

# COMBATTING DISPARITIES IN ACCESS TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PORTUGAL, ITALY AND SPAIN

**TSI2022-EUROCH-IBA (101100120)**

**Deliverable 6.1 Webinars**

**European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This document is an executive summary of Deliverable D6.1 which presents training topics explored by countries, together with examples of how these might be put into practice within schools, school clusters or regions, to enable capacity to be increased, by addressing gaps and challenges that occur in many education systems. This was done through the organisation and delivery of three webinars. The deliverable is linked to implementation of this phase task **T6.1 Webinars, including training materials for key stakeholder (school professionals, regional administrations, student associations, parent associations) on priority topics in three Project countries, and evaluation analysis.**

### Building Capacity

Building capacity across the education system has been a key aspect of the work of this project, in its aim to support Italy, Portugal and Spain to improve their inclusive education systems, and a means of meeting one of the objectives of the project:

*To become a means for stakeholders to gain knowledge and understanding of inclusive education, to build capacity and change attitudes, leading to change at school and regional levels, through the practical application of inclusive approaches in the national priority areas.*

Capacity refers to the extent of those engaged in education at every level to implement the policies and practices in an effective way, to provide positive outcomes for all learners, and for society more generally.

Building capacity is then the active and deliberate provision of opportunities to increase the knowledge, understanding, skills and ability of those in education, to be effective in meeting the gaps and challenges at different levels of the education system. This may be those creating policy as well as those who implement policy into practice. Research has shown that for policy to be effective, both policy makers and those working to implement policy into practice at regional, local, school and class levels, must share the same knowledge and understanding and also possess the skills to address the challenges of inclusive education in varied contexts.

Engagement with stakeholders has been an important aspect of this project, in two ways: A series of online and in-person meetings enabled findings to emerge on the day-to-day experience of inclusive education, from the many perspectives of the wide range of participants. These findings revealed a number of common challenges across the three countries, as well as more regional issues in each of the three countries. The second aspect of the stakeholder engagement work involved addressing these gaps in policy, practice and understanding, by building capacity in those most closely engaged with education on a daily basis. The capacity building and strengthening phase (Work package 6) of EUROCH project addressed how education systems can close the gap between national and regional policies, in inclusive education, and their implementation in schools and classrooms. This was done through a series of three webinars.

Five topics were proposed by EASNIE team for webinars, in relation to key challenges and priority areas identified by the three countries. These were topics which can have a

positive impact on increased capacity, through targeted training and tools for key stakeholders. The EASNIE team chose the topic of the first webinar, and provided four further topics, inviting each country to select the topic of their choice:

- 1: Monitoring and evaluation at school level
- 2: Initial and ongoing training and development in inclusive education.
- 3: Collaborative working and thinking across all levels of the education system.
- 4: Effective strategies for resource allocation and use at school and regional levels.
- 5: Monitoring and evaluation for improvement at system and regional levels.

Following decisions by the three countries, webinars were held on topics 1, 3 and 4.

Each webinar included both a theoretical part and concrete, practical advice to participants. These were delivered through presentations on different aspects of the topic from one or more experts, supported by additional resources, in the form of tools, and examples of practice. All material was shared with participants after each webinar.

Webinars were held on the Zoom platform, with simultaneous interpretation from English into Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. Questions to the speakers were invited through the feature provided on the platform. As there was capacity for up to 500 online participants for each webinar, the ministries of the three countries were asked to extend the invitation to as many participants as they wished, up to 160, to extend this capacity building phase to those beyond the regions and participants of the working groups. Information about the target audience for each webinar was shared with the countries, prior to the event, together with an overview of the topic and speakers. Participants were invited to give feedback on the content and delivery of the webinars, after each event, together with general anonymized statistical information, such as their country of working and role/representation as participant.

### **Webinar 1 on Monitoring and evaluation at school level**

The first webinar in the series focused on monitoring and evaluation for school improvement towards more inclusive educational systems, with a discussion of practical steps and approaches that can be used in schools. A follow-up document was circulated with more information and a wide range of further examples, tools and references. The theoretical and conceptual background to this extensive topic was addressed in detail in Deliverable 5.1.

Effective monitoring and evaluation in schools have been identified as key to building capacity building and improving inclusive education. The webinar aimed to explore various aspects of monitoring and evaluation at school level, including five key areas:

1. Leadership and policy;
2. Inclusive instructional strategies;
3. Collaboration and supporting teachers;
4. Engaging parents;
5. Monitoring and evaluation improve inclusion.

