

# Summary of the Hungarian National Adaptation Plan

## 1) Presentation of the National Adaptation Plan (purpose, topics addressed, structure)

*Hungarian experts participating in the study visits organised in the framework of the STAIRS project have set themselves the goal of learning about models that can contribute to the realisation of, or achieve the following:*

*In order to accommodate disadvantaged groups and increase their chances of learning and social mobility, they should be able to provide*

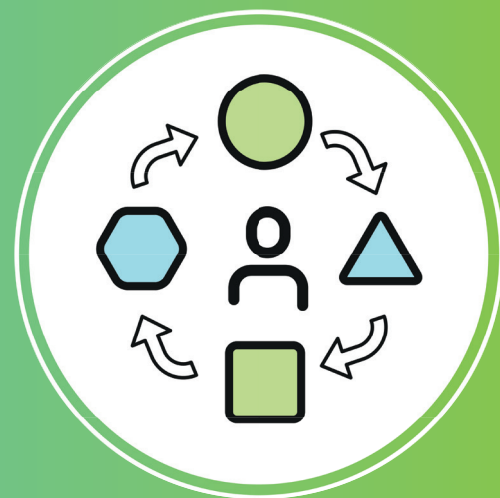
- a) the alignment of interventions in support of the target group with a professionally consensual, long-term and cross-governmental strategy, as no rapid change can be achieved in this area;
- b) system-wide coherence of interventions - in order to add development effects to expenditure;
- c) promoting the continuous building and networking of the approach as well as the expertise needed to successfully complete the task;
- d) cooperation between stakeholders in order to support the target group as effectively as possible.

The models should also contribute to the reduction of prejudice in the majority society, and in particular in teachers, and they should help strengthen the culture of cooperation in the communities at different levels of the country.



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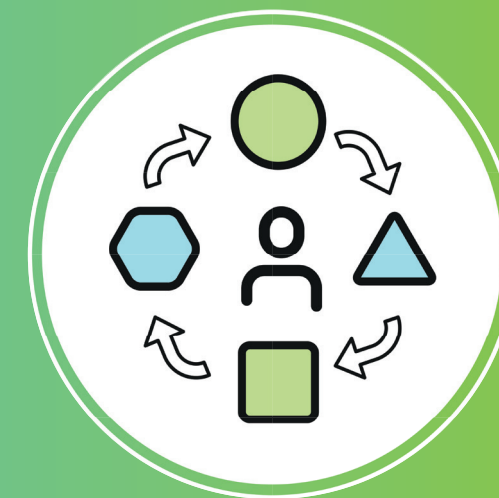


Our experts represented various fields related to the topic of inclusion in education. Their professional competencies complement each other and, overall, cover the most important content directions for the STAIRS project.

**Petra Földes** is a teacher at an adult education institution. Young people graduating this institution will become pedagogical assistants, childcare workers and helpers of young people with special educational needs. In addition to her teaching work, she is the editor of the journal titled *Új Pedagógiai Szemle (New Pedagogical Review)* and a board member of OFOE (*the National Professional Association of Form Teachers*). This NGO organises conferences, participates in research and development projects, and has been running a website for many years to help educators work with practical advice.

**Enikő Gönczöl** is an employee of the Edunet Foundation dealing with research and the development of educational programmes. For over two decades, she has worked in several national institutions as a project manager, educational researcher, and developer of curricula and programmes for students and teachers. Her activities have often been related to the topic of social inclusion, the fight against exclusion, and the development of personal and social competences. She is also the author of textbooks in the fields of history, social studies, civics and ethics.

**Eszter Szegedi** is currently the school leader of a school in a settlement near Budapest. Until 2019, she worked as the unit head of the Knowledge Centre of the Tempus Public Foundation. She was responsible for coordinating a number of international and domestic projects in the EU-initiated Education and Training 2010 and 2020 work programmes. She has 25 years of teaching, research and development experience. Her main areas of interest are European policy, social exclusion and the prevention of early school leaving. Together with her colleagues, she is now working on an early warning system at the institutional level because more and more of their students are with learning difficulties, special educational needs and related problems.



