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Inclusive teaching: Preparing all teachers to teach all students

An important element of inclusive education involves ensuring that all teachers are prepared to teach all students. Inclusion cannot be realized unless teachers are empowered agents of change, with values, knowledge and attitudes that permit every student to succeed. Despite their differences in teacher standards and qualifications, education systems are increasingly moving away from identifying problems with learners and towards identifying barriers to learning. To complete this shift, education systems must design teacher education and professional learning opportunities that dispel entrenched views that some students are deficient, unable to learn or incapable.

Countries committed in 2015 to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education’ by 2030, as stated in the fourth Sustainable Development Goal. While the right to inclusive education was enshrined in Article 24 of the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities issued General Comment No. 4 in 2016 stressing that inclusive education is much broader in scope. All over the world, layers of discrimination on the basis of gender, remoteness, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, incarceration, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion and other beliefs and attitudes deny students the right to be educated with their peers or to receive education of the same quality.

Inclusive teaching requires teachers to recognize the experiences and abilities of every student, embrace the idea that each student’s learning capacity is open ended, and be open to diversity. A comparative Teacher Education for Inclusion project identified four core values and associated competence areas (Table 1). Instilling these values – supporting all learners, working with others, valuing learner diversity and engaging in professional development – should result in teachers who have high expectations for all learners.

The framework’s implications for teacher attitudes, methods and professionalism must be prioritized in teacher education. Teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion often combine commitment to the principle with doubts about their preparedness and how ready the education system is to support them. Ensuring that teachers rise to the challenge requires training as well as support, appropriate working conditions and autonomy in the classroom to focus on every learner’s success. Inclusive methods of teaching require teachers to take responsibility for all students by making a range of options available to every student rather than offering a set of differentiated options only to some (Florian and Spratt, 2013), while professionalism calls upon them to reflect on how they can be inclusive of all learners and how to reject social biases and stereotypes.

High-quality training for teachers is critical to inclusive teaching (Florian, 2019; Forlin and Chambers, 2011; UNESCO, 2009). Lack of preparedness for inclusive teaching may result from gaps in teachers’ knowledge about pedagogies and other aspects of inclusion. Teacher education can address issues ranging from instructional techniques and classroom management to multi-professional teams and learning assessment

TABLE 1:
Core values and competence areas of inclusive teaching

Core values	Competence areas	
Support all learners	Promote academic, practical, social and emotional learning for all	Engage effective teaching approaches in heterogenous classes based on understanding of a variety of learning processes and how to support them
Work with others	Work with parents and families to engage them effectively in learning	Work with other education professionals, including collaboration with other teachers
Value learner diversity	Understand inclusive education (e.g. it is based in belief in equality, human rights and democracy for all)	Respect, value and view learner diversity as an asset
Engage in professional development	Be reflective practitioners (i.e. systematically evaluate one's own performance)	View initial teacher education as the foundation for ongoing professional learning

Source: Based on European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2012).

methods. It must be relevant to teachers' needs, cover multiple aspects of inclusive teaching for all learners and include follow-up support to help teachers integrate new skills into classroom practices (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2010, 2015). In fact, the idea that specialized knowledge is needed can marginalize issues of diversity in teacher education (Cochran-Smith and Dudley-Marling, 2012). Overcoming the legacy of preparing different types of teachers for different types of students is a dominant concern, alongside questions about the level of preparedness and reflection among teacher educators (Florian and Pantić, 2017; Symeonidou, 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic calls on teachers to develop further skills, for instance in assessing learning delays or threats to the mental and socio-emotional well-being of marginalized learners.

This paper describes how countries are responding to the challenge of teacher preparation for inclusion, using country examples from the Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER) website developed for the 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report*, a new tool bringing together national experiences to facilitate peer dialogue within and between countries. It provides an overview of teacher training programmes, touching upon issues of implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and support mechanisms.

MANY TEACHERS DO NOT RECEIVE – AND DEMAND – TRAINING

Analysis carried out for the 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report* based on PEER reveals that 61% of 168 countries claim to provide teacher training on inclusion, with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by those in Europe and Northern America, most likely to offer such training. This global finding is broadly consistent with a global survey of professionals, focused mainly on disability-inclusive education, in which one-third of respondents reported that inclusive education had not been covered in their pre- or in-service teacher training courses (Pinnock and Nicholls, 2012).

The availability of such training varies depending by country income group. Providing training is much more challenging in countries with fewer resources, where many teachers are not even trained according to national standards (Education International, 2018). Across 10 mostly low-income sub-Saharan African countries that participated in the Programme d'analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la CONFEMEN learning achievement survey, just 8% of grade 2 and 6 teachers had received in-service training in inclusive education – the lowest among the training topics they were asked about (Wodon et al., 2018).

By contrast, in the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), in which 49 mostly upper-middle- and high-income countries took part, 35% of lower secondary school teachers reported that teaching in multicultural and multilingual settings had been included in their pre-service formal

teacher education or training, and 22% stated that it had been included in their professional development activities in the 12 months prior to the survey (OECD, 2019b; Schleicher, 2019).

There is often high demand among teachers for professional development on inclusion. Some 25% of teachers in the 2018 TALIS reported a high level of need for professional development on teaching students with special needs, and in Brazil, Colombia and Mexico the share was over 50%. About 15% reported a high need for personalized learning training, rising to over 40% in Japan and Viet Nam (Figure 1). In the Netherlands, one in five teachers with at least two decades of experience reported considerable difficulty dealing with students with post-traumatic stress disorder; 89% said they had encountered at least one such student (Alisic et al., 2012).

