

RESEARCH RESULTS

SEMINAR

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Education Trade Unions
and Inclusive Schools:
Embracing Diversity in Education

Objectives of the research

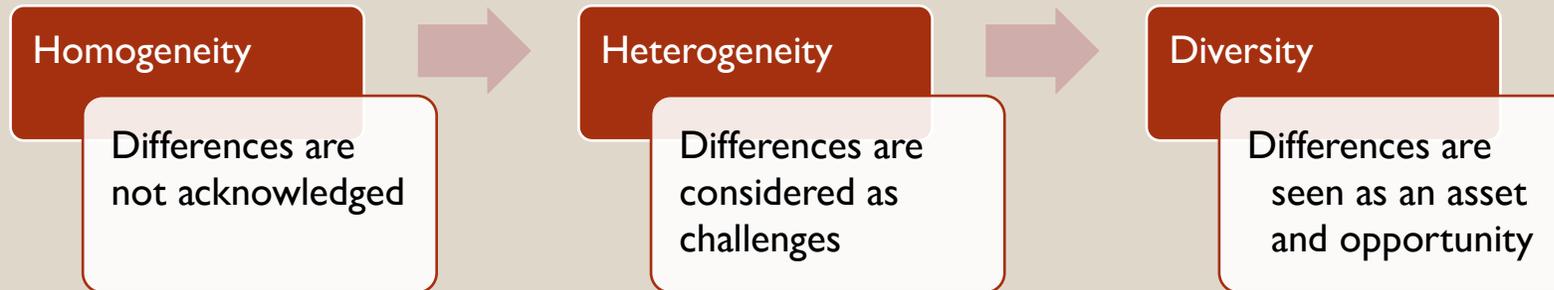
- Identify **impact of changes** in the society on professions in education and training
- Identify **training needs** to support teachers, academics and other education personnel in working with a diverse classroom and implementing inclusive education
- Identify **good practices** of creating and maintaining sustainable inclusive learning environments

Approach of the research

- **Online questionnaire** to all ETUCE members (April – September 2020): 61 respondents representing 60 ETUCE member organisations from 38 countries (about 50% response rate).
- **Desk-research** to provide background
- **A template to gather good practices: 30 good practices from 11 ETUCE members, located in 10 countries.**

Diversity in the classroom: changing paradigms

- Shift from:



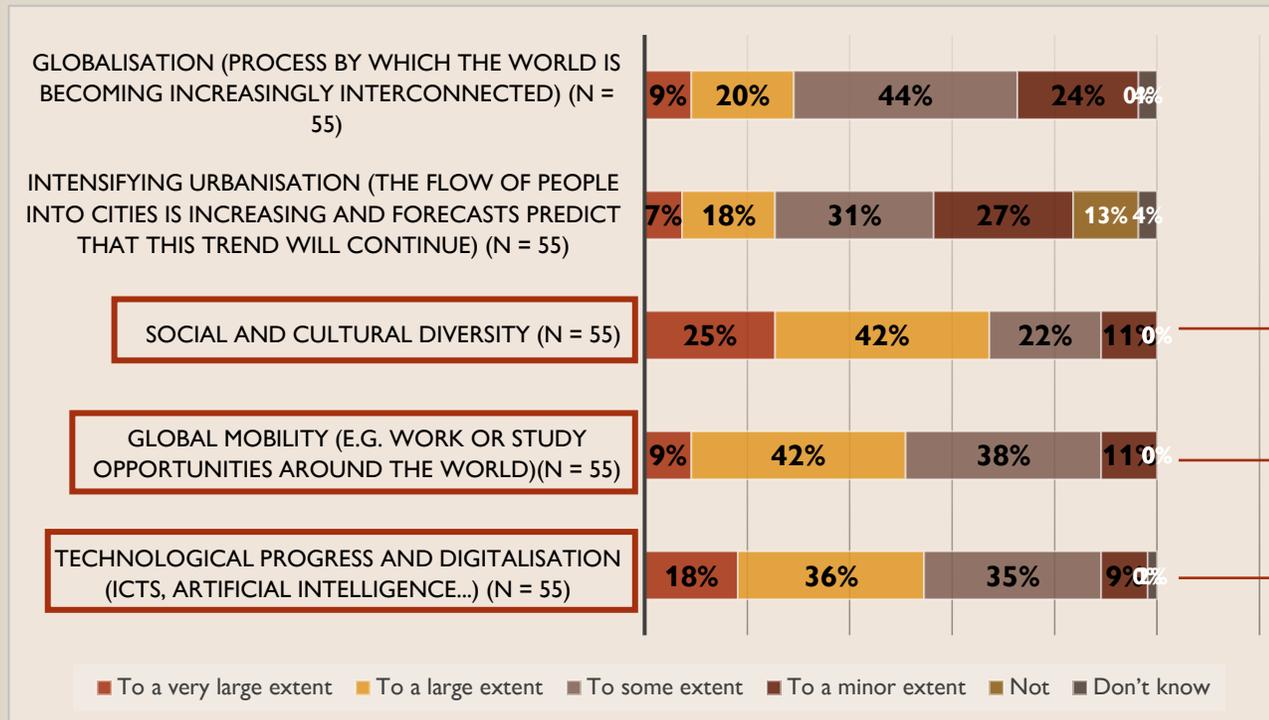
Though...many European countries still approach diversity from a deficit angle, rather than an asset (EC study 2017)*