Main questions of the experts when getting prepared in advance for the study visits were the following:

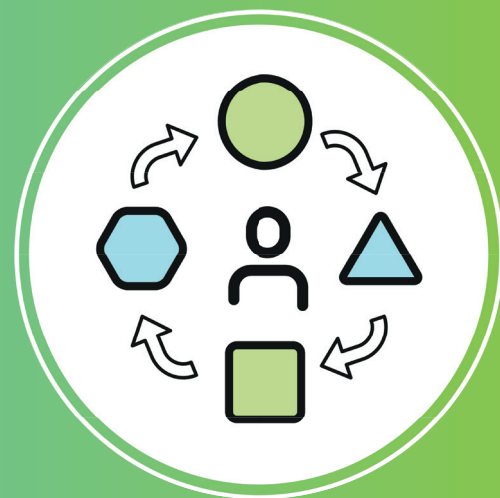
- How can the staff of a school be made sensitive to issues of social inclusion?
- How can the various actors - researchers, government staff and practitioners - successfully collaborate and work together?
- How can the Irish and Portuguese partners build bridges between research results and everyday practice in education?
- How do they create a strong partnership between homes and schools? How do they work with families?
- How do networks of school leaders and teachers work to share experiences and solve problems related to the project theme?
- In their experience, what are the opportunities for learning online?

Their main focus was on understanding policy-level processes. The project and the study visits focused on presenting specific good practices, thus, the policy framework mostly became visible in presentations only as a context. The Irish DEIS and the Portuguese TEIP programmes, as well as the New School Inclusion Law of 2018 (Law Decree DL 54-2018) presented in connection with the latter, were on the agenda of the meetings as a complex policy good practice.

One of the important topics was the question of the enrollment system in Irish DEIS schools, the composition of pupils and the distribution of pupils in need between schools. Based on the responses received, these appear to be special institutions in lagging, segregated areas whose network has been set up to promote social inclusion and whose composition of students is more or less homogeneous.

In the case of the Portuguese New School Inclusion Law, issues related to the implementation process remained open, which makes it partly understandable that only a short time has passed since the legislation was enacted.

It had to be seen that it was not possible to go beyond this in the analysis of the given situation, but the answer shed light upon the philosophy of change. At the same time, with further orientation, the

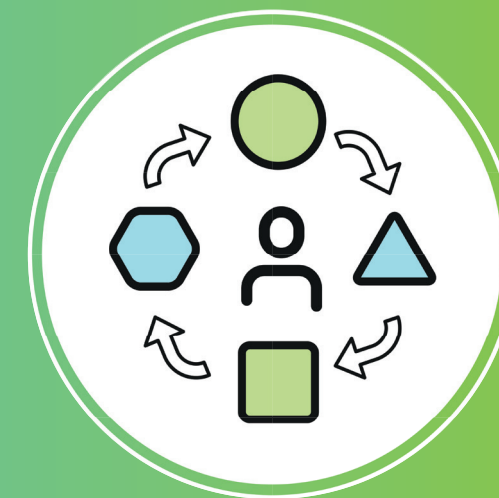


difficulties of adaptation are also revealed. Recent research by a professional teacher organisation, for example, has shown that the number of initial and in-service teacher training courses and opportunities is limited in the field of special educational needs, and one of the reasons for this may be that the reduction of special education limits and discourages training providers in this field. The trend is particularly problematic because in the comprehensive model of inclusion, compared to the segregated one, the need for special skills is greater rather than lower. It is hard to imagine that teachers with general training will be able to cope with the diversity of SEN students without special training.

Another recent study highlights that there is no professional consensus in judging the move to formally delete the concept of special educational need from the pedagogical dictionary. There are those who believe this could run the risk of simply “forgetting” certain problems. One educators’ union (Federação Nacional da Educação, FNE) therefore proposes a return to the concept of SNI – in order to be able to identify differences between children and respond appropriately to the different needs of students. In this context, however, it is important to note that these types of criticisms are inherent in the implementation process.