The webinar, held on Wednesday, 27 November 2024, featured insights from Dr Gordon Porter, an expert in the field with extensive experience in building capacity at school, regional, and national levels, as well as contributions from EASNIE team members. Various examples of practice were included, along with an exploration of variety of approaches to the collection and use of school level data.

The invitation was extended to educational practitioners and other relevant stakeholders, such as school leaders, teachers, support professionals, teachers in training, teacher educators, and parents as well as participants from the peer learning activities and on-site meetings in Italy, Portugal, and Spain.

Following the webinar, EASNIE provided the attendees with several additional resources and examples of practice, on the topic of monitoring and evaluation at school level.

The target audience for this webinar was educational practitioners and other stakeholders, at school level, including school leaders, teachers, support professionals, teachers in training, teacher educators and parents. Those who participated in the peer-learning activities and regional in-person meetings from Italy, Portugal and Spain, may be particularly interested in attending.

This webinar addresses monitoring and evaluation for school improvement towards more inclusive educational systems, with a discussion of practical steps and approaches that can be used in schools. A follow-up document will be circulated with more information and further references. The theoretical and conceptual background to this extensive topic will be addressed in detail in Deliverable 5.1.

## **Webinar 2 on collaborative working and thinking across all levels of the education system**

The second webinar in the series focused on collaborative working and thinking across all levels of the education system. The webinar reviewed a research-based collaborative supports planning model for inclusive classrooms rooted in social learning theory. This partnership model provides an example of how to involve learners and families, including a parent's perspective.

The webinar discussed how collaborative working and thinking were promoted in the region of Flanders in Belgium. Additionally, it addressed the role of inclusive education centres and collaborative structures to support schools with the implementation of inclusive education for all learners. An example from Norway of the process around a White Paper on social inclusion and social mobility was presented and followed by a short questions session.

The webinar, held on Thursday, 13 February, 2025, featured insights from a member of the EASNIE team, Ms. Mieke Meire, (Catholic Education Flanders), and Ms Bodil Hafsås, (representative of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, and the project manager for a white paper on social inclusion and social mobility, especially targeted at children and young people, and their families).

The webinar included educational stakeholders from Italy, Spain, and Portugal, particularly policy makers at national and regional levels, practitioners such as school leaders,

teachers, support staff, regional/school cluster leaders, teacher educators, as well as community and family organisations.

Following the webinar, EASNIE provided the attendees with additional resources and examples of practice on the topic. These contains examples of practice from a number of countries, and organisations, including online dashboards for data collection and system monitoring.

As countries continue to build capacity at all levels of the education, it is clear that different ways of working and thinking are needed, to address challenges at every level. It is now widely accepted that inclusive education systems require all stakeholders to work together towards the shared goal of high-quality education for all. This means a move away from working and thinking in silos, to more collaborative approaches to find solutions, by working with those from different levels and sectors of the system, as well as with those working outside education, but who are closely engaged with it.

Three speakers at this webinar explored some aspects of collaborative approaches, and provided a range of evidence-based examples of practice at three key levels:

1. Individual learner: Collaborative support planning between teacher, parent/ learner and the support person leads to positive outcomes within a mainstream classroom.
2. Whole school: An overview of the system of support within Belgium Flanders, indicating how coordinated collaboration between a range of stakeholders enables an effective system of support for teachers and for learners within and across schools.
3. National level: Norway is currently developing a White Paper, to address some challenges within the education system. In a completely new and innovative approach to working and thinking, five Ministries in Norway are currently working collaboratively to design, develop and resource changes in the education system.

### **Webinar 3 on Effective strategies for resource allocation and use at school and regional levels**

The third webinar in our series explored a range of topics related to resource allocation within inclusive education systems. Featuring insights and examples from multiple countries, with a particular focus on Portugal, the aim was to provide a comprehensive understanding of how different nations approach resource allocation to promote inclusion and equality in education.

Presentations included:

- Professor Mel Ainscow, who focused on promoting inclusion and equity in education with lessons from Portugal.
- Associate professor Simoni Symeonidou, who discussed making the most of financial and human resources for inclusive education.

- Dr. Paula Hunt, who presented on intentional and purposeful resource allocation for inclusive education.

Educational stakeholders from Italy, Spain, and Portugal, including policymakers at national and regional levels, practitioners such as school leaders, teachers, support staff, regional/school cluster leaders, teacher educators, as well as community and family organisations, were invited to participate in this webinar.

Following the webinar, additional resources and multiple examples of practice from different countries were shared with the attendees.

