



Erasmus+

Science and Global Education beyond the barriers  
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## Key message 3 :

# HIGHLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS

- **Introduction**

‘Highly qualified professionals’ concerns issues of **initial and in-service training, the profile, values and competence of teachers, effective approaches to recruitment, and attitudes, as well as networking and co-ordination of all professionals.**

Young people attending the European Parliament Hearing, organised by the Agency in 2011, pointed out:

**The starting point for inclusive education is teacher awareness and education ...** Teachers must be aware of what everyone needs and give opportunities for successfully reaching goals. We all have our talents – together we make a better working community (European Agency, 2012a, p. 12).



# CORSO ON-LINE



## Initial and in-service training



- Appropriate **initial and in-service training** of teachers and other professionals is considered a **key factor** for successful inclusive practices. The Agency report **Key Principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education – Recommendations for Practice** highlights that:
- **All teachers should develop the skills to meet the diverse needs of all learners. In their initial and continuing education, teachers should be equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding that will give them the confidence to deal effectively with a range of learner needs**
- (European Agency, 2011c, p. 15).

# Furthermore....



- Furthermore, it indicates that:
- **Teacher educators are key players** in assuring a high-quality teaching force;
- **yet many European countries *have no explicit policy on the competences they should possess or on how they should be selected or trained***
- (ibid., p. 63).

## The profile of inclusive teachers and other professionals



- Within the framework of the Agency **Teacher Education for Inclusion project, the Profile of Inclusive Teachers (European Agency, 2012b)** has been developed as a guide for the design and implementation of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes for all teachers.

**It identifies a framework of core values and areas of competence that are applicable to any ITE programme for preparing all teachers to work in inclusive education and considering all forms of diversity**



## **The framework of core values and areas of competence includes**

**Valuing Learner Diversity** – learner difference is considered as a resource and an asset to education. The areas of competence within this core value relate to: Conceptions of inclusive education; The teacher's view of learner difference.

- **Supporting All Learners** – teachers have high expectations for all learners' achievements. The areas of competence within this core value relate to: Promoting the academic, practical, social and emotional learning of all learners; Effective teaching approaches in heterogeneous classes.
- **Working With Others** – collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers. The areas of competence within this core value relate to: Working with parents and families; Working with a range of other educational professionals.
- **Personal Professional Development** – teaching is a learning activity and teachers take responsibility for their lifelong learning. The areas of competence within this core value relate to: Teachers as reflective practitioners; Initial teacher education as a foundation for ongoing professional learning and development (ibid., p. 7).

# Approaches to recruitment



- **Effective approaches to recruitment and increased retention rates of teachers and other professionals are indicated as key factors in a number of Agency projects.**
- The Agency report **Teacher Education for Inclusion Across Europe – Challenges and Opportunities** highlights that:
- **Effective approaches to improve the recruitment of teacher candidates and increase retention rates should be explored along with ways to increase the number of teachers from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities**
- (European Agency, 2011b, p. 71).

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**A minority of countries have tests to regulate entry to the teaching profession** but recent research by **Menter and colleagues (2010)** highlights evidence showing that **there are many dimensions of effective teaching that are not reliably predicted by tests of academic ability.**



This conclusion is certainly supported by the project literature review and country reports, as both highlight the **importance of attitudes, values and beliefs in addition to knowledge and skills in developing inclusive practice.** These, together with dispositions that support the development of the required competences are **difficult to ascertain even through an interview situation and further research is needed into methods of selecting of teacher candidates** (European Agency, 2011b, pp. 19–20).





- **Positive attitudes of teachers and other professionals are highlighted as a key element for inclusive education in most Agency projects.**
- The Agency report **Inclusive Education and Classroom Practice** notes that:
- Of course, inclusion largely depends on teachers' attitudes towards pupils with special needs, on their view on differences in classrooms and their willingness to deal with those differences effectively. **Generally, the attitude of teachers has been put forward as a decisive factor in making schools more inclusive** (European Agency, 2003, p. 12).
- Similarly, the Agency **report Key Principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education – Recommendations for Practice** highlights the importance of positive attitudes. It states that:
- **All teachers should have positive attitudes towards all learners and the will to work collaboratively with colleagues.** All teachers should see diversity as a strength and a stimulus for their own further learning (European Agency, 2011c, p. 14).

## Networking and co-ordination

- All the Agency reports refer to the **effective role of collaboration and co-ordination of professionals and networking with interdisciplinary community services**. One noteworthy example is the **Agency report Teacher Education for Inclusion: Profile of Inclusive Teachers (TE4I)**, which highlights that: **The implementation of inclusive education should be seen as a collective task, with different stakeholders each having roles and responsibilities to fulfil.**

The support that classroom teachers need to fulfil their roles includes access to structures that facilitate communication and team working with a range of different professionals (including those working in HEIs [higher education institutions]), as well as ongoing professional development opportunities (European Agency, 2012b, p. 23).



Cooperative  
Learning Group  
Job Cards

## Conclusions

- To conclude:
- 1) Inclusive education involves a **systemic change that requires transformation in the way teachers and other education professionals are educated**, not just in terms of competences but also of ethical values.
- 2) The main aspects related to highly qualified professionals can be summarised by a **number of indicators** in the area of legislation for inclusive education developed and presented in the Agency project, **Development of a set of indicators – for inclusive education in Europe**:
  - **Initial teacher training and in-service teacher training programmes include special education or inclusion related issues.**
  - **Teachers and other staff are supported to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding inclusion so they are prepared to meet all pupils/students' needs in mainstream teaching.**
  - **Courses and professional development opportunities to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills are available.**
  - **Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership.**
  - **Dedicated resources are set aside for appropriate professional development related to meeting special needs in inclusive education** (Kyriazopoulou and Weber, 2009, p. 28).