COUNTRIES USE A VARIETY OF FRAMEWORKS TO PREPARE TEACHERS FOR INCLUSION

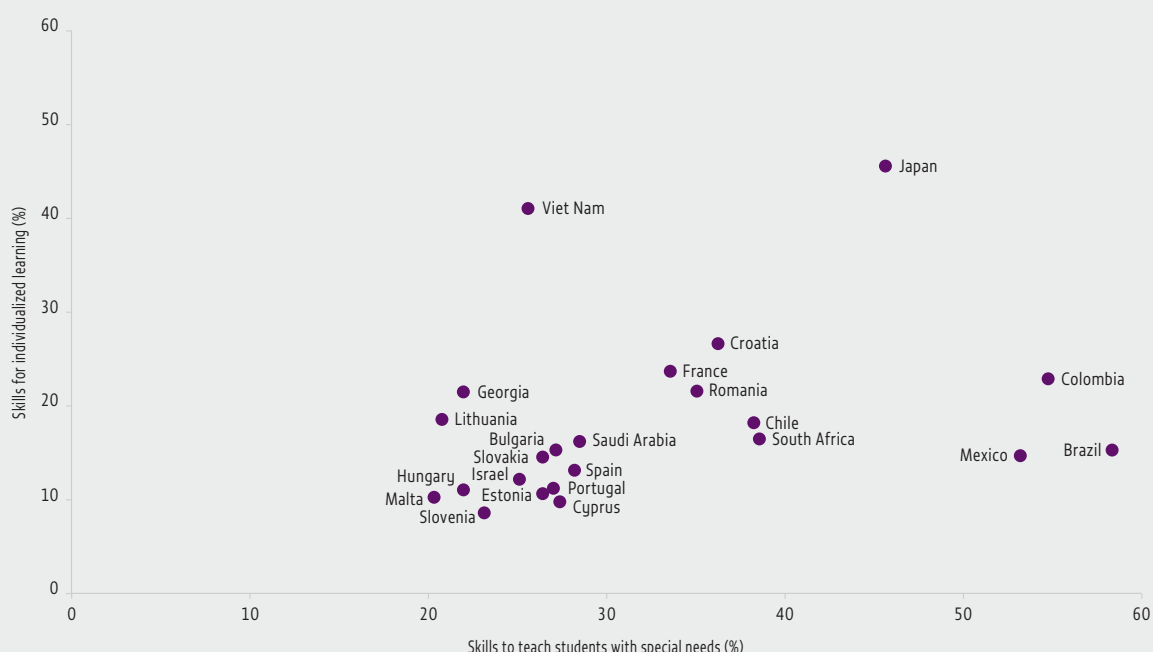
Governments may provide for teacher education for inclusion in their laws, policies, plans, programmes or regulations. About 44% of countries enshrine teacher training on inclusion in their laws and policies (Figure 2).

To understand these estimates, it is important to note that countries differ in how they define inclusion in education and how they use this term in their law and policy documents. Overall, 10% or 19 out of 196 countries have general or inclusive education **laws** that address inclusion as a concept that refers to all learners. Of those, one-third mention teacher training. In Chile, the School Inclusion Law created the National System of Teacher Professional Development, which is ‘one of the pillars of the education reform ... to guarantee the right to an inclusive and quality education for

FIGURE 1:

Teachers need more opportunities for professional development on inclusion

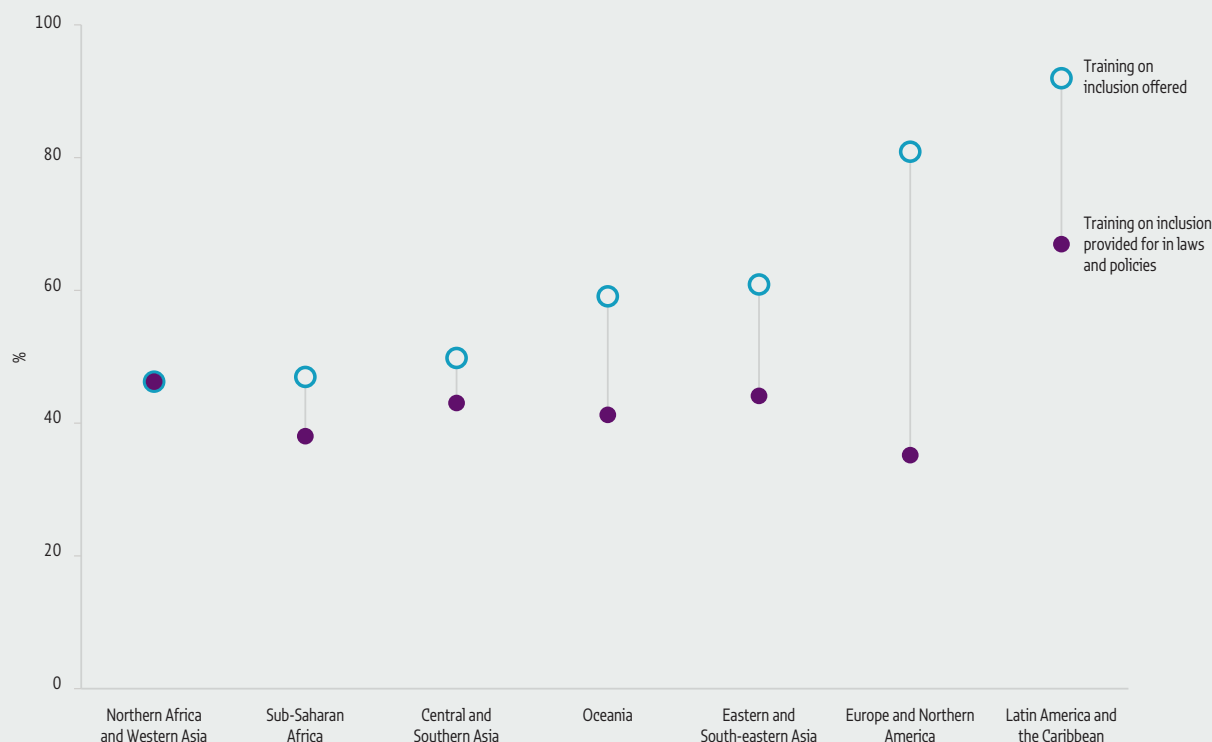
Percentage of teachers reporting a high need for training in two inclusion-related areas, selected middle- and high-income countries, 2018



Note: Education systems selected are those in which teachers reported a higher-than-average need for professional development on teaching students with special needs, i.e. students for whom a special learning need has been formally identified because of mental, physical or emotional disadvantage.

Source: OECD (2019b).

FIGURE 2:
About 4 in 10 countries enshrine teacher training on inclusion in laws and policies
 Percentage of countries providing teacher training on inclusion, 2019



Source: GEM Report team analysis based on PEER.

all' (Chile Ministry of Education, 2016). In Colombia, Decree 1421 of 2017, which describes inclusive education as 'a permanent process that recognizes, values and responds in a relevant way to the diversity of characteristics, interests, possibilities and expectations of girls, boys, adolescents, youth and adults' calls for 'internal teacher training processes with an inclusive education approach' (Colombia Ministry of Education, 2017).