In conclusion, it must be seen that virtual study visits can serve as the beginning of learning about policy processes, and they can provide many lessons for Hungarian policy makers. A deeper analysis of the DEIS programme could provide inputs primarily to help the inclusion of disadvantaged children from deprived communities. The lessons learnt from the implementation of the new Portuguese Inclusive Education Act are mainly for the development of inclusive education for children with disabilities.

While in their own bundle, both models treat these two areas in a unified pedagogical system.



## 2) Proposals for ensuring (more) social inclusion in education in Hungary

### *Suggested intervention focuses*

#### **Social dimension**

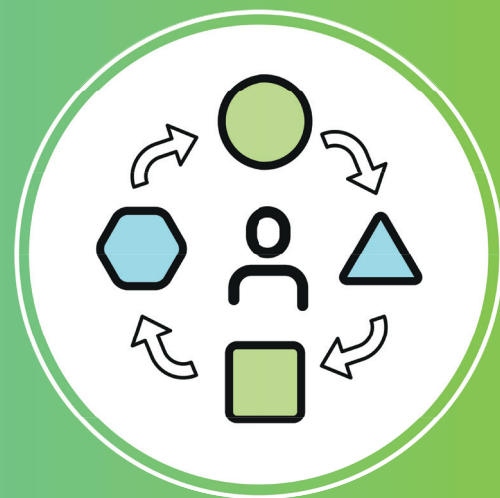
- Commitment to education policy for inclusion is a prerequisite for a successful shift. This requires conducting professional debates about the origins of school disadvantage and interpreting the results to decision-makers.
- The success of inclusion efforts depends on the openness of the community. To this end, it is important to sensitise local communities, which can be achieved by strengthening and supporting civil and ecclesiastical actors and opinion formers.

#### **Regulatory environment**

- There should be a professional debate on diagnosis-centered care and a rethinking of the needs of vulnerable learners with educational disadvantages. A regulatory environment needs to be developed that guarantees that all students have access to support according to their needs.

#### **Professional conditions**

- There is a need to network different professions, to share their knowledge, to find synergies between professionals at the institutional, inter-institutional and scientific (higher education) levels. It would be fortunate to have a full-fledged, not just “travelling” presence of educators (non-teachers) in the teaching staff.
- In this context, it would be necessary to rethink the forms of cooperation. For example, special education educators could act as professional supporters for majority educators, based on familiar models, and development educators could be given a broader mandate.



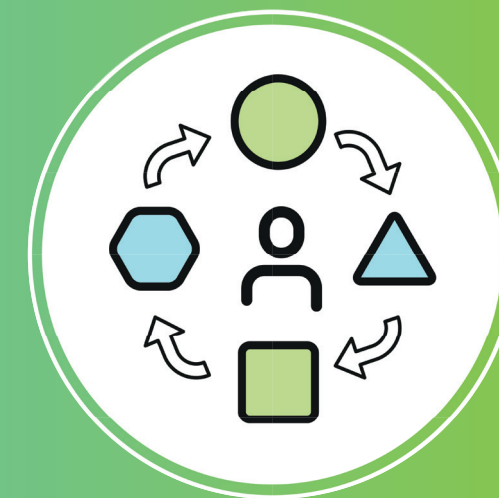
#### Direct environment

- Involve families in the life of institutions by providing open operations and a diverse repertoire of activities.
- It is necessary to strengthen local small communities, civic actors and the functioning of educational institutions as local community organising forces by announcing tenders, presenting adaptable good practices, and supporting networking.

### 3) Further steps in the implementation of the National Adaptation Plan in the Hungarian educational system

The Tempus Public Foundation, established in 1996, which implements the STAIRS project, is a non-profit organisation operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Innovation and Technology, and provides the greatest mobility in Hungary through the programmes it manages. Its main activities include raising awareness of the European Union's priorities and policies, building a knowledge-based society, promoting dialogue and cooperation between those involved in education and the world of work, and organising forums and exchanges of experience for education and training at various levels.