- Shift from:

- Special needs education: as a supplement to general education provision.
- Education for All: ensuring that all children have access to education of good quality; creating an education environment in which students are both able and enabled to learn. Inclusive education as a strategy to achieve Education for All.

* PPMI, (2017), Preparing teachers for diversity: the role of initial teacher education. Final report to DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the EC

Findings: Opportunities and challenges



Opportunities for education systems

89%

89%

89%

- **Technological** progress and digitalisation (96%)
- **Under-resourcing** of public education (91%)
- Rising **inequalities** in living standards (89%)
- **Cyber security** and data protection (88%)
- Continuous increasing **workload** of education personnel (86%)
- Social and cultural **diversity** (83%)

Implementation of inclusive education

- **Implementation gaps:** difference between what is on paper and reality (because of under-resourcing, absence of embedding voice of education professionals in all stages of inclusive education development and implementation, lack of guidance, lack of adequate preparation, lack of support).

There is a well-evidenced gap between theories of inclusion, the law and policy on children's rights, and the daily practice in our schools" (respondent ETUCE online survey 2020).

"Formal procedures for inclusion in the education system have been met. In practice, access to children with disabilities, in part to children belonging to national minorities, is somewhat better. Gifted children and especially children of migrants are still neglected. LGBTI diversity is ignored in the education system" (respondent ETUCE online survey 2020).

Lack of..... in frameworks and policies

- Regular monitoring of the implementation of inclusive education policies (38%)
- Clear learning assessment guidelines taking into account different needs and previous achievements of learners (31%)
- Strategies and policies encompassing the different aspects of diversity in schools (incl. infrastructure) (31%)
- Strategies and policies supporting school leaders to adopt an inclusive education approach (29%)

Funding of (inclusive) education

Privatisation

66%

In my country/region schools can use public funding in a flexible way within agreed parameters with the relevant national/regional/local authority to accommodate needs related to inclusive education. (n = 58)



In my country/region there is other (than financial) publicly support to allow all schools to develop plans and actions for inclusive education. (n = 58)



In my country/region, there are (extra) publicly financial supports for schools to develop plans and actions for inclusive education (on top of the generic public financial support). (n = 58)



70%

In my country/region, the public financial support for schools includes a budget to develop plans and actions for inclusive education. (n = 59)



Key elements of inclusive education and conditions for implementation (1)



A **clear vision of inclusive education** embedded in policy frameworks and including a sound and shared understanding of the concept of inclusion in education by all stakeholders in education, including policy and decision-makers.