In France, Law 2019-791, which aims to strengthen inclusive education, envisages an initial 60-hour adaptation training for teaching assistants and provides for continuing professional development on the basis of a national benchmark, adapted to the diversity of the situations of students in school. A school circular referring to its implementation focuses on recognizing teachers' work, supporting them and providing accessible professional training on inclusion (France Ministry of National Education, 2019a, 2019b). In Portugal, Decree-Law 54/6 of July 2018 requires schools to establish a multidisciplinary

team, composed of a teacher, a special education teacher, a psychologist and three members of the pedagogical council, to support, advise and train teachers in the implementation of inclusive pedagogical practices (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2020c).

None of these laws specifies the content of teacher training on inclusive education. While teacher training and inclusion in education are mentioned, the links between the two are not explicit. For instance, the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova states that continuous training of the teaching staff is compulsory throughout their career and will be regulated by the Government, but Chapter VI, which focuses on inclusive education, does not refer to training (Republic of Moldova Government, 2014).

Overall, countries address education inclusion for all more often in their **policies** than in their laws: 17% or 34 out of 196 countries have adopted an

inclusive education policy that addresses inclusion as a concept that refers to all learners. Moreover, analysis of 26 of these 34 policy documents showed that two-thirds explicitly referred to teacher training. Ghana's inclusive education policy aims to 'ensure that all pre-service teacher training courses include training on inclusive education to enable teachers to deal with the diversity in their classroom and be equipped with relevant teaching and learning competencies and strategies to meet the needs of all learners'. Teachers also must be trained in initial assessment of learning difficulties and in creating an enabling environment (Ghana Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 8). The Lao People's Democratic Republic and Timor-Leste also embrace inclusion broadly and mainstream the concept in all training activities. Their policies on teacher training aim to increase awareness and understanding of the basic rights of all learners (Lao PDR Ministry of Education and Sports, 2011; Timor-Leste Government, 2017). In Malta (Malta Ministry for Education and Employment, 2019) and Paraguay (Paraguay Ministry of Education and Science, 2018), inclusive education policies aim to ensure that all teachers are equipped to deal with diverse students through the promotion of universal design for learning.

Education sector **plans and strategies** often refer to teacher training for inclusion. Three-quarters of plans reviewed, or 101 out of 134, promote or envisage inclusion. Of these, 49 explicitly indicate an aim to provide teacher training on inclusion, either general or directed at a target group. Again, the highest proportion, or about one in two plans reviewed, is observed in Latin America and the Caribbean. For instance, in Argentina, the National Strategic Plan 2016–2021 Argentina Enseña y Aprende seeks to 'train new teachers with specific knowledge and skills to guarantee teaching processes that promote quality learning and the inclusion of students' (Argentina Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 16). In May 2020, the National Teacher Training Institute launched the Observatory of Educational Practices to encourage the dissemination of pedagogical experiences in collaborative work with teachers in pre-service and in-service training that promote inclusion in classrooms (Argentina National Teacher Training Institute, 2020). Strengthening teacher training and development is likewise one of the objectives of the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2017–2020, which envisages that 70% of special school teachers will receive

training for the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools (Dominican Republic Ministry of Education, 2017).

The second largest share of plans addressing inclusion, or 43%, is found in sub-Saharan Africa. The Education and Training Sector Strategy 2016–2025 of the Democratic Republic of the Congo includes a plan to integrate training modules on inclusive education into initial teacher training (Democratic Republic of the Congo Ministry of Education, 2016). More than one in three countries in Eastern and South-eastern Asia and Oceania incorporate training on inclusion into their education plans. The Lao People's Democratic Republic Education Sector Development Plan 2016–2020 aims to develop a system of continuous professional development for teachers that covers inclusive education with a focus on pedagogical skills to address learners with diverse learning needs, such as ethnic minorities, girls and children with special needs (Lao PDR Ministry of Education and Sports, 2016). In Oceania, the Tuvalu Education Sector Plan III (2016–2020) aims at 'improving teacher attitude and efficacy towards inclusive teaching', calling on teachers to consider the different ability levels of the children in their classroom and to use learning support programmes (Tuvalu Education Department, 2016, p. 18).

Relatively fewer countries in Central and Southern Asia and in Northern Africa and Western Asia make provisions for teacher training on inclusion in their education plans. Nepal's School Sector Development Plan 2016–2023 aims to establish teacher professional development courses based on child-centred and active learning approaches, inclusive education, formative assessment and differentiation to meet the learning needs of every student (Nepal Ministry of Education, 2016). The Education Sector Strategic Plan in Palestine (2017–2022) seeks to ensure that teacher training and supervision activities are free of gender stereotypes and promote equality, non-discrimination, human rights and intercultural education to provide equitable, inclusive and high-quality education systems for all (Palestine Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2017).

In some countries and territories, teacher competency **standards** focus on the inclusion of all learners and influence how teachers are trained.

In Québec, Canada, teacher training focuses on achieving 12 key competencies, which account for an ‘increasingly diverse school population’ (Québec Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 5). In Chile, teacher performance standards are covered in the Marco para la Buena Enseñanza (Good Teaching Framework), which includes 21 criteria; skills related to inclusion include creating a climate of respect for gender, cultural, ethnic and socio-economic differences and being familiar with a variety of assessment strategies and techniques depending on the subject matter being taught and the context (Chile Ministry of Education, 2008).

New Zealand’s non-prescriptive and flexible English- and Maori-language curricula call for ‘all students’ identities, languages, cultures, abilities, and talents’ to be recognized (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2020a). The teaching code includes a professional learning standard that calls on teachers, among other things, to ‘critically examine’ their impact of their own assumptions and beliefs on the achievement of ‘learners with different abilities and needs, backgrounds, genders, identities, languages and cultures’ and to ‘engage in professional learning and adaptively apply this learning in practice’ (New Zealand Education Council, 2017). In the Philippines, the Department of Education, through the Teacher Education Council, issued an order to adopt and implement the Professional Standards for Teachers in 2017. The standards are founded on learner-centredness, lifelong learning and inclusion. For instance, Domain 3 on learner diversity refers to five broad categories: gender, needs, strengths, interests and experiences; linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and religious background; disabilities, giftedness and talents; difficult circumstances; and indigenous groups (Philippines Department of Education, 2017).