# INTRODUCTION

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As a part of the capacity building activities of the Combatting Disparities in Access to Inclusive Education in Portugal, Italy and Spain project (EUROCH) (2022–2024) a series of three webinars was held.

This deliverable introduces training topics to be explored by countries, together with examples of how these might be put into practice within schools, school clusters or regions, to enable capacity to be increased, by addressing gaps and challenges that occur in many education systems. This was done through the organisation and delivery of three webinars. The deliverable is linked to implementation of this phase task **T6.1 Webinars, including training materials for key stakeholder (school professionals, regional administrations, student associations, parent associations) on priority topics in three Project countries, and evaluation analysis.**

## Building Capacity

Building capacity across the education system has been a key aspect of the work of this project, in its aim to support Italy, Portugal and Spain to improve their inclusive education systems, and a means of meeting one of the objectives of the project:

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Building capacity is then the active and deliberate provision of opportunities to increase the knowledge, understanding, skills and ability of those in education, to be effective in meeting the gaps and challenges at different levels of the education system. This may be those creating policy as well as those who implement policy into practice. Research has shown that for policy to be effective, both policy makers and those working to implement policy into practice at regional, local, school and class levels, must share the same knowledge and understanding and also possess the skills to address the challenges of inclusive education in varied contexts.

Engagement with stakeholders has been an important aspect of this project, in two ways: A series of online and in-person meetings enabled findings to emerge on the day-to-day experience of inclusive education, from the many perspectives of the wide range of participants. These findings revealed a number of common challenges across the three countries, as well as more regional issues in each of the three countries. The second aspect of the stakeholder engagement work involved addressing these gaps in policy, practice and understanding, by building capacity in those most closely engaged with education on a daily basis. The capacity building and strengthening phase (Work package 6) of EUROCH project addressed how education systems can close the gap between

national and regional policies, in inclusive education, and their implementation in schools and classrooms. This was done through a series of three webinars.

Five topics were proposed by EASNIE team for webinars, in relation to key challenges and priority areas identified by the three countries. These were topics which can have a positive impact on increased capacity, through targeted training and tools for key stakeholders. The EASNIE team chose the topic of the first webinar, and provided four further topics, inviting each country to select the topic of their choice:

- 1: Monitoring and evaluation at school level
- 2: Initial and ongoing training and development in inclusive education.
- 3: Collaborative working and thinking across all levels of the education system.
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Following decisions by the three countries, webinars were held on topics 1, 3 and 4.

Each webinar included both a theoretical part and concrete, practical advice to participants. These were delivered through presentations on different aspects of the topic from one or more experts, supported by additional resources, in the form of tools, and examples of practice. All material was shared with participants after each webinar.

Webinars were held on the Zoom platform, with simultaneous interpretation from English into Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. Questions to the speakers were invited through the feature provided on the platform. As there was capacity for up to 500 online participants for each webinar, the ministries of the three countries were asked to extend the invitation to as many participants as they wished, up to 160, to extend this capacity building phase to those beyond the regions and participants of the working groups. Information about the target audience for each webinar was shared with the countries, prior to the event, together with an overview of the topic and speakers. Participants were invited to give feedback on the content and delivery of the webinars, after each event, together with general anonymized statistical information, such as their country of working and role/representation as participant.

# WEBINAR 1 ON MONITORING AND EVALUATION AT SCHOOL LEVEL

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The first webinar in the series focused on effective monitoring and evaluation at school level and included all of the project countries.

Effective monitoring and evaluation in schools have been identified as key to building capacity building and improving inclusive education. The webinar aimed to explore various aspects of monitoring and evaluation at school level, including five key areas:

6. Leadership and policy;
7. Inclusive instructional strategies;
8. Collaboration and supporting teachers;
9. Engaging parents;
10. Monitoring and evaluation improve inclusion.

The webinar, held on Wednesday, 27 November 2024, featured insights from Dr Gordon Porter, an expert in the field with extensive experience in building capacity at school, regional, and national levels, as well as contributors from EASNIE team members. Various examples of practice were included, along with an exploration of variety of approaches to the collection and use of school level data.

The invitation was extended to educational practitioners and other relevant stakeholders, such as school leaders, teachers, support professionals, teachers in training, teacher educators, and parents as well as participants from the peer learning activities and on-site meetings in Italy, Portugal, and Spain.

Following the webinar, EASNIE provided the attendees with several additional resources and examples of practice, on the topic of monitoring and evaluation at school level.