The Tempus Public Foundation has been playing an advisory role for 25 years, focusing on supporting policy learning. One of the main missions of the organisation is to deliver relevant policy and experimental results and materials to support policy learning to decision-makers; thus, encouraging the development of professional dialogue in a number of important areas. Among other things, it intends to support this type of learning by promoting tools and methodologies, such as those presented in the NAP. The Open Online Course (MOOC) outlined by the partnership will also serve the same purpose. Over the past quarter century, the Tempus Public Foundation's Knowledge Centre has accumulated significant knowledge in planning and implementing international and domestic projects, organising professional events, encouraging expert collaborations, preparing studies and publications, building professional networks, and educational research and development. One of the main missions of the Knowledge Centre is to strengthen the link between policy, research and practice. It has played an important role in the implementation of the Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework, for which the strategy for lifelong learning and the prevention of early school leaving has laid the foundations.



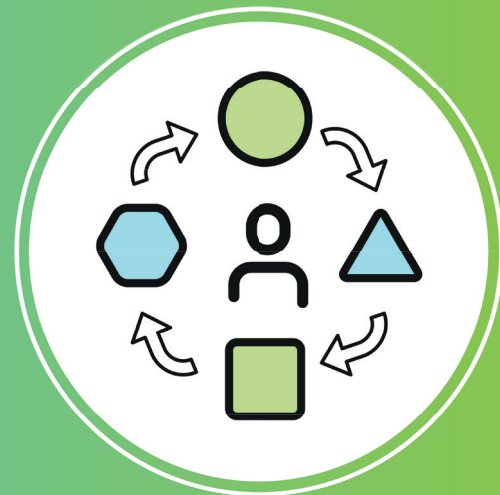
The Knowledge Centre is active in helping to translate the EU's social, employment and education objectives and policies into domestic practice. It is constantly looking for opportunities for dialogue with relevant policy actors and decision makers. The STAIRS project aims to contribute to the utilisation of the experience of the project in Hungary by providing structured information to the stakeholders and by creating joint learning opportunities and platforms for dialogue.

#### Regular delivery of structured information to stakeholders

The aim is to enable professionals to interpret the knowledge accumulated in the organisation about their own work and to utilise it as part of their own activities.

- **Policy newsletter.** The Tempus Public Foundation's „Education and Training in the EU and at Home” newsletter for decision-makers and education professionals is published every two months. The number of readers in 2021 was around 400, and it typically came from the following target groups: (a) ministry officials representing the policy-making and decision-making levels, (b) heads and professionals of educational background institutions, (c) the narrower range of experts with whom the Tempus Public Foundation has a living professional relationship.
- **Pályázati Pávilon.** This publication is a bi-annual pictorial magazine of the Tempus Public Foundation that reaches a wide range of actors in the education sector. In addition to information regarding application, there are also articles that present the professional work going on in various projects - also offering a variety of good examples and adaptation opportunities for practitioners.
- **Appearance in journals and various online interfaces.** The organisation strives to deliver the policy and experimental results of education and training, the experiences supporting policy learning to the given target group, formulated according to the needs of a specific group, with well-known journals (e.g. Új Pedagógiai Szemle, Új Köznevelés), and through portals (e.g. OFOE, Modern Iskola). The purpose of these appearances is primarily to shape attitudes.





### *Providing joint learning opportunities and platforms for dialogue*

The Tempus Public Foundation strives to bring stakeholders together from a variety of platforms. It promotes dialogue and networking by organising workshops, conferences, webinars and online forums.

**Alma a fán workshops.** Since 2011, the Tempus Public Foundation's events have regularly included topics that are directly related to one of the EU's priorities or objectives. The series of workshops were launched after the publication of the first issue of the series titled Alma a fán (Apple on the tree, a collection of interviews) in 2011. This series provides a forum for educators, parents, school leaders and community leaders as well as professionals from other fields of education to learn together. Since 2019, the main goal of the three-hour afternoon club events is dialogue and knowledge sharing on the key theme of inclusion (related to the STAIRS project).

