



STAIRS MOOC - Book of Modules

**Learn to do more - How to foster policy-related learning
to achieve meaningful change towards inclusive
education?**

INTRODUCTION

STAIRS – STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER ADAPTING IDEAS TO READJUST LOCAL SYSTEMS
TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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INTRODUCTION TO THE STAIRS MOOC

[The STAIRS project](#) (*Stakeholders Together Adapting Ideas to Readjust Local Systems to Promote Inclusive Education*) aims to support national, regional, and local stakeholders who are working to promote inclusive education and training through a process of learning and adapting multi-agency initiatives based in other European countries. The STAIRS MOOC: *Learn to do more - How to foster policy-related learning to achieve meaningful change towards inclusive education?* aimed shine a light upon and promote social inclusion through education by documenting good practice exemplars which were particularly based upon multi-agency collaboration. This MOOC has been created by 7 institutions from Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, and Slovenia within the STAIRS project (*Stakeholders Together Adapting Ideas to Readjust Local Systems to Promote Inclusive Education*). The MOOC takes the learner on a journey through modules that focus on policy and policy makers and the policy context of inclusion in education, schools and practitioners, vocational education, and special education initiatives. The MOOC also focuses on the impact of key agents of change such as policy makers, teachers, and other education practitioners in promoting and sustaining an inclusive ethos. The final part of the journey examines the task of change management and adapting initiatives at national, regional, and European level. The MOOC specifically examines the process of managing mindset change and explains the change management toolkit which was devised as part of the STAIRS project. The Change Management Toolkit (CMT) can be used by stakeholders who are interested in transforming education through multi-agency inclusive initiatives. Throughout the modules, a range of initiatives from Ireland and Portugal are used as exemplars of good practice. The modules plot their impact on tackling social and educational exclusion through multi-agency collaboration. It also explores how selected countries (Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia & Czechia) created their own national adaptation plans based on adapting elements of the Irish and Portuguese initiatives. It is hoped that by participating in the STAIRS MOOC, educators and policy makers will gain new knowledge and insights into the types of multi-agency collaboration that best promotes and sustains social and education inclusion for all citizens.

The STAIRS MOOC examines social inclusion measures targeted at marginalised and excluded communities and includes projects from pre-school to further education and training. Learners who engage with the STAIRS MOOC will gain insight from a wide variety of initiatives targeted at children and young people from marginalised backgrounds, those who are at risk of early school leaving or those who have left formal schooling without formal qualifications. There is also a focus on the link between early school leaving and SEN. The goal of the project is not only to document exemplars of good practice that address social exclusion and marginalisation, but also to find initiatives that fit target groups the best

and which lend themselves to be adapted in another country. The project will document the planning that underpins the process of adapting an initiative, taking into consideration different policy, education, and national contexts. The adaptation plans will document not only the process of adapting initiatives but will also serve as a basis of upscaling project results to other countries in Europe. Engaging with the MOOC will enable the learner to explore how the STAIRS project designed activities to support the development of country adaptation plans. They will be guided through this process and will gain insight into the types of knowledge sharing that is required to extend inclusive practices beyond country borders. It provides a general framework for replicating and adapting education initiatives, whilst recognising specific national, regional, and local contexts. It will also document the kinds of adjustments and modifications that must be made for successful adaptation. It will also outline the types of policy changes that are required to ensure these education initiatives can be replicated as smoothly as possible in other European countries.

This document provides a detailed outline of each of the modules contained in the STAIRS MOOC. It documents for each module, the recommended ECT, and a brief overview of the aims and syllabus. It also outlines the learning outcomes and indicative study resources. The main body of the document provides the detail underpinning each lesson and associated assessments. It is hoped this document will be used as a guide for academics, policy makers etc. when designing modules and/or courses on topics such as multi-agency partnership in education, inclusive education, adapting and upscaling educational initiatives, and change management. The following pages document the content underpinning each module. The module syllabus, learning outcomes, study resources and assessment are documented.

