

COUNTRY SYSTEM MAPPING

Country Report: Greece

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education



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INTRODUCTION

The goal of the Country System Mapping (CSM) activity is to identify, map and analyse the key features that impact the effective implementation of inclusive education policy in practice in all Agency member countries' education systems. In a departure from previous thematic activities undertaken by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency), CSM considers the **whole** education system from the perspective of implementing policy for inclusive education in practice. However, within this system-wide view, there is a focus on the specific priorities Representative Board members (RBs) have already identified in relation to monitoring and evaluation, cross-sector working and quality assurance.

The main output from the CSM work is a systematic mapping of information on each country's education system.

Information from the individual CSM Country Reports has been analysed in two ways:

- **Thematic Analysis** to highlight issues (challenges and opportunities) emerging from the reports to use as the starting point for the Agency's Thematic Country Cluster Activities (TCCA).

Challenges for inclusion are defined as things the country needs to work on to reach an inclusive education system. Strengths for inclusion are things that encourage and reinforce inclusive practice in the country and could potentially be shown as an example to other countries.

- **Mapping** to inform TCCA groupings, based on the system structures and processes countries have (or do not have) in common.

The agreed goal for the mapping element of the CSM analysis work was to highlight parameters, or comparative factors, that indicate which country systems are structured and/or working in different – or similar – ways.

The information from the CSM work will be used within the remainder of the [Multi-Annual Work Programme 2021–2027](#) (MAWP). As of autumn 2024, country cluster activities will be organised which are closely aligned to individual country approaches to key issues for inclusive education, as well as system structures and processes countries have in common.



Effectiveness of teacher professional development processes

The work of permanently appointed teachers is evaluated on a four-year basis by the education scientific consultant, in terms of general and special teaching of their school subject/subjects, and by the director of the school unit, in terms of the pedagogical climate and classroom management; also, their work is evaluated every two years by the principal or head of the school unit and the education pedagogical consultant, in terms of their service consistency and adequacy ([Eurydice](#)).

Efficiency and effectiveness of funding mechanisms

Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Institute of Educational Policy, Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education – See above ‘Effectiveness of teaching and learning processes’.

Effectiveness of (vertical) co-operation between stakeholders at different system levels

The provisions of Law 4369/2016 are those applied for the evaluation of the decentralised bodies of the Ministry of Education, as well as for the evaluation of bodies under the supervision of the Ministry, with administrative competences in issues of primary and secondary education.

Concerning quality assurance in vocational education, a programme of study/curriculum quality framework has already been developed and is in force ([Eurydice](#)).

Effectiveness of (horizontal) co-operation between ministries and ministerial departments

No information.

5.5 Specific monitoring mechanisms relating to learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

The teachers’ assembly is informed if there is a problem. It then informs and discusses the issue with parents. They refer the issue to EDY which consists of the head of the school unit (president), psychologist, social worker and the special education teacher. The class teacher also participates. In schools, EDYs have the responsibility for the preparation and implementation of the short-term intervention programme, the specification of the main axes of the Individualised Education Programme of the learners as they are described by KEDASY in the evaluation reports, in specific short- and long-term objectives, as well as the support and monitoring of the educational and psycho-social process of the learners. Whenever an EDY does not exist, the short-term programme is undertaken by the educational support team.

The learner educational support team is formed by the teachers’ assembly. It is supported in its work by KEDASY and consists of:

- the school principal;
- the teacher in charge of communication with KEDASY;
- the teacher in charge of the class.



The contact person with KEDASY is the special education teacher or another teacher who has been trained in issues relevant to special education. The learner educational support team is informed about the issue. The classroom teacher informs and discusses the issue with the parents, and prepares a descriptive report for the learner which is completed by the other members of the teacher assembly. A short-term intervention programme is organised, specifying the learning objectives and parents are informed about the support of the programme at home.

The results of the intervention are recorded. If the results of the intervention are positive, the procedure is complete. If the results are not positive, the school unit contacts KEDASY. KEDASYS are interconnected with the school units: each teacher or member of the special teaching staff of KEDASY, by decision of the association of teaching staff, undertakes under their responsibility a unit of school units and acts as a contact and reference person of these units.