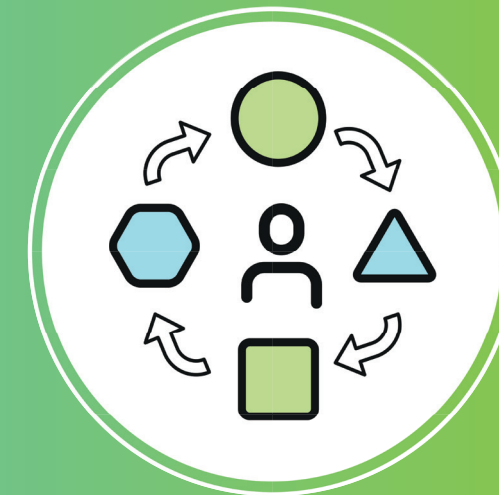
**National Discussion Forum (NDF).** The lesson learned during the study visits and the completion of the NAP will be presented by the Tempus Public Foundation at an expert forum in October 2021, where participants will have the opportunity to discuss the Irish and the Portuguese good practices, explore national adaptation opportunities as well as make suggestions for upscaling at the European level. Experts, researchers, teacher educators, doctoral candidates, project leaders and decision-makers whose heart is to promote social inclusion will be invited to the forum.

## **4) Key messages for creating the European Adaptation Guidelines**

### *Recommendations for a European Adaptation Guide*

#### **General considerations**

Adapting high-volume, complex, nationwide inclusion programmes is a challenge not only because they are always valid within a country's context, but also because the development of the adaptation concept itself is context-dependent. A well-intentioned policy-level adaptation concept assumes the



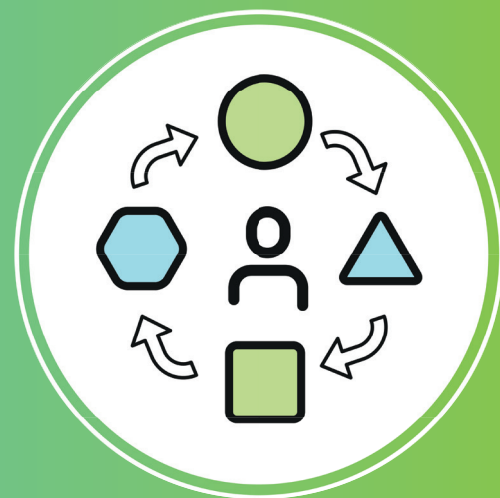
learning ability of policy and decision-making, and also builds on experimentation and the correction opportunities required by feedback mechanisms built into the development process. Given the internal regularities of development cycles, the fact that measurable impacts have a time horizon of at least 8-10 years, such an initiative can only be successful in countries where education policy is supported by long-term intentions across election cycles, which guarantees the coherence of policy and institutional interventions at different levels.

However, on the basis of the common features of the DEIS and TEIP programmes, some important general recommendations can be formulated, which are in line with the aspects related to the implementation processes highlighted by the Portuguese partners:

- Combining a top-down and bottom-up approach in development.
- Ensuring autonomy and flexibility at local level with a well-designed, monitored and supported common professional framework.
- Ensuring an important role for the meso level (local education administrations, professional networks and regional development centres) in the implementation process in order to effectively translate the concepts into daily practice.
- Involvement of all stakeholders in the planning and implementation of development programmes, in the feedback of experiences (reflection).

Some smaller projects (for example, the Limerick's Literacy Initiative, the Socio-Museological Project, DEIS, TED or smaller elements within the TEIP programme) can also be adapted at the local community, municipal or institutional level. These activities can be supported by selecting the appropriate elements, detailing the original models and formulating adaptation guidelines in simple language for the users concerned. However, not many results are expected from providing information in writing alone.