Introductory Module

Introduction

This module provides an overview of the [STAIRS project](#), the objectives of the MOOC and a brief outline of the individual modules. It will detail what the learner should expect from engaging with the STAIRS MOOC (knowledge, Skills & Attitudes). The module will provide background information on the STAIRS project and will document the key outputs arising from the project. It will outline the aims and objectives of the project, particularly the multi-agency and policy level focus. It will provide background information on the six European partners and their focus (primary, post-primary, VET etc.) It will describe the evolution of the good practice grid and the Irish and Portuguese case studies which used as exemplars of good practice inclusive initiatives throughout the MOOC. It will also elaborate on the role of the study visits and the process of self-reflection, development of the national adaption planning process and upscaling to European Adaption Guidelines that emanated from the study visits. It will also detail the process of change management and the change management toolkit.

Syllabus

This module will provide an overview of the STAIRS project and its key aims and objectives. It will emphasise the multi-agency focus as a key response to addressing social exclusion and marginalisation in education. It will outline and explore the good practice guidelines and how the guidelines assisted the selection of case studies which demonstrated optimum multi-agency collaboration and partnership in Ireland and Portugal. The module will also document the study visits which facilitated a deep exploration of the various components of the case studies, and the subsequent work which emanated from the study visit period – discussions, learning diaries and self-reflection questionnaires. It will outline the process of adapting the case studies and the role of the national adaption template. The upscaling from the national adaption plans to European Adaption Guidelines will also be explored. It will describe the process of change management and explain the Change Management Toolkit. Finally, this module will summarise the key findings from the STAIRS project and particularly, the recommendations targeted at local, regional, national, and European policy makers.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1 Cognitive: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation

- Understand the aims and objectives of the STAIRS project, and the multi-agency approach to addressing social exclusion and marginalisation in education.
- Critically reflect on the key issues underpinning a Good Practice Grid.
- Evaluate the significance of adapting and upscaling national projects.
- Examine the role change management plays in initiating educational and social change.

2 Affective: Attitude and Values

- Value the development of communities of practice which underpin effective cross-national collaboration.
- Value policy makers and other key stakeholders in the educational field and the role they play in addressing educational exclusion and marginalisation.
- Appreciate the complex nature of adapting and upscaling national project.
- Appreciate the impact of change management on initiating positive social and educational change.

1 **The STAIRS Project** (*Stakeholders Together Adapting Ideas to Readjust Local Systems to promote Inclusive Education*):

- was a collaborative, learning project involving seven institutions from six European countries.
- lasted three years and four months.
- focussed on the upscaling of good practice in inclusion, and social inclusion, in particular.
- employed a variety of rich research resources including identification of good practice and determination of status quo in partner countries.
- by means of rigorous scrutiny of recognised good practice through ‘virtual’ study visits developed national adaptation plans.
- scrutinised inclusion phenomena ranging from literacy initiatives to vocational education and training, and lifelong learning.
- generated a great deal of data (some still to be mined further and exploited).
- adopted, adapted, and created investigative instruments and used technology to overcome unforeseen barriers.
- produced a toolkit for change management, European Adaptation Guidelines, and a seven-module MOOC.

The project examined and explored existing meaningful and inclusive, high-quality educational opportunities where those rights of the learners (and those around them) are afforded active participation in society. The main focus was on upscaling available knowledge of good, inclusive policy and practice into more effective policy and practice elsewhere.

The project rationale: Effective learning about good practice leads to change and improvement in practice and thus the more who know about and are involved in knowing about such the greater the overall upscaling is likely to be.

The Project Vision: local systems being active in supporting prevention, intervening, and compensating for social inequality.

At each stage of the project, knowledge gathering, knowledge exchange and knowledge transfer and how knowledge might be applied all took place. Knowledge, per se, is not enough for learning to have occurred. Reflection on what had been perceived needed time for absorption and consideration of contextual relevance and potential application.