In addition, the KEDASY teacher is responsible for: learner referrals, conducting evaluations and interventions, the formulation of needs at the level of support of the school community, conducting training and awareness actions, the implementation of vocational guidance programmes, and proposes the axes of the short-term programme (P.D. 79/ΦΕΚ τΑ'109/01.08.2017, N. 4559/ΦΕΚ τΑ'142/03.08.2018, article 23; N. 4547/ΦΕΚ τΑ'142/03.08.2018; YA Ap. 158733/ΓΔ4 /ΦΕΚ τΒ'4299/27.09.2018).

5.6 Specific evaluation mechanisms relating to learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

According to Law 4823/2021, the monitoring of the operation of the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support is assigned to a special committee of the Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education.

5.7 Specific accountability mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

Accountability mechanisms include:

- the introduction of a series of new support structures;
- the introduction of the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASY), which aim to:
 - identify institutional (and not just individual) barriers to learning at all levels;
 - provide psycho-social support to all learners, including learners with disabilities;
 - build capacity of mainstream schools so that they respond more effectively to all learners' diverse needs.
- the establishment of School Networks of Educational Support (SDEY) and Interdisciplinary Support Committee (EDY) with article 39, Law 4115/2013 and Law 4823/2021;



- the extension of the role of special schools as support centres and the re-organisation and renaming of the abovementioned networks and committees to ‘School Networks of Educational Support’ (SDEY) and ‘Interdisciplinary Support Committees’ (EDY).

Special classes were redefined as ‘inclusion classes’ with Article 82 of Law 4368/2016. However, they still operate as pull-out programmes (European Agency, [Country information](#)).

Evaluative commentary

This section provides a qualified, evidenced-based reflection on the **challenges, opportunities and consequences** of quality assurance and accountability for inclusive education in practice. It specifically considers the implications of how different stakeholders across the education system are accountable for ensuring the effective implementation of policy for inclusive education in practice.

As it has already been reported, the Greek education system is highly centralised. The government sets out the general strategic goals of the system and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MofERA) shapes education policy, monitors its implementation, and administers the education system. MofERA has responsibility for the entire education system from pre-primary to adult education, although higher education institutions have greater autonomy. Other central bodies which shape education policy include:

- The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (*Εθνική Αρχή Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης*, HAHE, 2020) leads quality assurance in higher education, replacing the former Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (2005).
- The Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (*Αρχή Διασφάλισης της Ποιότητας στην Πρωτοβάθμια και Δευτεροβάθμια Εκπαίδευση*, ADIPPDE, 2013) aims to ensure high-quality educational work in primary and secondary education.
- The Institute of Educational Policy (*Ινστιτούτο Εκπαιδευτικής Πολιτικής*, IEP, 2011), took over the work of the Pedagogical Institute and other bodies responsible for educational research and teacher professional development. IEP also provides on-going technical support for policy planning and implementation.
- The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (*ΕΟΠΠΕΠ, Εθνικός Οργανισμός Πιστοποίησης Προσόντων και Επαγγελματικού Προσανατολισμού*, 2011) aims to promote better quality and more efficient and reliable lifelong learning services in Greece.
- The Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (*Ίδρυμα Νεολαίας και Δια Βίου Μάθησης*, 2011), implements actions, programmes and projects on lifelong learning and youth, and learner welfare.

Other education stakeholders include the 13 regional primary and secondary education directorates and the local directorates of education. Teacher unions, including the Primary School Teachers’ Union (DOE) and the Federation of Secondary School Teachers (OLME),



formally participate in central and local education administrative boards and selection boards for school leaders.

Within the above framework, parents have a limited role in the system.

The Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE, 2013) is an administratively autonomous body, supervised by MofERA. It aims to ensure quality in primary and secondary education, through monitoring and evaluation, and to support MofERA with national education strategy. ADIPPDE assesses educational quality, evaluates implementation processes and reports on system priorities to MofERA. Schools must regularly submit learner, teacher and school data to the MySchool database (Diophantus, 2013). Greece participates in some large-scale international studies such as PISA and the Survey of Adult Skills, but there is no national standardised assessment scheme to provide regular information about learners' learning outcomes and/or inclusive education outcomes.