At the regional level, the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* in Europe guides the design and implementation of initial teacher education programmes for all teachers, targeting mainly teacher educators and decision makers. It identifies eight areas for teacher competency, including understanding of the concept of inclusive education; viewing learner difference as an asset; and promoting the academic, practical, social and emotional learning of all learners (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012).

At the global level, the Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards identifies three domains and standards for competency: teaching knowledge and understanding, teaching practice, and teaching relations. It underlines teachers’ commitment to promoting inclusive quality education for the benefit of all students, teachers and the community (Education International and UNESCO, 2019).

DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSION MEAN THAT TRAINING ACTIVITIES OFTEN FOCUS ON SPECIFIC GROUPS

Preparing teachers for inclusion should not be treated as a specialized subject that focuses on teaching specific groups; rather, it should be mainstreamed. A teacher education system that accounts for diversity from the outset, instead of taking a piecemeal approach for certain groups, allows for a more effective use of resources (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2011). Such an approach also marks a shift away from categorizations, which often result in stigma, marginalization and exclusion.

Inclusion-oriented pre-service teacher education programmes tend to focus on how to address challenges that various types of learners might encounter. The risk of this approach is that modules on special education end up emphasizing differences between learners and reinforcing the very divisions that create barriers to inclusion (Florian, 2019). Research on teacher education for inclusive education suggests that inclusive approaches should be a core element of general teacher preparation rather than a specialist topic (Rouse and Florian, 2012).

A review for the 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report* of teacher education for inclusion in Argentina, Ethiopia, Ghana, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania) found policies on training for inclusion in all the countries at the primary education level and a clear trend of extending teacher development for inclusion to early childhood care and education, secondary education and higher and adult education. However, most efforts focused on students with disabilities, though there were some efforts towards

a whole-school approach and system transformation to build inclusive school communities and cultures (Lehtomäki et al., 2020).

Some countries embed training on disability-inclusive education in a wider system of teacher education. To graduate from the Upper Austria College of Education, student teachers must have inclusive pedagogical competences and knowledge to teach students with various needs. Inclusive content is embedded in each subject (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2015). In South Africa, guidelines on inclusive teaching and on responses to learner diversity emphasize the principle of inclusion and the practice of adapting curricula to diverse needs (South Africa Department of Basic Education, 2010, 2011). In Canada's New Brunswick province, a comprehensive inclusive education policy introduced training opportunities for teachers to support students with autism spectrum disorders (**Box 1**).

Likewise, two approaches that are highly consistent with inclusive teaching have been developed in response to increasing immigration in high-income countries. The first approach, the culturally responsive teaching approach to teacher education, focuses on skills and dispositions teachers need to teach diverse student populations (Villegas and Lucas, 2007). The second approach, content and language integrated learning, involves teacher development courses that support teachers in helping students who may not speak the language of instruction, enabling diverse learner groups to use languages as both a communication and a learning tool (Coyle et al., 2010).

In most countries, in-service teacher education on inclusion focuses on specific groups, notably students with **disabilities** and **special needs** (Hayes et al., 2018), and varies in the extent to which these aspects are situated within a coordinated framework to include all learners. In Ecuador, a 39-hour course aims to help teachers organize the classroom and take advantage of the resources of the education community to promote inclusion of children with special education needs, for instance through Braille and sign language as well as through particular pedagogical models (Ecuador Government, 2015). In Gujarat state, India, health and education services cooperated to create a training programme for

BOX 1:

New Brunswick offers teachers training to support students with autism spectrum disorders

The Canadian province of New Brunswick has been a pioneer in promoting inclusive education for three decades. The roots go back to a home-grown movement in which teachers played a prominent role (Porter and Towell, 2017). The province's efforts received international recognition after it approved a legally binding policy on inclusive education in 2013 (Zero Project, 2016). An earlier evaluation had found challenges; for instance, the many support personnel deployed were focusing more on working directly with students with special needs than on supporting mainstream classroom teachers. To address this, professional development in some areas, including autism spectrum disorders, needed to be strengthened (Porter and AuCoin, 2012).

In response, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development created the Autism Learning Partnership in 2012. A training course, consisting of online introductory and advanced learning programmes and continued education opportunities, is supported by a team of behaviour analysts, psychologists, researchers and educators (New Brunswick Government, 2019). In 2015, the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders was 1.3% among 6- to 17-year-olds in the anglophone sector, which makes up 68% of the population (Canada Public Health Agency, 2018).

About 25% of all education personnel, including education assistants and behaviour interventionists, completed the course. Advanced training was offered in 49% of schools and was completed by one in three resource teachers. As part of continuing education opportunities, 30 teachers were supported to certify as behaviour analysts. Trained staff work with all children in the preschool autism programme. Preliminary research found that introductory learning programme participants had increased confidence in their ability to understand how autism characteristics affect learning, provide support to students with autism spectrum disorders, and recognize adaptation and response strategies to help students (New Brunswick Government, 2019).

early identification of students with dyslexia and other special needs. The programme started in 2019, training 80 educators to pick up early signs of disorders and connect affected students to relevant services (Shastri, 2019).

Article 14 in Italy's Law Decree 96 of August 2019 on the Promotion of School Inclusion for Students with Disabilities calls for training school staff and creating specific inclusion plans (Italy Government, 2019; Italy Ministry of Education and Ministry of University and Research, 2019). Notably, Italy had already reported an increase by 30 percentage points in teacher participation rates in training programmes for teaching students with special needs in inclusive contexts, the largest among countries that participated in the 2013 and 2018 TALIS. This increase was accompanied by a significant decrease of almost 20 percentage points in the percentage of teachers reporting a need for training in this area (OECD, 2019a).

In Ukraine, bachelor's and master's curricula include topics on meeting the needs of people with disabilities, often directed at specialists. For instance, there are courses for psychologists in special schools, psychological and pedagogical support for children with mental disabilities, practical speech therapy methods, and approaches facilitating social development in children with visual impairment (Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation, 2015). In Viet Nam, a 2007 decision established the need for teachers and education managers to be trained in inclusive education. Training institutions in Kon Tum and Ninh Thuan provinces developed pre-service modules on inclusive education of children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2015). At the national level, education faculties at Hanoi Pedagogy University, Ho Chi Minh City Pedagogy University, Ho Chi Minh City National Pedagogy College and the National Pedagogy College provide formal training in special education (OHCHR, 2019).