Phase	Aim	Step
Research and analyses	Desk research was conducted to define learning needs in the national context of learning countries and to establish good practice case studies for the policy learning process. This aspect of the process also included the use of a Good Practice Grid, which outlines the key criteria underpinning good practice initiatives, especially initiatives that involve a multi-agency response. An analysis of the good practices was made by the learning countries to preliminarily determine what good practices could potentially help answer, and best fit the defined learning needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identifying national challenges 2) Finding sharing partners 3) Searching for good practices
Mutual learning	Learning event(s) (e.g., study visits) were organized to share and learn from the identified good practice initiatives. Exchanges of practical knowledge, discussions and networking amongst stakeholders were at the forefront (at both the learning events and afterward in an online forum format) to gather vital information and key insights for implementing lessons learned in the national context.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4) Preparing for study visits 5) Planning study visits 6) Implementing study visits
Exploitation	National teams of experts and stakeholders developed proposals and/or recommendations for the implementation of the lessons learned in their own national context. By following the policy learning process, key insights from all national teams were combined to exploit lessons learned further at the	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7) Summarising lessons learnt 8) Planning the adaptation of good practices 9) Planning and managing the process of change

	European level.	10) Synthesising and upscaling lessons to the wider EU community
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The STAIRS Good Practice Grid

One of the first tasks of the Stairs project was to identify exemplars which demonstrated effective multi-agency collaboration in education, and which were focussed specifically on addressing educational exclusion, marginalisation, and disadvantage. We were keen to select exemplars that could be adapted in other European countries. To select exemplars, it was important to have an agreed understanding of multi-agency collaboration and, how to identify effective multi-agency collaboration. At the start of our deliberations, we posed several key questions:

What do we mean by multi-agency collaboration?

What is effective multi-agency collaboration?

How do we identify good multi-agency practice in education (good practice that specifically challenges exclusion, marginalisation, and disadvantage)?

We took an evidence-based approach in answering these questions, and in the process devised 40 indicators/criteria that could be used to show evidence of multi-agency collaboration. These indicators can be used to identify good practice multi-agency collaboration, by posing the question: 'Is there evidence of...?'

We then devised a *Good Practice Grid* to enable us to identify to what extent there is evidence of each criterion. We developed three divisions to evaluate each criterion: a lot of evidence, some evidence, and no evidence. On further consideration, it was felt that while the individual criteria are useful on their own, there was also a need for a more meaningful thematic grid. There was also a lot of similarity between some criteria. Therefore, after further deliberation and evaluation, the 40 criteria were subdivided into six broad thematic areas:

- Policy context of the initiative (which includes the policy underpinning the initiative –

including the historical foundation);

- Funding (how the initiative is funded);
- Schools and Institutional (e.g. higher education, teacher education, private enterprise etc.)

involvement;

- Practitioners (history of working together, communication, management of project/initiative (internal organisation));
- Collaboration (opportunities for agencies to come together to share ideas and explore/discuss/identify good practice);
- Professional Development (opportunities for teachers and practitioners etc. to gain new skills, knowledge or dispositions and/or avail of CPD from the initiative).

Once we were satisfied with the criteria and overarching thematic areas, we used the Good Practice Grid to select the Irish and Portuguese good practice case studies. The Good Practice Grid was also used by the learning countries to evaluate the selected case studies from their own national context, and to assist in refining additional questions in areas into which the country wished to gain more insight into. The learning countries were then tasked with evaluating the Irish and Portuguese case studies in the context of potential adaption. Assessing the potential for adaption, the Good Practice Grids enabled the learning countries to answer three crucial questions:

What have you found that was directly useful to you and could be broadly replicated?

What, though with some difficulty, could be adapted or expanded to suit your needs and how?

What, though of interest, would be unworkable within your contextual needs and why?

The Good Practice Grid therefore enabled the selection, comparison, and evaluation of multi-agency collaboration. It was also invaluable in assessing the suitability of multi-agency initiatives for adaption. It has therefore, a wide range of uses within the context of assessing European multi-agency collaboration for inclusion.

The Country Reports

In the STAIRS project, learning countries such as the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, and Slovenia identified their *needs and demands* summarised in individual Country Reports. These countries in their relatively new or re-newed (post-1989) states have a different history in relation to inclusive education. Multi-professional collaboration, for example, in this field is still developing. Preparing country reports was an important part of the learning process to become aware of current situation regarding inclusive education in participating countries. Country reports in the STAIRS project served as background materials for the partnership so partners might better understand the education system of the learning countries from the perspective of *inclusion* and *equity*. Drafts were presented at the second partnership meeting in Croatia and final versions completed and were posted on the project. The focus was particularly on policy level equity and inclusive education issues, interventions, and good practice measures with the aim of eliciting what more was needed to be learned to improve the status quo.