Following initial resourcing challenges, in 2018 efforts to strengthen ADIPPDE included defining a new role based on three action lines:

1. conducting ex-post evaluation in primary and secondary education;
2. supervising schools' strategic planning;
3. formulating and standardising school self-evaluation and other evaluation processes.

A governing council, including academics and school representatives, was also introduced for a four-year term. ADIPPDE publishes annual reports on selected aspects of system evaluation offering policy recommendations. ADIPPDE works as an indicator of the nascent culture of accountability and improvement-focused use of data. However, with on-going changes to school evaluation, ADIPPDE's role will need to be re-examined.

As part of a wider e-governance drive, MySchool (Diophantus, 2013) is the Greek education information system established to centralise educational data and enhance system-level governance. MySchool collates data about learners, teachers, schools and curriculum for pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, both in the public and private sectors. In this way, it provides everyday administrative support to educational actors at school, as well as at local, regional and central levels. It also aims to support their decision-making through various tools, such as data processing tools, reporting tools and Business Intelligence mechanisms. Furthermore, the database is used to tackle key thematic concerns such as early school-leaving. For example, since 2016, relevant datasets regarding early school-leaving have been regularly provided to the Observatory of Learner Drop-out within the IEP, to produce accurate indicators on learner drop-out. Using this data, IEP publishes annual reports. According to Eurostat, Greece has dramatically decreased the rate of early school-leaving since 2009 ([OECD country profile 2020](#)).

Greece has been making efforts to reduce the high-stakes nature and summative focus of learner assessment and has started introducing measures for upgrading the quality assurance authority and expanding its role (Law 4823/2021). However, greater stakeholder involvement and government accountability mechanisms could promote better trust in it. In fact, greater school autonomy, balanced by enhanced local capacity and accountability, could help improve schools' efficiency and responsiveness. The



government has made efforts in this direction including regional support bodies for schools and school networks (Law 4823/2021). Additionally, continuing to build an evaluation and assessment system that provides constructive accountability and improvement-focused feedback at system, school and learner level is also important, as are the nascent measures to empower local- and school-level actors ([OECD country profile 2020](#)).



SECTION 6. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION, CO-OPERATION AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

This section provides information on the structures, mechanisms and opportunities for stakeholder collaboration and co-operation in the country.

6.1 Does the legislation and policy framework specify learner voices are used to inform the development of learning and teaching environments?

No.

6.1a Description of the legislation and policy framework around the use of learner voice

Not applicable.

6.1b Explanation

Even though the issue of rights in the area of disability, as well as for other socially vulnerable children, has become a priority, the educational system is still highly centralised and subject-orientated. More emphasis is given to adults (i.e. experts, parents' or teachers' associations) rather than children's voices.

6.2 Does the legislation and policy framework ensure curriculum development processes take account of all learners and their communities?

Yes.

6.2a Description of how the legislation and policy framework around curriculum development processes take account of all learners and their communities

The most recent initiative is **Ergastiria Dexiotiton: 21st Century Skills Lab**, a GENE global education awardee. 'Skills Lab' has been a compulsory 'course' in all Greek schools, from pre-primary to lower secondary education, after a successful one-year pilot implementation. It adopts the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDCs) and has been designed under four thematic pillars: well-being, environment, human rights/social empathy, and creativity. These aim to promote and implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals with particular emphasis on Goal 4: 'Inclusive and Quality Education'. Through collaborative learning methodologies, learners are given a voice, deliberate upon important real-life issues, such as the concept of justice in pluralistic and intercultural democratic societies, gender equality, bullying, global citizenship, the rights of all persons to dignity and respect, etc., and design action plans to combat anti-social and anti-democratic practices, developing 21st century skills. 'Skills Lab'



is a broad-spectrum educational initiative that aims, among others, to raise awareness of social and human rights and create a school ethos as a shield against any form of violence.

