

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR INCLUSION

Policy Mapping Grid: Slovakia



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Further information about the Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion (TPL4I) activities is available on the [TPL4I web area](#).

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SECTION 1: WIDER POLICY CONTEXT

Wider policy context

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic secures the general right to education for each Slovak citizen (Article 42) and guarantees persons with disabilities special assistance in preparation for their profession (Article 38, Section 2) (Source: CPRA – Slovak Republic Country Report).

The public administration in education is guaranteed by both the state administration and territorial self-governance, which is executed by municipalities and higher territorial units. The central body of state administration in education is the [Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport](#) of the Slovak Republic. It develops educational aims, curriculum and methods for education. Local administration is the responsibility of municipalities, which provide most pre-primary, primary and lower-secondary education in Slovakia. Public schools provide education free of charge.

The first stage of the education system is pre-primary education, attended by children from three to six years and provided by kindergartens. There is a high pre-school attendance rate in Slovakia (around 90%). Despite the wide network of kindergartens, higher demand for places is being recorded due to population growth (Source: [IECE – Slovak Republic Country Survey Questionnaire, p. 2](#)).

Primary and lower-secondary education is organised as a single structure system, beginning at the age of six and lasting for nine years. Education is provided by basic (primary and lower-secondary) schools, where a child starts to fulfil compulsory school attendance.

Compulsory schooling lasts ten years and pupils complete it by finishing the first year of upper-secondary education.

Higher education is provided at three levels – bachelor's, master's and PhD study programmes – in autonomous universities and higher education institutions.

Adult education includes further professional education, special interest education and civic education.

The Ministry of Education co-operates with central bodies of state administration and other bodies and organisations. The State School Inspection is the body of the state administration in education that exercises state control over the level of pedagogical management and the level of education. Evaluation of the quality of education, research, development, artistic and other creative activity of higher education institutions is under the remit of the Accreditation Commission.

Until 1990, the administration of education was centrally executed. Act No. 542/1990 of the Law Code on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government replaced the previous Act and created a branch system of administration as amended by the subsequent provisions, conditions for pluralistic development of the education system, and conditions for strengthening schools' autonomy.



Wider policy context

The Amendment to Act No. 542/1990 of the Law Code on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government set the new competencies of decision-making which operate within the system – municipalities, self-governance regions, school self-government bodies, state bodies which ensure the professional and methodological management, head teachers and heads of school establishments.

The Act sets out two forms of competencies of territorial self-government (municipalities and self-governance regions):

- Transferred execution of the state administration
- Execution of territorial self-governance (the so-called self-governing competencies).

The reform of public administration (state government and territorial self-government) and the organisation of the education system in the field of management, establishment and dissolution of schools and school facilities, and self-governance of schools has continued. The changes are anchored in the legislation through the Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government Act No. 596-2003 of the Law Code. In 2008, the new Education Act, which created legislative space for the implementation of content reform of regional education, was approved (Act No. 245/2008 of the Law Code).

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport is the central body of the state administration of the Slovak Republic for primary, secondary and higher education, educational facilities, lifelong learning, science and for the state's support for sports and young people.

The Ministry manages schools and school facilities within the Slovak Republic through generally binding rules. By providing vocational guidance to all founders, it administers the network of schools and school facilities in the Slovak Republic.

At local level, school state administration is realised through municipalities and higher territorial units, which secure activities laid down in their founder competencies.

Higher education institutions are legal entities and their organisation and activities are decided by the bodies of academic self-government in compliance with the Act on Higher Education Institutions.

Commitments to inclusive education

Slovakia committed to several international conventions with the challenge of directing the education system towards inclusive education, such as the Salamanca Statement, the Lisbon Strategy, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education. Slovakia is obliged to address the issue of inclusive education and of inclusive society.

The Education Act does not use the term 'inclusive education' as such. However, it sets out 'equality of access to education, taking into account the educational needs of an individual' and emphasises the 'prohibition of all forms of discrimination, particularly segregation'. (Source: [IECE – Slovak Republic Country Survey Questionnaire, pp. 6–7](#))



Wider policy context

In 2016, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the Government Programme for 2016–2020, in which a significant part is dedicated to education – particularly:

- 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 (Source: Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education – Slovak Republic Country Report).

(European Agency, Country information for Slovakia, [Legislation and policy](#))



SECTION 2: VISION AND MAIN PRINCIPLES OF TPL4I POLICY

2.1 Policy vision

Policy priorities	Findings
2.1.1 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers (i.e. student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers, teacher educators) can access 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	<p>2.1.2.1</p> <p><i>In 2016, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the Government Programme for 2016–2020, in which a significant part is dedicated to education – particularly:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>to support pre-primary education, with a special focus on learners from a socially disadvantaged background;</i>• <i>to create conditions for inclusive education;</i>• <i>to improve service of professional psychological and special educational counselling and diagnosis;</i>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>to promote vocational training in the system of so-called dual education.</i> <p>(European Agency, Country information for Slovakia, Legislation and policy)</p> <p>2.1.2.2</p> <p>The Government Programme of the Slovak Republic does not address the details arising from the thesis ‘to create conditions for inclusive education’. Education and training of inclusive teachers is contained in ‘Learning Slovakia’, issued by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport in September 2017 (Section 2-04.02). The National Program for the Development of Education for 2018 to 2027 was adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic on 27 June 2018. It implies the obligation to develop an inclusive education strategy (Section 4.2.1, point 5, ninth thesis).</p>
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

