



Stakeholders together adapting ideas to readjust  
local systems to promote inclusive education

# EUROPEAN ADAPTATION GUIDELINES

## EXPLOITATION

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## 7. SUMMARISING LESSONS LEARNT

Summarising lessons learnt is an important process after the study visits have been concluded. This enables national teams to agree on key messages and takeaways based on the good practices of sharing countries. Even though at the study visit each actor learns on their own, the actors are part of national teams that are working towards a common goal.

The national teams meet (either online or in-person) to prepare the “**National JIGSAW**” (i.e. the national summary of the main lessons learnt based on each actor’s learning). The national summaries are compiled in a single document in a single structure to serve as a base for the national adaptation plan.

The national summaries should be gathered and uploaded to a section inside the common online course as part of the Learning Content Management System (LCMS) so that it is accessible to all study visit participants. Keep in mind that the national summary of one country can also be beneficial to another country’s learning process.

Quick tips on how to summarise lessons learnt:

- A short draft of the main lessons learnt should be made shortly after the study visit event. Learning diaries and self-reflection questionnaires can feed into this document.
- Lessons learnt should be connected but not limited to the country's learning needs. Broader lessons can be learned that go beyond learning needs defined at the beginning of the process.
- Lessons learnt by each participant can be grouped based on common themes (similarities between the lessons learnt of individual participants) and to provide an overview of which lessons have been mutually agreed upon.
- Agreed upon lessons learnt in the national teams should be the basis for the National Adaptation Plans.

### Supporting materials:

- [Users guide to prepare for a study visit and the adaptation process in the field of social inclusion \(Includes: National JIGSAW\)](#)
- National Summaries of lessons learned from Ireland and Portugal study visits
  - [Croatia](#)
  - [Czech Republic](#)
  - [Hungary](#)
  - [Slovenia](#)

### Case: National Summary of the lessons learned – Czech Republic

The Czech Republic summarised their lessons learned from the Irish study visit as follows.

The visit to Ireland revealed the following facts which we need to consider when creating inclusive education that is highly protective, individual, and respects the special educational needs of the pupil. We also have to think about the inclusion practices of the Roma students. In the Czech Republic, involvement of the social system should be at the forefront of inclusive practices, as well as cooperation with families. Furthermore, we identified the following topics in our lessons learnt that need to be worked on in the Czech Republic after the study visits:

- The need for further education of pedagogical staff (not only teachers but also teaching assistants and other professionals) who are involved in the education and training of pupils with SEN, as well as having close cooperation between parents and the social body – in our country the OSPOD (Authority for social and legal protection of children).
- DEIS tries to equalize the different „starting positions” of students. The question will be how to balance this starting position, and to ensure close cooperation with the social and health care system, schools, and families in the Czech Republic.
- The deprivation index is interesting as it evaluates the degree of disadvantage in particular areas – an interesting idea for implementation in the Czech Republic.
- Increasing the motivation for regular school attendance of pupils from different socio-cultural backgrounds – establishing communication channels between all involved stakeholders in the education and training of pupils with SEN.
- Providing effective support in accordance with the degree of disadvantage.
- Setting up cooperation between parents, schools, school counseling services, social departments, and the health care system.
- Establishing how to increase motivation for compulsory education and regular school attendance in vulnerable groups of students.
- Supporting children to develop their maximum potential with regards to their special educational needs.
- Developing an ethos of trust in special education for children and pupils with more severe forms of disability. Focusing on a highly professional approach and specialized educational methods, as well as providing career orientation support.
- Supporting further education of students when completing compulsory schooling and providing support for making responsible career choices.

## 8. PLANNING THE ADAPTATION OF GOOD PRACTICES

To plan for a successful implementation of good practices and lessons learnt in a learning country's national context, it is essential to keep in mind three key areas:

- National Adaptation Plans
- National Discussion Forums
- Wider Dissemination and Exploitation

The three areas enable lessons learnt from abroad to be transferred to each individual country's context.

### ***National Adaptation Plan (NAP)***

The **National Adaptation Plans** represent plans for adaptation based on the mutual learning process and are based on the lessons learnt from the learning event.

The development of the NAP requires the input of all national team members involved in the study visits. Critical thinking, effective communication among stakeholders, and exchanging different perspectives are crucial when formulating the NAP. This is needed because of the demanding adaptation of the good practices to the particularities of the respective national context. The **NAP Template** aims to aid this process by structuring the planning and writing of the national adaptation plan. The **NAP Concept Paper** further elaborates on the structure of the template.