6.3 Does the legislation and policy framework support the active involvement of different stakeholders in ensuring inclusive learning environments?

Parents and families

Yes, with participation in the design and implementation of learner's transition programmes. The consent of the parents or guardians is mandatory for KEDASY to issue an assessment report for a learner. Compilation of a co-operation protocol between a school unit that operates EDY and parents/guardians: there is a detailed description of the co-operation protocol between a school unit that operates EDY and parents/guardians, configuration of IEP by KEDASY with the co-operation of parents/guardians, compilation of a co-operation protocol between KEDASY and parents/guardians.: appeal of the family to a secondary committee, if parents disagree with the report of KEDASY.

Safeguarding learner and family personal data. Parental consent for referral of a learner to support services. Consent of parents for the learner to be referred to a pull out programme (Law 4823/2021; ΦΕΚ 136/3-8-2021 and Rules of operation for EDY ΦΕΚ Β' 5009/27-10-21).

School-leaders/leadership teams, teachers and specialist staff

Yes. Co-operation of EDY with members of the educational community. Collaborative interdisciplinary approach to learner difficulties in the classroom. Co-operation between EDY and the teachers' assembly. Preparation of the IEP and interdisciplinary support. Design and implementation of learner transition programmes. Members of EDY staffing (Law 4823/2021; ΦΕΚ 136/3-8-2021; Rules of operation for EDY ΦΕΚ Β' 5009/27-10-21).

Stakeholders in the local communities

Yes. In Law 4823/2021 and, mainly, in the Rules of Operation of EDY, the co-operation of the school community with the social services and the community in general is described. The involvement of these services is not exactly clear, but the ultimate aim of such co-operation is the comprehensive support of learners and families, and the smooth participation of children in education.

Local-level decision-/policy-makers

No.

Non-governmental organisations, disabled people's organisations or other organisations representing vulnerable groups

Yes. There is no explicit reference to co-operation with NGOs.

In practice, many KEDASY and many schools co-operate giving priority to evaluation and support processes for learners who come from refugee structures, from the 'Smile of the Child', and from institutions such as 'The Mother'.



For personal data, the professional confidentiality of all employees in KEDASY and EDY applies.

Also, the exchange of information is done by confidential correspondence and the reference to Law 4823/202 that only after the consent of the parent/guardian that will be included in the co-operation protocol will KEDASY be able to notify the evaluation report to the school unit.

Reference to the preservation of confidentiality is also made in the protocol of co-operation of EDY with the families.

6.4 Does the legislation and policy framework ensure that curriculum development processes involve the participation and contribution of different stakeholders?

No.

6.4a Description of the legislation and policy framework ensuring the involvement of stakeholders in curriculum development processes

Not applicable.

6.4b Explanation

No information.

6.5 Does the legislation and policy framework support the development of learning communities in local/regional areas?

No.

6.5a Description of the legislation and policy framework that supports the development of learning communities

Not applicable.

6.5b Explanation

In the legislative decision 449/2007, school–family collaboration is defined, but without any proposals for collaboration policies between structures involved in the educational procedure. The policies for collaboration presuppose the training and preparation of school staff for the reinforcement of collaboration by means of in-service training, organisation of conferences, comprisal of a collaboration period with the family in the school programme, creation of centres for the reinforcement and support of parents within the schools, home visits and creation of action research groups aiming at the improvement of the conditions for collaboration. A functional collaboration also presupposes the improvement of conditions for communication between social services, health centres and school (Refer to Sideri, 2007, p. 3; European Agency, [CPRA](#)).



Evaluative commentary

This section provides a qualified, evidenced-based reflection on the **challenges, opportunities and consequences** of stakeholder collaboration, co-operation and effective communication for the implementation of inclusive education in practice. It specifically considers how effectively different stakeholders across the education system are supported to increase their personal and collective ability to be inclusive in practice.

