THE MANY FACETS OF DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

Diversity describes the range of human differences and variations, whether they are inherent (by birth) or acquired. Increasingly complex and diverse societies require more and targeted efforts to tackle all kinds of discrimination to improve equality and to use diversity as an asset. These efforts are especially important in education as it is a fundamental human right, i.e. every person has the right and the entitlement to education.

HOW DIVERSE IS OUR EDUCATION?

STUDENTS

- 34% of teachers in the EU work in schools with at least 10% of special needs students;
- 25% of teachers in the EU work in schools with at least 10% non-native-speaking students;
- 32% of teachers in the EU work in schools with at least 1% refugee students;
- 19% of teachers in the EU work in schools where more than 30% of students come from a socio-economically disadvantaged background.

EDUCATION PERSONNEL

- Low level of diversity of the teaching workforce in relation to migrant and/or minority background;
- Education personnel with disabilities experiencing difficulties in working conditions and access in workplaces;
- Women account for 68% of the teacher workforce, while only 47% of principals are women;
- Across OECD countries less than 15% of teachers are aged below 30 years, at all levels from primary to upper secondary.

CHALLENGES AFFECTING INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

- Technological progress and digitalisation. (n = 55)
- Under-resourcing of public education. (n = 55)
- Rising inequalities in living standards. (n = 56)
- Cyber security and data protection. (n = 56)
- Continuous increasing workload. (n = 56)
- Social and cultural diversity. (n = 55)
- Violence and harassment (including cyber-harassment). (n = 55)
WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

Inclusive education aims to allow all learners to achieve their full potential by providing good quality education to all in mainstream settings with special attention to learners at risk of exclusion and underachievement by actively seeking out to support them and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners, including through individualised approaches, targeted support and cooperation with the families and local communities (EC Training 2020 Working Group on Promoting Citizenship).

ADDRESSING DIVERSITY THROUGH EDUCATION

SHIFTS OF APPROACHES

- From homogeneity to heterogeneity and diversity;
- From ‘special needs education’ to ‘inclusive of everyone’s potential’, or ‘education for all’;
- Diversity from a deficit angle to an assets perspective;
- Intersectionality of the identity characteristics and experiences of learners is increasingly a topic of consideration.

IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN REGION

To what extent can you agree with the following statements that describe teaching and learning environments in your country/region with regard to inclusive education?

- Education social partners are consulted on all education policy reforms and developments at all levels. (n = 58)
  - 17% Strongly agree
  - 24% Agree
  - 31% Agree to a certain degree
  - 26% Disagree
  - 2% Don’t know/not applicable

- Support mechanisms are implemented to address teachers’, trainers’, academics’ and other education personnel’s individual needs (both in relation to their own development needs and teaching/learning).
  - 11% Strongly agree
  - 23% Agree
  - 32% Agree to a certain degree
  - 35% Disagree
  - 0% Don’t know/not applicable

- There are mechanisms and guidelines in place for cooperating with and educating parents/guardians, carers and families as valuable partners in promoting inclusion in education. (n = 58)
  - 11% Strongly agree
  - 23% Agree
  - 32% Agree to a certain degree
  - 35% Disagree
  - 0% Don’t know/not applicable

The concept of inclusion in education is sufficiently integrated in the initial and continuous professional development of teachers, trainers, academics and other education personnel. (n = 58)

- 11% Strongly agree
- 23% Agree
- 32% Agree to a certain degree
- 35% Disagree
- 0% Don’t know/not applicable