Good Practice Case Studies

The main purpose of STAIRS is to promote social inclusion through educational good practices which are particularly based upon multi-agency collaboration. The Irish and Portuguese partners were tasked with identifying examples of what appeared to promote good practice in combating inequality in education and training. The Good Practice Grid helped identify and recognise 'Good Practice' across a variety of context. The Irish partner identified five case studies that they felt were good exemplars of social inclusion initiatives to show case:

- DEIS (Primary)
- Limerick DEIS Primary Schools' Literacy Initiative
- Youthreach Programme
- Special Education Initiative
- Transforming Education Through Dialogue (TED) Project

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The Portuguese partner identified the following case studies as good exemplars of social inclusion initiatives:

- TEIP initiative (specific focus on José Saramago Cluster of School & Santo António School Cluster)
- Portuguese Inclusive education model
- EduGep Project
- IVET model

Virtual Study Visits

Policy makers (national and regional), teachers and other practitioners from partner countries visited Limerick and Lisbon in 2020 to gain more knowledge about the good practice initiatives and to ascertain ways in which the selected initiatives could be adapted for their own region or national system. They were also tasked with keeping and developing a Learner Diary that was used to reflect on key learning from the study visits and to assist in the process of adapting selected case studies to their own national, regional and/or local contexts.

Three STAIRS project products enabled upscaling in principle and in practice:

- **Change Management Toolkit:** *The Change Management Toolkit (CMT)* is a collection of tools on how to achieve change in education. It was one of the outputs of the STAIRS project.
- **European Adaptation Guidelines:** *The European Adaptation Guidelines (EAG)* summarises and shares the key findings of the learning process of the project with the wider EU community involved, dedicated, and interested in ensuring more equitable education environments across the EU. It is particularly addressed to experts and practitioners, as well as national and international decision-makers in the field.
- **Massive Open Online Course:** The MOOC was developed to showcase the STAIRS

project, its aims and key outcomes and outputs.

Summary

The main goal of the STAIRS project is disseminating and upscaling good practices currently in place in Portugal and Ireland (sharing countries in the project) in the field of social inclusion and the examination of the adaptation process in the learning countries (Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia). One of the essential aims of the STAIRS was to select good practice initiatives that displayed effective multi-agency partnerships to address a particular community or need on promoting inclusion through and in education. For that purpose, a set of activities were developed, and documents produced, such as the Good Practice Grid, 'Case Studies of Good Practices' by the sharing countries and 'Country Reports' by the learning partners to identify learning needs to promote inclusion in their contexts. Those documents having been produced, the learning activities taken place, preparation for the study visits to Ireland and Portugal, as well as their implementation. Then, new knowledge acquired by the national teams of learning partners were identified, as well as the part of that knowledge that could eventually be adapted to each national context. It was in that phase of the process that National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) emerged, which drew upon the potential adaptation of policies and practices based on lessons learned to the respective contexts. The National Adaption Guidelines were then upscaled into the European Adaption Guidelines. Key to the adaption process is the recognition that transformation does not occur without a willingness to explore alternative education practice. Indeed, the central facet determining positive outcomes for the STAIRS project is the mind and attitude change the project is seeking to bring about. Learners (policy makers, state or regional government, educational officials, teacher educators, school leaders, schoolteachers etc.) must be willing to embrace change and uncertainty, collaboratively work together, think outside the box, be willing to adapt and reconsider taken for granted beliefs and practices, and provide funding to confront and address educational inequality. The multi- and inter-agency collaborative philosophy is a central component of the STAIRS project, along with the process of change management.

Module Study Resources

- [Good Practice Grid](#)
- [Good Practice Case Studies from Ireland and Portugal](#)
- [Good practice case study template](#)
- [Country reports from Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and Czechia](#)
- [National Adaption Plan Concept Paper](#)
- [National Adaption Plan Template](#)
- [European Adaption Guidelines](#)
- [Template of the Self-reflection Questionnaire](#)
- [Learning Diary Template](#)
- [Change Management Toolkit](#)