Some countries address **gender** and gender identities in their teacher training. In Chile, the Ministry of Education has established training on gender, discrimination, inclusive schools, sexuality and sexual diversity in the classroom for teachers nationwide (Chile Ministry of Education, 2015). It has also developed practical teacher guidance and training recommendations for inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people (Chile Ministry of Education, 2017). Colombia integrates a crosscutting component on gender perspective and gender identities into its policy guidelines for teacher training on inclusive education (Colombia Ministry of Education, 2013). In Nepal, the National Centre for Education Development has

implemented a gender awareness module within its teacher professional development programme (Nepal Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare, 2014). Mauritius's Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008–2020 committed to including gender sensitivity training in all pre- and in-service teacher training courses, covering gender learning styles and cognitive development, sexual harassment code of conduct, and how to stimulate classroom interactions with boys and girls to ensure equitable treatment (Mauritius Government, 2009).

In Uganda, the 2015–19 National Strategy for Girls' Education aimed to introduce gender training as part of teacher education, with a focus on science teachers and on ensuring response to girls' needs and interests (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, 2015). However, the budget for in-service training for primary teachers' colleges had been eliminated in 2013, undermining implementation (Uganda Ministry of Finance, 2018). The National Teacher Policy, launched in 2019, has renewed the government's focus and has included development and a pilot of guidelines to equip teachers with basic knowledge about gender concepts and skills for gender-responsive pedagogy in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (UNESCO, 2019).

Language and multilingual education also factor into teacher training in several countries. Botswana's inclusive education policy states that 'consideration will be given to increasing the number of teachers who speak ethnic minority languages who can provide effective teaching to learners who are not yet fluent in the language of instruction' (Botswana Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 10). One aim of Cambodia's 2015 Teacher Policy Action Plan was to promote continuous professional development through incentives and credits on inclusive education and multilingualism, especially for remote and underperforming schools (Cambodia Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, 2015). An evaluation of the 2014–18 Multilingual Education National Action Plan called for a recruitment strategy to deploy and retain indigenous teachers with good command of an indigenous language (Ball and Smith, 2019). The 2019–23 Multilingual Education National Action Plan aims to include a multilingual education programme at a regional teacher training centre.

Bilingual education is central in teacher education in Latin America. In Colombia, the Bilingual and

Intercultural Education Programme encourages bilingual teacher professionalization and training, although the Ministry of Education does not require teachers to learn the language of the community where they teach (Guido Guevara et al., 2013). Peru's National Bilingual Intercultural Education Plan recognizes pre- and in-service teacher training as crucial to the implementation of the policy. In 2016, the country counted 38,000 trained bilingual teachers (with different levels of training in bilingual intercultural education), with at least 17,000 new teachers required to cover demand (Peru Ministry of Education, 2016).

IT TAKES TIME TO IMPLEMENT PLANS AND TO CHANGE TEACHER ATTITUDES

Many intentions expressed in plans only materialize slowly, as it takes time and resources to develop both capacity and a shared understanding. In Burundi, for instance, the Transitional Plan for Education 2018–2020 provides for the creation of a pool of national trainers specialized in inclusive education. They will initially work in 46 schools to pilot the project (Burundi Ministry of Education, 2018).

In Papua New Guinea, teacher training for disability-inclusive education has been historically led by non-government organizations, notably the Callan Studies National Institute. The Universal Basic Education Plan 2010–2019 aimed to offer an inclusive education course as part of the pre-service programme for secondary teaching (Papua New Guinea Department of Education, 2009). In 2017, 10 teacher educators received a fellowship to attend a post-graduate course in Australia to improve the quality of instruction on inclusive education in teacher colleges (Barker and Tracey, 2020).

In Paraguay, the 2007 Indigenous Education Law promoted teacher training and the creation of specialization and training centres for indigenous teachers (Paraguay Ministry of Education and Culture, 2007), while the Plurilingual Education Plan from the Indigenous Peoples of Paraguay 2013–2018 envisaged the implementation of teacher training with an intercultural and multilingual approach for each of the indigenous peoples (Paraguay Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014). However, an indigenous teacher training institute has not yet been established (Paraguay Ministry of Education and Sciences, 2019).

In Zimbabwe, inclusive education in three-year primary school teacher diplomas is covered in psychology of education and subject didactics courses. Training is offered in behaviour and classroom management, collaboration, curriculum differentiation and management, and inclusive education legislation. A Bachelor of Education in special needs education is also available as a 2-year programme for in-service teachers. In addition, professional development and support for disability-inclusive education is offered through in-service training by the Department of School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education, at least one staff on site development session per term, and periodic visits from resource persons to provide staff development. The Education Sector Strategic Plan committed to develop an inclusive education policy, which is still not completed, and outlined a Teacher Quality Improvement Programme (2016–2020) to further train teachers in the implementation of the new inclusive curriculum (Zimbabwe Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2016). A study of 24 inclusive primary schools has shown that teachers continue to believe that they need competencies, which ultimately contradict the concept of inclusive pedagogy (Majoko, 2019).

THE APPROACH TO TEACHER TRAINING IS JUST AS IMPORTANT FOR INCLUSION AS ITS CONTENT

A significant body of research focuses on the collaborative manner in which positive effects on teachers are achieved (Heafner, 2019; Hopkins, 2010), particularly within schools perceived as learning communities (DuFour and Eaker, 2004; European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012; Hord and Sommers, 2008). Teacher collaboration enables the development, implementation and evaluation of instructional improvement strategies tailored to the specific needs of students. Teachers must become involved in their own professionalization and take on the role of instructional leaders in turn. By adopting a collaborative approach, teachers can explore other pedagogical practices while becoming aware of their own conceptions of teaching and learning (Erkens et al., 2018). Collegiality influences student success when teachers trust each other, communicate effectively, share successful professional practices and recognize each other's value (Senge, 2014).