The **necessary policy frameworks and mechanisms** in place to support the implementation of inclusive education, accompanied by sufficient resourcing and public funding. *Investing in education is investing in people.*



Embracing diversity: every learner has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs. *Particular challenges are identified related the implementation of inclusive education for specific groups, like e.g. Roma students, LGBTI students, migrant and refugee students, learners with mental health issues.*



A **democratic culture in educational institutions**, including the meaningful participation of teachers and other education personnel as well as learners in decision-making processes, evaluation and improvement processes in educational institutions.



Initial education and continuing professional development of all educational professionals.



Availability of teacher support personnel and mechanisms:

Smaller number of students for teachers to meet specific needs of students.

- **support personnel** (including teacher assistants, psychologists and linguistic support personnel, remedial teachers).
- **support mechanisms** (including support in identifying learners' needs, opportunities for mutual learning and exchange)

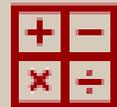
Key elements of inclusive education and conditions for implementation (2)



Sufficient time within their working hours for teachers, trainers, academics and other education personnel to implement an inclusive education approach.



Adequate recruitment and retention policies for teachers and other education personnel reflecting the diversity in the education sector and in society.



Designing appropriate teaching-learning aids, equipment and approaches (e.g. differentiated curricula, classroom arrangements and teaching strategies).



Safe and healthy working and learning environments, free from harassment and bullying, including cyber-bullying. *93% of the respondents argues that (urgent) training action is needed in this area for teachers, academics and other education personnel. ETUCE Survey 2020*



Cooperation as an essential component in implementing inclusive education meaningfully and effectively (between education professionals, between leadership and education professionals, between various sectors and education, between education professionals and families, carers).

Key elements of inclusive education and conditions for implementation (3)



Adequate governance models at education institutional level and the whole-school approach. *Leaders in educational institutions need to be knowledgeable and well prepared to meet the diverse needs of their learners. Professional support to leadership in taking up their responsibility is essential.*



Adequate assessment and monitoring systems:

(National) tests still focus too much on performance, attainment, exams and qualifications, rather than promoting learning for all.

At the level of education institutions to track progress in the implementation of inclusive education against the existing regional/national frameworks.

At the level of the learning process of students: assessment systems that avoid reproduction of inequalities and promote learning for all, as well as take into account innovative pedagogical methods.