Quick tips on how to prepare the NAP

- A starting point for writing and compiling the NAP can be posing the following question: "How can we use the lessons learnt from the good practices to address a learning need and develop an intervention or a set of recommendations that can be supported on policy level?".
- The NAP should be built on the work having been previously done as part of the Country Report (i.e. the defined learning needs) and also, on national lessons learnt from the learning event.
- Carefully consider the purpose of your NAP at the beginning (i.e. do you wish to adapt a specific good practice, policy framework in the national context, or is it a set of recommendations that are brief but open up possibilities for initiatives in the future).

- The NAP can be developed in the form of recommendations for the national education system or in the form of steps (i.e. an action plan) on how to incorporate lessons learnt in the national context.
- When writing the NAP, it is recommended to consult the good practice case studies, the Country Report, and the additional documentation available from the study visits (learning diaries, self-reflection questionnaires, etc.).

### ***National Discussion Forums***

National Discussion Forums are expert forums, where a wide range of invited participants have the opportunity to discuss the good practices and explore national adaptation opportunities presented in NAP. They are organised by national teams and aim to connect with stakeholders that have not participated in the learning process.

Quick tips on how to organise discussion forums:

- Carefully consider the purpose of the National discussion forum (possible purposes include: presentation of the national adaptation plan and discussion about the possibilities of its implementation in the national context; connecting stakeholders to plan future initiatives based on lessons learnt and national adaptation plans; connecting stakeholders to discuss and foster policy changes or policy formulation).
- National discussion forums can be held in different formats (e.g. presentation and Q&A sessions, working in smaller groups, networking sessions).
- Assess the target group for the discussion forums (i.e. policy level decisions makers, researchers, academics, school principals, teachers). The target group depends on the type of the national adaptation plan and what aims are to be achieved by implementing a discussion forum.
- Issue invitations to the national discussion forum and accompanying documentation (e.g. national adaptation plan) well in advance to garner interest amongst stakeholders. It is also important to give them enough time to read the documentation and prepare for the discussion forum. This maximises the potential of the discussion forum.
- If required, prepare a summary of the main conclusions emanating from the discussion forums to further assist the adaptation process.

## ***Wider Dissemination and Exploitation***

It is important to disseminate the knowledge and information acquired during the adaptation process in the national learning context. Thus, it is important to have a strong dissemination strategy in place that enables the upscaling of the lessons learnt and the adaptation process to a wider audience. The **STAIRS Dissemination Plan Template** has been developed to plan to reach a wider audience.

Quick tips on how to disseminate widely and exploit fully:

- Plan dissemination channels (e.g. e-mail lists, social media posts such as Facebook or Twitter, institution website posts, and press releases).
- Identify the target audience and plan how to reach them.
- Dissemination activities can lead to or follow up a main learning and adaptation process activity or event (e.g. study visits/learning event, summarised lessons learnt, national adaptation plan).
- Create a project homepage with the projects' outputs.
- Produce printed materials such as flyers, booklets, information brochures, etc.
- Use research results and experts' conclusions in preparation of methodologies of workshops.
- Organise knowledge exchange events for stakeholders and experts.
- Organise discussion forums to share findings and results.
- Prepare papers, posters, and presentations for conferences.
- Compile articles, book chapters, etc. based on research findings emerging from the project.
- Report to Governing Authorities in your country.

### **Supporting materials:**

- National Adaptation Plans
  - [Croatia](#)
  - [Czech Republic](#)
  - [Hungary](#)
  - [Slovenia](#)
- [National Adaptation Plan Template](#)
- [National Adaptation Plan Concept Paper](#)
- The STAIRS National Dissemination Plan Template (See Annex 1.)

## Case: Discussion forum in Croatia

A discussion forum on Promoting Inclusive Education and Improving the Education of Vulnerable Social Groups - Experiences and Recommendations from the STAIRS Project was held online on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022. During the Forum, activities and results of the STAIRS project were presented and the participating experts held lectures: doc. dr. sc. Nikolina Žajdela Hrustek, prof. dr. sc. Kirinić Valentina Kirinić, doc.dr.sc. Zlatko Bukvić, and Marijana Dodigović, prof. and B.Sc. psychologist.

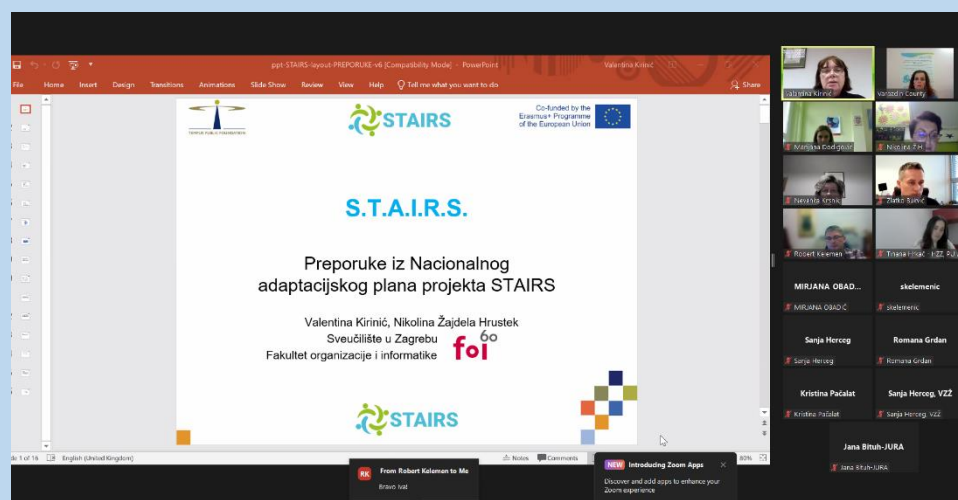
The presentations were followed by a half-hour Q&A session. The main conclusions from the forum can be summarised as follows:

*“Inclusive policy is at a high level in our country, it is declaratively positive, but it needs a ‘push’. We have very good regulations, many examples of good practices of sensitisation for students with disabilities and implementation of educational inclusion, but altogether needs to be more systematised and harmonised. Especially, when it comes to implementation of laws and recommendations. Also, all procedures should be monitored and measured in order to improve results and ensure active cooperation of all stakeholders. Efforts to improve inclusive education should be supported by all stakeholders, especially at the local level, using all the resources we have.”*

The forum was attended by all members of the STAIRS team, representatives of the Croatian Employment Service, Public Institutions for Regional Development of Varaždin County, numerous secondary and primary schools and universities with pedagogical departments and Varaždin County.

The Forum was recorded and it is now, along with all materials, available online for participants who weren't able to join: <https://www.varazdinska-zupanija.hr/vijesti/stairs-forum-dobra-regulativa-i-praksa-nedostaje-uskladivanje-ceka-se-zamah.html>

Figure 6: Snapshot of the Croatian discussion forum



## 9. PLANNING AND MANAGING THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

While planning the adaptation of good practices is an important task to consider, even more attention is recommended to be given to the process of managing *mindset change*. In the STAIRS, we have set out to build upon existing good practices of providing social inclusion in education. However, achieving social inclusion in education requires substantially more than just adapting good practices, it requires all stakeholders (i.e. policy makers, school leaders, teachers, counsellors, students, parents) to accept *an ethos of providing each student with opportunities to obtain equal outcomes*, especially in regards to vulnerable groups of students.

Change management is often the key component in driving the success of any venture. However, change initiatives are not all equally disruptive. Some will have a greater impact and be more challenging. Others may be barely noticeable. The NAP Concept Paper has precisely considered this possibility of change, indicating that the recommendations for adapting policies/best practices should be those that best adapt to the national context, without changes, as they can be adopted directly, or modified to better suit them.

To provide for the successful adaptation of a policy, initiative, and/or project, change management is often a key component. The **Change Management Toolkit (CMT)** has been created to help foster change amongst stakeholders. It is a set of proven tools and techniques to aid the individual in managing change. The toolkit can be used when planning or realising the national adaptation plans in national contexts.

Since there are many complexities involved in executing a change initiative, both change management and project management components are required. Sometimes change management and project management are mistaken to be the same, but they are two complementary yet different disciplines. Both use formal processes, tools, and techniques to plan for the change, manage the change, and sustain the change. While change management focuses on ensuring the support of the people, project management focuses on tasks to be executed. Coupled together, pro-active change management and project management will lead to the actualisation of the benefits of the change initiative.

Thus, the CMT of the STAIRS has considered the change management generically recommended in the NAPs, giving special emphasis to the role of people, since the common denominator to achieve success for all change initiatives is *people*. Therefore, the CMT is divided into two parts: a conceptual part, addressing issues of change for fostering social inclusion in and through education; and an instrumental one, presenting a set of tools that are considered useful to carry out the change foreseen in the NAPs. These tools have been selected considering who the recommendations in the NAPs are addressed to (policy makers, school leaders, teachers, educational experts, academics, researchers, parents, students, etc.)



and should put those recommendations into practice. Some of the tools are meant to be used by specific change agents and others to be used by everyone involved in a change process, as the diagram below shows.

Quick tips on how to use the CMT:

- Evaluate your NAPs, and consider how you can divide your adaptation plans into change management and project management processes.
- Consider what kind of *mindset change* is needed to successfully implement your planned adaptation, and which tools can aid you in this process.