Countries implement collaborative peer training and professional exchanges to foster inclusion in several ways. First, they establish learning communities as means of peer professional development, focused on developing pedagogical practice, acquiring individual and collective knowledge, and searching for meaning. This approach can help teachers perform better and manage change more effectively (Pont et al., 2008). Through peer-to-peer transfer, learning communities enable the development of new leaders (Webster-Wright, 2009). In New Brunswick, Canada, head teachers establish Education Support Services teams to develop strategies for classroom teachers. Teams meet every two weeks and can choose a narrow approach, focusing on a particular student with many support needs, or a broad approach to meet the needs of all students who require additional support to succeed (New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2013). In Namibia, Learning Support Groups work with teachers in their normal working hours to motivate professional development and engagement (Namibia Ministry of Education, 2013).

Team teaching allows access to professional capital and can be a key driver in promoting inclusive education. In Ireland, team teaching, as part of a continuum of teacher education and school improvement, was first used with students aged 12–16 who were at risk of not learning and of not attending school. In 2017, the National Instructional Leadership Programme led by Education and Training Boards Ireland adopted team teaching as a means for teachers to improve the acquisition of skills and the transfer of learning in their own settings (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2020b).

Cooperation among teachers within and between schools can support them in addressing the challenges of diversity (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2012), especially in systems transitioning from segregation to inclusion, but it is a challenging task. Sometimes such collaboration is absent even among teachers at the same school. In Sri Lanka, a study found that few teachers in schools with special needs units reported collaborating with or receiving support from the other stream, partly due to the units' segregation (Furuta and Alwis, 2017).

Teachers from mainstream and special schools are generally not encouraged to interact, their careers diverging as early as the pre-service level (Box 2).

An outreach project of the School for the Deaf in Hossana, Ethiopia, provides in-service training for mainstream and special education teachers, along with awareness-raising programmes for families, community members and education officials. It focuses on the teaching and learning of deaf and hearing-impaired students in mainstream settings throughout the country to improve the quality of education in inclusive classrooms and create access to education for children in the target group who are out of school (Lehtomäki et al., 2020). In Kenya, a small-scale intervention established inclusion committees consisting of students, teachers and head teachers in mainstream and special schools, which met regularly to discuss how to make schools more inclusive and develop co-teaching and collaboration (Elder and Kuja, 2019).

BOX 2:

Special and mainstream education teachers are often trained separately

It is often taken for granted that special schools employ trained professionals. However, even the most basic expectations may not be realized in the poorest countries. In Niger, for instance, only 10 of the 162 teachers working in special needs and inclusive schools were trained to work with children with disabilities (FNPH, 2018).

Where teacher training exists for special education, it tends to be delivered in different institutions or programmes from mainstream education. This practice can perpetuate segregation and hinder progress towards making education systems inclusive. Separate training systems can also increase scepticism among participating teachers. In Canada, teachers who received professional development in special education or were trained as special education teachers were much more likely than mainstream teachers to express negative views about inclusion as the best way to educate all students. Professional development systems that concentrate on special needs education may be too narrowly focused and ignore the wider context of inclusion (Woodcock and Hardy, 2017). In addition, the transition to more inclusive systems can be challenging for specialized teachers. In Belarus and Norway, there was uncertainty about the role of training systems that had served special needs educators as the countries moved towards inclusive systems, and special education professionals were concerned about being replaced by generalists (Hannås and Bahdanovich Hanssen, 2016).

Singapore's Ministry of Education established 16 Satellite Partnerships between mainstream and special schools. Between 2015 and 2017, the Buddy'IN programme, aimed at integrating graduating students from mainstream and special schools to improve acceptance of people with disabilities, covered 200 students (OHCHR, 2016). In Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, as part of a programme run by a local NGO in partnership with CBM, an international NGO, blind students can choose between attending the mainstream school or remaining in segregated classes in a resource centre with boarding facilities. Students who moved to the mainstream school reported missing the resource centre's extracurricular activities and vocational training. In response, the centre and school worked together, with the centre offering more support to the school, including in-service teacher education (CBM, 2018).

Second, countries transform special schools into resource centres as part of a move from segregation to inclusion. This effort often results in promoting collaboration between mainstream and special education teachers to develop inclusive teaching skills and practices. In Sichuan province, China, the Shuangliu District Special Education School's 1+5+N model aims to integrate learners with special education needs through a three-level resource system. The first-level resource centre for the district, founded by the local government, provides professional help to other resource room centres (1); secondary resource rooms established in five mainstream schools (5) receive help from the district special education centre and help all other resource centres in mainstream schools (N). The project has led to the development of a proposal for a systematic inclusive education policy, submitted to the Ministry of Education, which focuses on resource rooms as a means of teacher training (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2020a).

Since 2006, Ethiopia has introduced more than 7,000 cluster resource centres to support the provision of special needs education. They correspond to about one centre for every five schools. Itinerant resource teachers provide guidance to teachers and head teachers upon request (Ethiopia Ministry of Education, 2016). In the Maldives, the Ministry of Education established 20 teacher resource centres in 2007 to overcome transport constraints, a key obstacle to professional development, and to facilitate the creation of a learning community network linking administrators and teachers (UNICEF, 2007). The 2017 National Policy

on Inclusive Education in Nigeria plans to rehabilitate and upgrade special schools to serve as resource centres catering for the needs of people with disabilities and training teachers on inclusion (Nigeria Federal Ministry of Education, 2017). In Ukraine, 500 Integration Resource Centres support educators to include children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms (UNICEF, 2020).

TRAINING AND ITS OUTCOMES SHOULD BE MONITORED AND EVALUATED TO PROMOTE INCLUSION

Monitoring the implementation and results of teacher training programmes that focus on inclusion is necessary. In New Brunswick, Canada, the superintendent monitors the performance of each school based on performance indicators for inclusive education, which include the provision of ongoing professional development for administrators, teachers, educational assistants and other professionals (New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2013). In the Cook Islands, all principals are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the inclusive education policy, including professional development for leaders, teachers and teaching assistants; and training must be timely and appropriate (Cook Islands Ministry of Education, 2017).

However, when monitoring mechanisms are not merely procedural but also try to promote accountability, they must recognize the work of teachers and not focus exclusively on grades. Two visions of results-based management are at odds with each other. One sees these accountability measures as a management tool to evaluate teachers' performance and results, while another sees them as a tool for collaboration in a collective project, namely the successful integration of all students (Brassard et al., 2013). A balance must be struck between providing support to the supervisee and establishing the control of the supervisor. For instance, collective professional development structures should not lead to the evaluation and control of teachers. Nor should the content of exchanges be used against teachers, or for any purposes other than support and professional development in the context of another individual evaluation process (April and Bouchamma, 2017). Misunderstandings regarding the purpose

of supervision can result in teachers refusing to be supervised (Lafortune, 2008).