Policy priorities	Findings
2.2.1 Teachers' 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	2.2.2.1 <i>The issue of understanding and supporting learners with diverse and additional educational needs is included in each university accredited training programme. Initial teacher education also includes preparation for work in partnership with families.</i> (European Agency, Country information for Slovakia, Teacher education for inclusive education)
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	–



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

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SECTION 3: GOALS AND CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT FOR TPL4I POLICY

3.1 Goals

Policy priorities	Findings
3.1.1 Policy states that all teachers should have qualifications that reflect an inclusive education agenda	–
3.1.2 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 teachers' professional learning opportunities consider teacher competences for inclusive education	3.1.3.1 According to the Act on pedagogic employees and professional employees, the teachers and specialists are obliged to maintain and develop their professional competences through continuing education or self-learning. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Slovakia, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>3.1.3.2 Self-learning involves self-development by studying literature, participating in seminars that are not part of a comprehensive educational programme, etc.</p> <p>3.1.3.3 All teachers have the opportunity to continue their training. The planning of teacher education is approved by school headteachers, who are responsible for the education of the staff they manage, but also for the provision of teaching at school.</p>
<p>3.1.4 There is a formal strategy for promoting dialogue between ministries, regional/local authorities/municipalities and teacher educators to agree on the requirements of teachers' professional development opportunities for inclusion</p>	<p>3.1.4.1 <i>The Methodological and Pedagogical Centre provides most of the in-service training courses for teachers all around the country. Other accredited organisations can offer in-service training. (European Agency, Country information for Slovakia, Teacher education for inclusive education).</i></p> <p>3.1.4.2 Courses are mostly oriented towards the use of different teaching methods in teaching subjects, but also to increasing the competences of teachers for teamwork in inclusive education. Each institution can use teacher trainers from other institutions, including universities, to provide its own accredited teacher education. Some teacher training programmes are region-specific.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
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 teachers' professional learning opportunities to ensure they meet system requirements for an inclusive education system	–

Evaluative comments for 'Goals'

–



3.2 Continuum of support

Policy priorities	Findings
3.2.1 There is a strategy to ensure a continuum of diverse professional learning opportunities for inclusive education – for pre-service, beginning and experienced teachers, as well as teacher educators and support teachers – across all levels where teachers work	–
3.2.2 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 teachers' 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	<p>3.2.4.1</p> <p><i>The provider of the continuing education may be: a school or school facility [according to a special regulation], a higher education institution, organizations established by the Ministry [...] for provision and fulfilment of tasks in the field of continuing education (National Institute for Education, Methodology and Pedagogy Centre, State Vocational Education Institute), an educational organisation of other central body of the State administration according to a special regulation, church or religious society, or a legal entity with education as a subject of activity.</i></p> <p>(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Slovakia, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>3.2.4.1</p> <p>The co-operation of education providers is currently not sufficiently developed.</p> <p>Some accredited training programmes are also aimed at developing competences towards inclusive education.</p>

Evaluative comments for ‘Continuum of support’

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

4.1 Capacity building

Policy priorities	Findings
4.1.1 There are strategies to increase the capacity of all schools/higher education institutions to support all teachers to engage in professional learning activities on inclusive education	–
4.1.2 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	–



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>4.1.8 There are strategies stated in policy to develop the role of specialist teachers as a resource for mainstream schools</p>	<p>4.1.8.1</p> <p><i>There is a network of educational counselling and prevention centres (special educational centres and centres of educational-psychological counselling and prevention), where the team of experts comprises physicians, psychologists, special pedagogues, rehabilitation workers, social workers and technicians, and other specialists. These professionals carry out a complex evaluation of the child/pupil with disabilities, learning difficulties (specific learning difficulties, specific behavioural difficulties) or disadvantages (European Agency, Country information for Slovakia, Assessment within inclusive education systems).</i></p> <p>4.1.8.2</p> <p>Experts from counselling centres are recommended to co-operate with teachers at the school. However, this is usually through written pupil-specific recommendations and telephone consultations.</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>–</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
4.1.10 There are competences for professional learning in inclusive education for all teachers	<p data-bbox="763 323 875 352">4.1.10.1</p> <p data-bbox="813 376 1912 448"><i>Requirements for [teacher education] students' practical performance are defined by professional competencies:</i></p> <ul data-bbox="864 472 1935 756" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="864 472 1458 507">• <i>project competence (planning of teaching)</i><li data-bbox="864 531 1935 603">• <i>communicative, organisational and managerial competencies (management of learning processes)</i><li data-bbox="864 627 1912 699">• <i>diagnostic and intervention competencies (diagnostics of individuals or group, management of pupil's individualised learning)</i><li data-bbox="864 722 1890 756">• <i>reflexive competences (work self-reflection, changes and self-improvement).</i> <p data-bbox="763 780 2002 852">(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Slovakia, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p>

Evaluative comments for 'Capacity building'

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4.2 Funding

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

Evaluative comments for 'Funding'

–



4.3 Monitoring

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



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

Evaluative comments for 'Monitoring'

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