Training needs of teachers, trainers, academics and other educational personnel

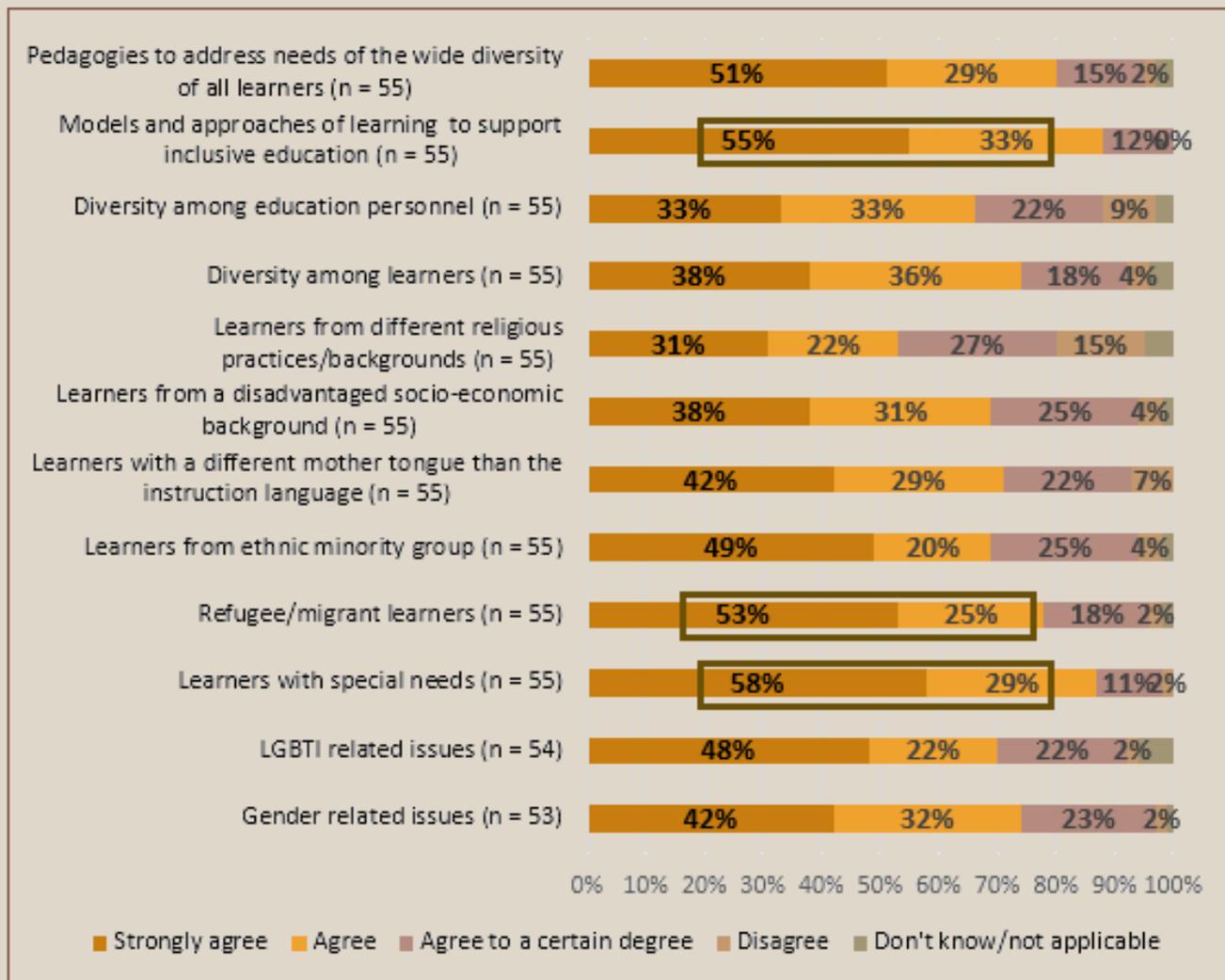
94%

93%

93%



Training needs of teachers, trainers, academics and other educational personnel



The role of Trade Unions in implementing inclusive education

1. Trade unions need to be involved in discussions and negotiations concerning all aspects of inclusive education, including:
 - All discussions related to **working conditions** of teachers and other educational personnel.
 - Discussions and negotiations about **shaping the initial and continuous professional development** of teachers and other education personnel
 - **Recruitment and retention** of teachers, reflecting the diversity in the education sector and society as a whole.
 - **Opportunities to exchange** with peers and other professionals who can provide support on the implementation of inclusive education.
 - Involvement of trade unions in discussions on **funding** of (inclusive) education (**how to spend money**).
2. Role of trade unions need to be clarified to novice teachers and other education personnel.
3. Views on diversity and inclusive education needs to be clearly expressed by trade unions.
4. Trade unions can take action in educational institutions where members have to deal with discrimination, harassment, bullying, racism.

Good practices ‘Diversity in education’

Variety of:

- **Specific campaigns/initiatives**, e.g. ‘Sexism at work’ (Flanders-B - 2020) – awareness raising among trade union personnel about the use and effect of gender stereotypes.
- **Campaigns**, e.g. ‘Education during a pandemic’ (Poland – 2020) offering support to teachers providing remote education.
- Publications/education **material**.
- **Research**.
- **Projects**, e.g. ‘Stereotypes and Prejudices’ (Portugal – 2020) to enhance discussions between students and the community about stereotypes and prejudices, ‘PACT’(Ireland – ongoing) equity related professional learning for teachers.
- **Policy frameworks and legislation**.



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