Similarly, it is possible to identify and select values, key messages, and methods that the sharing partners see as essential to successful inclusive practice. Examining and comparing these elements to approaches and practices of the adapting country or local community can be a good start to the adaptation process. It can be a starting point for gradually integrating elements that respond to identified



shortcomings into pedagogical practice. This presupposes that the relevant training institutions (higher education institutions providing initial and in-service training for teachers, providers of in-service training for school leaders or other professionals) are open to the dissemination and integration of this knowledge into education.

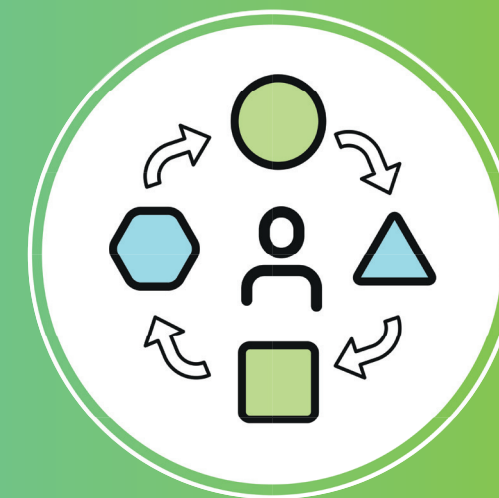
A key factor in development processes is motivation for change. Thus, the first step in the adaptation should be to arouse interest, for which it may be useful to process the ideas of good Irish and Portuguese practices in a comprehensible form, while also linking them to the target group's own experiences.

In general, it is more effective for each institution to first test only certain elements of the programmes and to plan a larger-scale policy intervention based on the experience gained.

Among general aspects, it is worth summarising the features that experts have come to know as a basic conceptual and methodological feature that permeates the Irish and Portuguese inclusion programmes:

- learner-centredness and an approach where “everyone really means everyone”;
- respect for cultural diversity;
- partnership between the whole school community;
- networking of school leaders and teachers;
- dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders;
- cooperation for active dialogue with families;
- decisions around the negotiating table, involving all stakeholders;
- a holistic approach to children's development;
- the ethos of high expectations of students;
- a pedagogical approach based on children's strengths;
- reflective classroom practice;
- shared leadership in institutions.

It is important to have a calm, high-quality, forward-looking social debate and professional dialogue on a number of fundamental issues related to education, for which we received a lot of inspiration

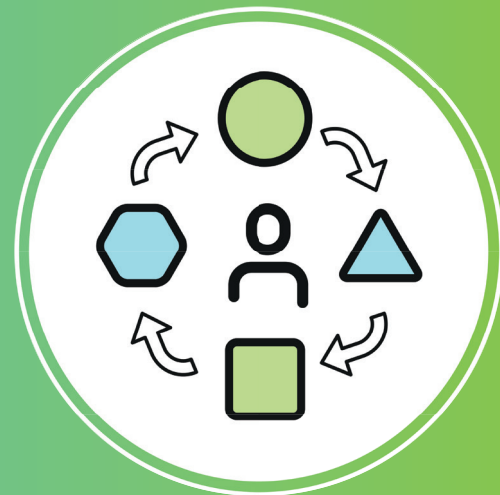


during the study visits and which is essential at the beginning of any adaptation process, especially on a larger scale.

#### Professional recommendations

The most important common message from the European and Hungarian literature and the good examples learned from the STAIRS project is that measures for inclusive and open-minded education need to be embedded in a comprehensive and learner-centered vision of education focusing on the development of key competences. This requires a multi-level (policy, political, professional) commitment that ensures adequate and sustainable funding, builds on professional dialogue, learning collaboration between institutions and professionals, and multi-faceted evaluation of interventions. Accordingly, the following key elements should appear in the approach and problem perception of a European Adaptation Plan.