Evaluating overall teacher training programme results is challenging to do well but necessary to inform policy. In the 2018 TALIS, 82% of teachers reported that the professional development activities in which they engaged in the year prior to the survey had an impact on their teaching practices. They also said that the training programmes that had the greatest impact were those that were based on strong subject and curricula and adopted collaborative methods and active learning (OECD, 2019a). Research findings are consistent with this and indicate that school-based training, especially in the form of learning communities, as mentioned above, tends to have a greater effect on inclusive teaching practices (OECD, 2019a).

Since 2017, the TOY for Inclusion project has introduced Play Hubs in early childhood care and education centres in seven European countries (Belgium, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Slovakia and Slovenia), targeting disadvantaged young children, especially from migrant and minority communities, such as the Roma. The programme has evolved from a traditional education approach to a professional development programme for teachers and staff, through team teaching and learning communities, and even school-wide self-evaluations. Team teaching is evaluated daily. At policy level, the inspectorate advises schools on their commitment to team teaching. This practice has increased the knowledge and skills of educators, head teachers, health practitioners, caregivers and local policy-makers, thereby increasing access to quality, inclusive early childhood care and education for hard-to-reach children up to age 6 (TOY for Inclusion, 2020).

A study comparing Canadian and German pre-service vocational teacher education found Canadian teachers more likely to have positive attitudes regarding inclusion and their capacity to create inclusive classrooms, partly because of the more prominent role inclusion played in training (Miesera and Gebhardt, 2018). In the Seychelles, teachers who had inclusive education training reported higher endorsement of the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms and more positive beliefs about the practice (Main et al., 2016).

Although Latin America is advanced in promoting inclusion in education, an analysis of pre-service

teacher education programmes of 22 training institutions in seven countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru) cautioned that pedagogies for inclusion were not a key feature of these programmes' curricula. Even when they were incorporated, this was mostly in theoretical courses. Specific tools required for inclusion-focused work in the classroom, such as how to develop an individualized action plan or how to teach effectively in disadvantaged contexts were not offered (UNESCO, 2018).

In some cases, evaluations may reveal that teachers feel they are not in a position to meet the challenge of inclusive education, despite having received relevant training. However, the idea that there are different types of teachers for different groups of learners leads to teachers feeling qualified or unqualified to teach certain learners, thus increasing exclusion (Florian, 2019). Teachers may also experience stress in teaching in an inclusive way, which impact their practice and needs to be addressed in training courses (Forlin and Chambers, 2011).

Overall, empirical evidence on the impact of teacher training on inclusion is still lacking in some contexts. Difficulties include the limited research on inclusion in education, weak monitoring mechanisms, the multifaceted nature and resulting use of multiple, often contradictory, definitions of inclusive education, and the incomparability of data on children's individual characteristics, a result of both measurement challenges and the variety of contexts (Kuper et al., 2018; Price, 2018).

SUPPORT MECHANISMS RESPOND TO TEACHERS' NEED FOR CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teaching assistants, head teachers and district or thematic education coordinators are other front-line actors in supporting teachers and their professional development.

Teaching assistants can support teachers to teach students with special needs (Blatchford et al., 2009; Masdeu Navarro, 2015). Yet, respondents to a survey of teacher unions reported that support personnel were largely absent or not available at all in at least 15% of countries, somewhat available in about 29% to 44% and always available in about 5% to 22%, depending on the

type of support personnel (Education International, 2018). Moreover, teaching assistants also need training to fulfil their role (**Box 3**).

Teachers are more likely to develop professionally in schools with an inclusive ethos. School ethos, a term sometimes used interchangeably with school culture or climate, refers to the explicit and implicit values and beliefs, as well as interpersonal relationships, defining a school's atmosphere and guiding behaviour (Donnelly, 2000). A comparison of inclusive schools in Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States noted that their inclusive culture was manifest in their uncompromising commitment to and belief in inclusion, perception of diversity among students and teachers as a resource, and commitment to inclusive ideals communicated across the school and to the community (Kugelmass, 2006).

There are no off-the-shelf, best-practice approaches to developing an inclusive ethos. Such approaches do not emerge mechanically through organizational restructuring or adoption of particular practices. Schools develop different ways to put their inclusive philosophy to work. To build inclusive schools, head teachers need knowledge and understanding of inclusion (Garner and Forbes, 2013; Jahnukainen, 2014). Leadership support and professional development for inclusion should focus less on administration and more on learning and achievement, and they should cover areas such as evidence-informed decision making and use of data (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2018b) (**Box 4**).

Countries have developed various teacher support structures. In Kiribati, 13 education coordinators who have received advanced training on the principles of inclusive education support teachers and head teachers (OHCHR, 2017). Malaysia, which introduced a policy to accelerate the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools, has intensified efforts to develop skills for early identification of needs. In addition to a three-credit, 45-hour-per-semester course in pre-service education and an in-service training programme, the government also plans to expand the use of medical practitioners from 13 special education service centres who provide two- to three-day training sessions (Menon, 2019). In Namibia, the inclusive education policy commits to the deployment of occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, social workers and audiologists to rural and remote schools to advise teachers (Namibia Ministry of Education, 2013).

BOX 3:

Support personnel also need training and defined roles and responsibilities

The role of support personnel is to supplement, not supplant, teachers' or special educators' work. Yet, they are often put in positions that demand much more. As support personnel are increasingly central in fostering inclusion, increased professional expectations, accompanied by often low levels of professional development, can lead to lower-quality learning and be counterproductive where inclusion is sought (Rose, 2020).

Inadvertent detrimental effects associated with excessive or inappropriate use of teaching assistants include interference with peer interaction, decreased access to competent instruction, and stigmatization (Chopra and Giangreco, 2019; Rose, 2020). In Australia, the access of students with disabilities to qualified teachers was somewhat impeded by overdependence on unqualified support personnel. In some instances, students received more instruction from teaching assistants than from qualified teachers. The situation is exacerbated when teachers consider teaching assistants responsible for individual students, enabling the teachers to abdicate professional responsibility for these students (Butt, 2018).