During the last decade, efforts have been made to improve collaboration and co-operation between different support systems and mechanisms related to the school community. For instance, in an effort to streamline the school network and improve efficiency, Greece passed legislation restructuring school support bodies (2018), introducing four decentralised support bodies to work with schools. At the regional level, Regional Centres for Educational Planning (PEKEs) focus on supporting schools with strategic planning and self-evaluation, pedagogical guidance and teacher training. At the local level, Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASY) and Sustainability Education Centres (KPE) were established. The former aim to support inclusion-related measures and career guidance, while the latter strengthen links between schools and their local environments in the interest of building sustainable communities. At school level, School Networks of Educational Support (SDEY) foster more collaboration and networking between schools, aiming to ensure equal access for all. Following initial implementation, the role of educational co-ordinators has been under review due to concerns that, by being fewer in number and no longer school-based, their impact has been limited and thus, the education school-based advisors have again been introduced. (Law 4823/2021). This support system, with the appropriate collaboration, can be more responsive to the wide range of needs and demands of the school units ([OECD country profile 2020](#)).

Also with the new Law, there seems to be a hierarchical network of supervisors/advisors among regional, local and school level (i.e. Regional Education Quality Supervisor, Regional Board of Supervisors, Education Quality Supervisor, Joint Meeting of Education Quality Supervisors, Advisors of Education) – how well they function remains to be seen (Law 4823/2021).

The degree of implementation and effectiveness of the above policies demands a clearly defined framework of co-operation and effective ways of evaluating and monitoring the quality of provision(s). Despite the above efforts, collaboration with different stakeholders as well as collaboration among the same stakeholders (i.e. among general education teachers or between general and special education teachers) remains a great challenge within the Greek education system, since a strong tradition of ‘teaching with closed doors’ prevails. Stronger collaboration with social partners (i.e. parents) is still needed in both stated, written and enacted policies.



SECTION 7. FINAL COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

Progress has been made in both written and stated policies towards inclusive education and a number of activities/actions have taken place in relation to social, religious, gender, ethnic, cultural/multicultural and disability issues. Many schools have become more culturally diverse as a result of social transformation and as an outcome of globalisation, mass migration and multiculturalism, while the vast majority of learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs are at least physically placed in mainstream education.

However, mainstream education does not necessarily mean inclusive education. A deeper analysis of written, stated and enacted policy practices indicate that the educational system in Greece leans heavily towards a more traditional integrationist rather than inclusionist approach, with a strong emphasis on a medical individualistic approach to special educational needs. For instance, the renaming of ‘special classes’ to ‘inclusive classes’ was one of the ways that the education policy responded to the impetus of inclusion (Law 2817/2000). In the same legislation that introduced the name of ‘inclusive classes’, a complex bureaucratic assessment and evaluation process for the identification of learners with a disability was put in place. This process reinforced the dominance of the ‘medical model’ in the education system by requiring learners to be ‘labelled’ with one of the recognised categories of disability before educational provision in the form of resources, additional support and instructional differentiation could become available.

Furthermore, the notion of inclusive education has changed terminology in Greek language (from ‘*entaxi*’ to ‘*symperilipsi*’) based on the assumption that in this way it will broaden its scope, aiming to refer not only to learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs but also to learners who are socially disadvantaged and are at risk of exclusion from regular education (i.e. immigrant learner, refugees, Roma, D/SENs). This change in terminology has created a number of ideological and educational misunderstandings since the previous notion of ‘*entaxi*’ included all the inclusive principles and rationale(s) as well. Thus, there is a need for a clear definition of ‘*entaxis*’/‘inclusive education’ to be adopted throughout all the legislative frameworks based on the definition provided by General Comment Number 4 (GC4, United Nations, 2016), according to which:

inclusion is a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all learners of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences (United Nations, 2016, paragraph 11).

Based on this definition, specific measures, policies and services should be developed in a systemic, systematic and consistent way. As it is, in all legislative frameworks a number of political and educational ambiguities and confusions stem from the fact that legislation uses concepts and the language derived from disability studies and inclusive education to describe more traditional structures of special education or structures that are closer to



an integrationist rather than an inclusionist approach (for instance, 'inclusive classes' continue in most cases to perform their role as 'withdrawn' rooms).