

# Stakeholders together adapting ideas to readjust local systems to promote inclusive education (STAIRS)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SLOVENIA

## Timeline

2019 Implementation 2020 Implementation 2021 Implementation

2022 Completed

ID number 35528

## Background

The white paper on Education in Slovenia places equity as one of its main principles. The Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (2011) regulates procedures for the placement of learners with special needs into education programmes. Depending on the learners' psychological and physical status, the act enables their inclusion in education, based on the assumption that additional help from experts and adaptation of the implementation of programmes will help learners to achieve a comparable standard of knowledge.

Expert opinion is that, although various system level solutions are in place, these do not ensure meeting quality education standards in the practice:

- (a) low special education needs (SEN) students do not get sufficient additional educational support;
- (b) teachers lack expertise for instruction classes with SEN students;
- (c) classes can include SEN students with different kinds of special needs;
- (d) classes at EQF level 3 can have more than the prescribed number of SEN students because schools do not have the capacities for smaller classes in some cases (merging different occupations into one class during general subjects);
- (e) parents can insist in enrolling in programmes not suited for SEN students;
- (f) schools are motivated to enrol students based on per capita funding, though this can lower education standards (final exam is internal).

## Objectives

The overarching objective is to examine professional processes in inclusive education, observe existing good practices in high-achieving countries (Ireland, Austria, Portugal as partners and associated partner, and Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Sweden and UK-Scotland as possible contributors) and develop national adaptation plans in different national (Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia) and contextual circumstances. By connecting professionals – bringing actors and stakeholders together and engaging them in a cohesive, collective and collaborative action at local and national levels – it is also the intention of the proposal to develop and disseminate adaptation guidelines at European level. Professionals

are to be specifically selected to participate in the learning process and to contribute to the local use of the learning. The aim of these plans is to make best practices seen applicable to the national level.

After the creation of national adaptation plans, European adaptation guidelines are also to be prepared and developed jointly by the participating countries' experts. This allows the experiences gained during the learning process and their country-specific recommendations to rise to the European level, making it possible that any other country aspiring to adapt best practices can also use the knowledge accumulated during the project. Developing policy recommendations at European level is also one of the key objectives of the project.

## Description

Stairs is a 2019-22 Erasmus+ project, promoting social inclusion through educational best practices. The project focuses on the adaptation of good practices in social inclusion across Europe and on the adaptation process itself. The consortium consists of seven partners. The Tempus Public Foundation in Hungary is a coordinating institution; six others, including the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (CPI) (seven institutions from six countries in total) cooperate in the project.

### 2019 Implementation

The partners prepared national reports on implementation of inclusion in education and the identification of country-specific needs in this field. Slovenia identified needs in inclusion of SEN students in regular VET programmes and the area of students with lower socio-economic status.

Two study visits to Ireland and Portugal (planned for 2020) were prepared, with a focus on good practices in the field of inclusion. In parallel, supporting materials were created for the participants in these visits. Partner countries invited external experts from the field of inclusive pedagogy. National guidelines for further development and promoting inclusion in education or development should be developed jointly during the project.

### 2020 Implementation

In 2020, due to COVID, the dynamics of work on the project changed. The planned study visits to Ireland and Portugal were implemented virtually; nevertheless the partners gained much interesting information and new knowledge, which they are now trying to transfer to the national space in social inclusion in education. They started preparing a national adaptation plan, which is the basis for the transfer of good practices or individual elements. The plan should contain proposals for the development of policies and practices in four areas:

- (a) promoting inclusive orientation and sensitivity to social inclusion;
- (b) identification and support/assistance to students with low socio-economic status (SES)'
- (c) teacher empowerment;
- (d) participation/networking of various stakeholders.

### 2021 Implementation

In 2021, the Slovenian partners prepared the National adaptation plan (NAP), with recommendations and suggestions for strengthening national approaches to ensure social inclusion in education. The suggestions were based on good practices and results from Ireland and Portugal. For example, both countries have established national systems for ensuring systematic support for schools in the most underprivileged environments. The systems are supported by national policies and based on long-term and sustainable principles. The NAP was presented at national

level on two occasions: at a science conference organised by the Educational Research Institute in September 2021 and in an online presentation and discussion organised by Institute of the RS for VET (CPI) in November 2021. Various national stakeholders were invited to the latter: representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education, and headmasters of upper secondary school, with the intent to obtain their feedback especially whether these suggestions can be put into practice. The suggestions were estimated to be real and efficient but only in the long term.

Project partners also began the preparation of the European adaptation plan (EAP), which are the European guidelines. The EAP is based on the NAPs from the participating countries (Czechia, Croatia and Hungary) and supports the social inclusiveness education in the EU.

## 2022 Completed

In 2022, the project partners completed the European Adaptation Plan (EAP), entitled 'European guidelines', which were created on the basis of the national adaptation plans (NAP) of the 'learning countries', namely: Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Croatia, as well as lessons from other countries (Ireland and Portugal). Ireland and Portugal presented good practices, as they were the 'sharing countries' in the project.

European guidelines (EAP) aim to contribute to further development in the field of ensuring social inclusion in education in the European educational area.

The partners have prepared a MOOC - open online education, intended for various target groups, e.g. teachers, counsellors, mentors in companies and students. The MOOC was structured into 6 modules, with '*inclusion in education*' related content. Slovenia was responsible for the fourth module, Vocational education and training and early school leavers.

The modules included the following areas:

- (a) Policy, policy makers and funding;
- (b) Schools and educational practitioners;
- (c) Special education, inclusion and school transition;
- (d) Vocational education and training and early school leavers;
- (e) Multi-agency collaboration;
- (f) Adapting good practice and change management.

At the end of the project, an international online webinar was organised, where the partners presented all the main results of the project, e.g. European guidelines (EAP), got acquainted with several other European projects in the field of inclusive education and discussed the possibilities of implementing good practices in the wider European area.

## Bodies responsible

- Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI)

## Target group

### Education professionals

Teachers  
Trainers  
School leaders  
Guidance practitioners

### Entities providing VET

Companies

VET providers (all kinds)

## Thematic categories

### Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

[Project website](#)

### “ … ” Cite as

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