**Supporting materials:**

- [Change Management Toolkit](#)

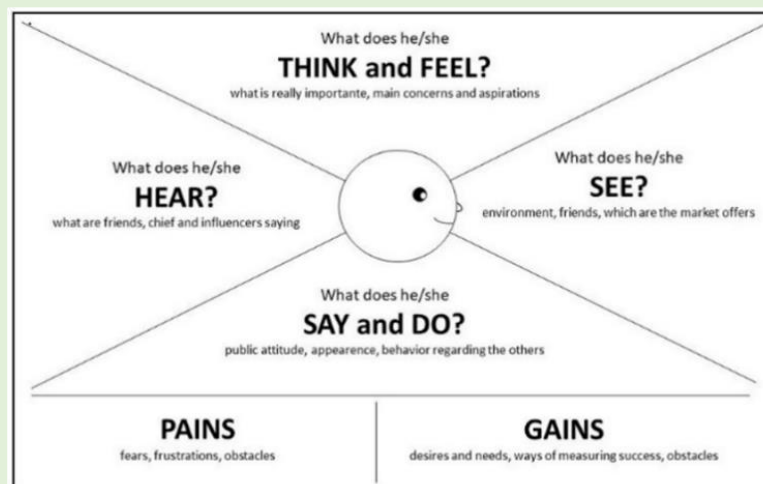
## Example: Tool from the Change Management Toolkit (CMT)

### Tool #3. Empathy Map

To make a change in education, such as those foreseen in the NAPs, demands to begin with the process for the deeper understanding of the people coming to carry it out. To gain these insights, it is important for the leaders of the change process to empathise with the implementers so that the leaders can understand the implementers needs, thoughts, emotions, and motivations. For that, the „Empathy Map” (EM) stands out as an adequate instrument to collect data. The Empathy Map is a “design thinking” tool and it was created with a specific set of ideas and is intended as a framework to complement an exercise in developing empathy.

A vast literature points out that about 70% of change processes fail due to the lack of engagement from people responsible for carrying it out. So, it is not enough to communicate well, it is necessary to get the implementers involved. And engaging with people reveals a tremendous amount about the way they think and the values they hold. A deep engagement can surprise both the leaders of a change process and the implementers by the unanticipated insights that are different from what they do – are strong indicators of their deeply held beliefs about the way the world is. So, following the Communication Plan (Tool #2), EMs shall be filled in by the implementers and the content analysed by the leaders of the change process.

Figure 7: Empathy Map Template



Adapted from <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/empathy-mapping/>

## 10. SYNTHESISING AND UPSCALING THE BENEFITS OF THE SHARING AND THE LEARNING PROCESS TO THE WIDER EU COMMUNITY

The STAIRS project has enabled six EU countries to intensively work together in partnership to share and learn from good practices in the field of education to strengthen social inclusion to support policy reform(s) across the EU. For this purpose, based on the learning experiences of the STAIRS project, the messages, which have synthesised individual lessons learnt from all partner countries, have been formulated to enable key findings to be distilled and incorporated in various initiatives or policy planning at the EU level. Thus, attention has been devoted to identifying where to emphasise further development of initiatives in the field (see below).

Even though the adaptation process is part of a mutually learning framework, national teams learn and develop possible adaptations of lessons learnt independently from each other. Thus, they can have substantially different views on what can be adapted according to their country's contexts. This is essentially a cultural and contextual issue that always needs to be kept in mind when adapting policies and initiatives from other countries, even from EU countries. However, even though countries have different starting points and contexts' concerning social inclusion, similar themes of lessons learnt from all participating countries can be distilled to generalise lessons to provide policy messages for the EU level that can benefit all member states. This enables a policy learning process to not only benefit individual countries but also benefit the common framework that links participating countries together (i.e. the EU).

Quick tips on how to provide recommendations and policy messages for other countries and the EU:

- Gather perspectives from all national teams on what the key findings are in the adaptation process.
- Group proposals together based on similar content.
- Prepare a proposal incorporating all national perspectives on lessons learnt.
- Schedule an international webinar with all partners for interested parties from any Member State. Beforehand, agree on lessons learnt and key policy messages to be forwarded by the partnership to the audience.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUPPORTING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN EUROPE

Taking into consideration the project results and existing EU agenda in the field of strengthening social inclusion in education, the STAIRS project has identified the following key topics (messages), which are important to respect in order to follow the EU goals concerning social inclusion in education:

- a) Strengthening sensitivity to social inclusion in education among key actors at the EU and national level (policy decision-makers, experts, practitioners).
- b) Establishing an appropriate policy framework at the EU level (Resolutions, Conclusions, Recommendations) and national level (laws, regulations, procedures), which would ensure the equal educational opportunities of diverse learners to be respected.
- c) Updating initial and continuous professional development of teachers and define teacher competencies frameworks required to strengthen social inclusiveness of education.
- d) Designing problem-based education and lifelong curriculum, which would allow diverse learners to acquire the right competencies to be successfully integrated in society and the labour market.
- e) Building a strong quality assurance system in order to maintain and constantly improve quality and effectiveness of inclusive education.
- f) Enhancing opportunities and abilities of the system to learn, network and exchange good practices.