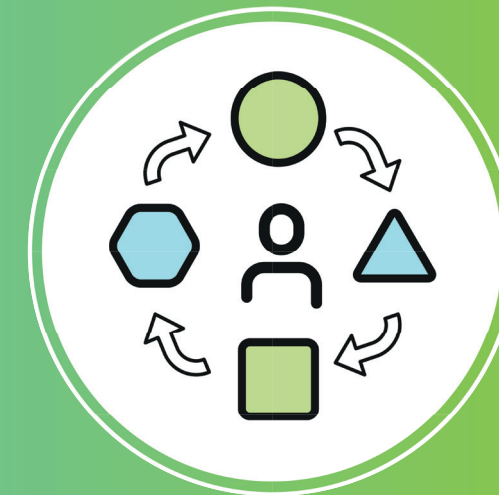
- **Attitude shaping.** The first and most important element is a deeper interpretation of the concept of inclusion, the expansion of its scope in the social way of thinking, and at the same time the shaping of the attitudes of professionals dealing with young people, the sensitisation of educators to the problem. The clarification and simplification of the concept could best support this process, called forth not by scientific methodologies but the reinforcement of an inclusive approach, which could encourage individual Member States to review their own regulatory documents in this regard.
- **Problem-based education and a lifelong curriculum.** Education should provide a usable knowledge experience that connects learning content with everyday life and maintains learning motivation. This is especially true for students who need to take more responsibility for development for schools because they receive less support from home due to their family situation. Loving learning in their case is only possible with the means by which they directly experience its benefits and experience success. A European recommendation could propose modern policy support for content regulators, make truly successful educational programmes and content available in national languages, and integrate them into training. It can also be important to create an educational environment that reflects the challenges of the digital age.
  - Within the topic of curricula, it should be emphasised that those educational programmes are



more successful in which more emphasis and time is devoted to the development of basic skills in an expanded sense (including reading, writing, numeracy, foreign language, problem solving, learning and social skills).

- Students dropping out from different forms of education can be supported with flexible access to other learning programmes and appropriate information and counselling in order not to turn their backs on learning for a lifetime. This has a well-functioning tradition in many European countries. Study visits organised form policy experts and decision-makers in education can be a good incentive to rethink Member States' systems, which can be catalysed by exchange programmes funded at European level.

- **Continuous professional development of teachers (CPD).** In addition to shaping teachers' attitudes, it is also important to ensure the availability of high-quality programmes aimed at increasing specific professional knowledge at the policy level. In addition to teachers, the development of the knowledge of peer professionals, and even the cooperation of all professionals working for children, can be considered a key element. Therefore, it is very important to acquire common professional foundations. A high-quality European summary study of the intertwined networks of professionals and professional organisations supporting schools, of well-functioning or less successful Member State practices and the systemic factors that shape them could do much to help Member States' policies in order to better understand the complex approaches to systemic support for the school. The accompanying volume of the same European study could be a practical guide outlining specific forms of co-professional collaboration in case studies (as seen in the Irish teacher training practice). The learning needs and development needs articulated by practicing educators often require the expertise of fellow professions. Therefore, it would be key to foster system-wide collaboration between special education educators, development educators, social and health workers, and school psychologists. It would also be useful to develop a Europe-wide training, knowledge and practical task map at European level. A guide to Member States' policies could identify which professions or tasks are not adequately covered in a given country.



- **The ability of systems to learn.** An adaptation plan should also take into account that the outcome of an intervention in complex systems, due to the large number of possible interactions, cannot be calculated in advance in every detail. Therefore, in addition to concrete proposals for action, it would be important for Member States' sectoral actors to receive European support for the design and implementation of the following policy measures to increase the learning capacity of the whole education system:
  - monitoring the system and its subsystems and operating the related forms of feedback (monitoring and supervision);
  - production and distribution of publications that are comprehensible to school users (teachers, vocational teachers, labor market participants, parents, students);
  - providing opportunities for networking between system actors: encouraging the exchange of experience between education and training professionals, researchers, practitioners and decision-makers;
  - encouraging inter-organisational and intra-sectoral cooperation;
  - development of guides and self-monitoring tools for institutions.