Training support personnel is necessary, but not sufficient, to ensure an inclusive learning environment and effective cooperation with teachers. A review of studies from 11 high-income countries, including Canada, Italy and Norway, found that teaching assistants often had unclear responsibilities and limited collaboration with and supervision by teachers. It also noted that their efficacy in raising learning outcomes and inclusion was mixed. For instance, teaching assistants often taught students with disabilities in small, separate groups, effectively excluding them from the wider classroom (Sharma and Salend, 2016).

Ideally, teachers and assistants should be trained together (Radford et al., 2015). Teachers may be unaware of their obligation to direct teaching assistants' work and collaborate with them. Relevant competences include conducting planning meetings, developing supplemental plans for teaching assistants and monitoring their day-to-day professional activities (Chopra and Giangreco, 2019).

New Zealand's Specialist Teacher Outreach Service models different strategies for teachers and teaching assistants and helps teachers work with the curriculum (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2020b). In Qatar,

BOX 4:**School leaders need specialized training to promote inclusion**

Head teachers often lack formal leadership or administrative training. In countries that participated in the 2018 TALIS, nearly one-fifth of head teachers had no instructional leadership training. The share was one-third in Australia and Lithuania and half in Croatia. In the same survey, 15% of head teachers reported a high need for professional development in promoting equity and diversity, with the share reaching more than 60% in Viet Nam (OECD, 2019b). Less than one-quarter of the 31 countries taking part in the World Bank Systems Approach for Better Education Results assessment on teachers required principals to participate in an induction or mentoring programme (Wilichowski and Molina, 2018).

Training in special education is obligatory for trainee head teachers in only eight US states (Lynch, 2012). Leadership courses often focus on law and compliance requirements rather than on leading strong instructional programmes for students with diverse needs (Osterman and Hafner, 2009). Lack of training and professional development often extends over the career (Burdette, 2010). An Estonian pilot project on organizational measures supporting inclusion of special needs learners in mainstream schools offers continuing training programmes for teachers and school leaders, and inclusive education implementation is a cross-cutting priority (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2018a).

a special education coordinator and additional special education specialists support teachers (Qatar Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2017).

Education officials who monitor implementation of inclusive teaching also need training. In Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania), in-service training on inclusive education was extended to a range of officials at all education levels. In January 2015, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training appointed and trained one staff member from each of the 15 departments to serve as an inclusive education focal point. By May 2019, nearly 70% of school inspectors, as well as examiners and curriculum developers, had attended one- to three-day training courses. Local and national inclusive education advisers and assistants took part in more intensive training involving seven study modules; a workshop on screening, identification, assessment and support for students; and six-week

introductions to sign language and Braille (Lehtomäki et al., 2020). In Singapore, officials working with primary and some secondary school teachers to help students with mild disabilities, dyslexia and autism spectrum disorders also receive in-service training through a professional learning communities platform, through which they share their knowledge and best practices (OHCHR, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Many countries have made progress in preparing teachers to support all students, collaborating with others, valuing diversity and engaging professionally. Yet, around the world, it is a struggle for education systems to change attitudes, equip teachers with the skills needed to support all students, and provide supportive working environments.

Teacher reservations about the feasibility of providing inclusive education to all may be based on discriminatory beliefs or reflect personal convictions or wider social norms, but they may also stem from lack of confidence in the ability of the system to support them. Sufficient, relevant and high-quality pre-service education or in-service professional development on inclusive approaches to teaching are needed to help teachers align their values, attitudes, knowledge and skills to be able to discern and develop the potential of every learner without prejudice and discrimination. Supporting teachers to teach all learners requires a coherent approach to their education, both at the initial stage and subsequently at regular intervals, which is consistent with a broad conception of inclusion.

While laws, plans, strategies and policies are increasingly issued all over the world in the name of inclusive education to fulfil the commitments countries made in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the fourth Sustainable Development Goal, two challenges are commonly encountered. First, many teacher education programmes are yet to embrace this broad concept of inclusion, instead treating inclusion in teacher education first and foremost as a special topic, imparting special skills, to be deployed in special settings. Second, even when countries strike the right tone, there is often a distance between declarations and actions, especially with respect to preparing teachers.

The following **recommendations** focus on ensuring that teacher education and support practices are at the heart of plans to deliver truly inclusive education systems.

- Education laws and policies must communicate a clear vision of teacher training for inclusion, as a process consisting of actions and practices that embrace diversity and build a sense of belonging, rooted in the belief that every person has value and potential and should be respected. Unfortunately, the language of inclusion has often been misused in policy documents to mask approaches that favour exceptions.
- Pre-service and in-service training systems should be reviewed and revised to ensure inclusive education principles are fully mainstreamed throughout teacher education curriculum. Inclusion for all, without exception, should be a core element of general pre-service training, imparting inclusive values and not as an optional specialist course helping some teachers prepare to teach some groups. This vision of inclusion avoids categorizations that could instead lead to stigmatization, marginalisation and potentially to exclusion.
- To achieve this goal, teacher training systems must deliver a more effective balance of theory-based learning and hands-on practice, with a focus on helping teachers learn how to be child-centred and inclusive. For that reason, peer training and professional exchanges, for instance through learning communities, resource centres, connections between mainstream and special schools, mentoring and team teaching must be prioritized.
- Teachers should be supported by teaching assistants, head teachers and district or thematic education coordinators to help fulfil their mission towards inclusive teaching. These key members of support mechanisms need to be equally well prepared to fulfil their roles.

- Governments need to meaningfully engage teachers and their representative organizations, as well as parents and community organizations, especially those representing groups at risk of exclusion, to develop and improve teacher standards, competencies and education programmes.
- A culture of monitoring and evaluation must be embedded in teacher education programmes, focusing on classroom practices and impact on student achievement and well-being, to inform and continue improving their design and implementation.

References for this paper can be found online at the following link:

<http://bit.ly/2020teacherspaperreferences>

International Task Force on Teachers
for Education 2030
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP, France
Email: teacherstaskforce@unesco.org
teachertaskforce.org

The Teacher Task Force is a global and independent alliance, hosted by UNESCO, composed of national governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, international development agencies, civil society organizations, private sector organizations and UN agencies that work together to promote teacher-related issues.

Global Education Monitoring Report
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP, France
Email: gemreport@unesco.org
Tel: +33 (1) 45 68 10 36
Fax: +33 (1) 45 68 56 41
www.unesco.org/gemreport

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