## Webinar 1: outline

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Wednesday, 27th November, 2024, 15:00 CET; 14:00 GMT; 10:00 Atlantic

Duration: 2hrs 20 minutes.

First hour:

Welcome and Introduction from the Agency

Short video on the work of the Agency

Introduction to Dr. Gordon Porter (Agency)

Presentation by Dr. Porter Part 1

Topic 1: Leadership and Policy in Inclusive Education

Topic 2: Inclusive Instructional Strategies

Questions for Dr. Porter on topics 1 and 2

Examples of Practice (Agency)

Break (20 minutes)

Second hour:

Presentation by Dr. Porter and Diana Murdoch

Topic 3: Collaboration and Supporting Teachers

Topic 4: Engaging Parents

Topic 5: Data collection

Questions for Dr. Porter and Diana Murdoch on topics 3, 4 and 5

Examples of Online resources for monitoring and evaluation (Agency)

Conclusion (Agency)

The target audience for this webinar is educational practitioners and other stakeholders, at school level, including school leaders, teachers, support professionals, teachers in training, teacher educators and parents. Those who participated in the peer-learning activities and regional in-person meetings from Italy, Portugal and Spain, may be particularly interested in attending.

This webinar addresses monitoring and evaluation for school improvement towards more inclusive educational systems, with a discussion of practical steps and approaches that can be used in schools. A follow-up document will be circulated with more information and further references. The theoretical and conceptual background to this extensive topic will be addressed in detail in Deliverable 5.1.

## **Additional resources**

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### **1. Agency resources and [tools](#)**

#### **[Raising the Achievement of all Learners in Inclusive Education](#)**

The RA self-review tool was designed to be used with a range of stakeholders (for example: leaders, teachers, support staff, parents and other community members, including other professionals and local employers working with the school). The [tool for self-review](#) across nine areas of school life, is available to download:

#### **[Supporting Inclusive School Leadership \(SISL\)](#)**

The SISL project aims to investigate how to develop and promote inclusive school-level leadership through national and local-level policy frameworks and support mechanisms.

#### **[A Tool for Self-Reflection on Policy and Practice](#)**

Information, guidance, glossary, and **sets of reflective questions** to guide the evaluation processes of current school practice and a proposed agenda for organising focus groups on using the self-reflection tool and for dialogue, for school leaders and policy makers.

## [Country Policy Development Support \(CPDS\)](#)

The CPDS work supports reflection on country policy development and implementation issues for inclusive education. CPDS is an individualised activity for all Agency member countries

[CPDS Framework](#) is a tool for recording and systematising country information on inclusive education systems. It helps to identify evidence of educational policies in relation to the [Agency's Key Principles](#) and indications of the implementation of these policies in practice.

## [Voices into Action](#): Including the Voices of Learners and their Families in Educational Decision-making

The Voices into Action (VIA) project examined the critical issue of involving the voices of learners and their families and how to effectively include them in decision-making.

- **Background information:** An overview of international and European Union (EU) policy documents that explain learners' and families' rights to participation in education decision-making
- **Conceptual framework and practical checklist:** A list of tasks and resources based on the [VIA Framework](#) that can be used for reflecting on, planning and evaluating participatory programmes
- **Examples:** A library of member country case studies and examples from Agency work that you can filter based on relevant topics
- **Resource library:** A library of resources addressing issues related to learner and family participation that you can filter based on relevant topics
- An [online toolkit](#). The toolkit provides guidance on how to act upon and truly embed learner and family voices in decision-making. It includes main principles and specific step-by-step guidelines, approaches, tools, methodologies, innovative practices and direction to action. It also presents examples from Agency member countries, showing practical ways of involving learners and families.
- An [infographic](#) conveying the project's key messages.

## Monitoring and evaluation at system level

[Resource: Literature Review](#) European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2024. *Towards a Multi-Level, Multi-Stakeholder Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Accountability Framework: Thematic Country Cluster Activities (TCCA) – Literature Review*. (V. Donnelly, ed.). Odense, Denmark

## Inclusive Assessment

### [Implementing Inclusive Assessment](#)

This Agency paper uses information from observations, discussions and reflections during and after Phase 2 of the Assessment in Inclusive Settings project case study visits to identify 'meta issues' for implementing inclusive assessment. Available to download in 42 languages.

## [Outline Indicators for Inclusive Assessment](#)

### 2. Other resources

#### [Pathways to Success](#)

Supporting Schools in their journey towards more inclusive schools for all. A range of open sources resources, available to all, including much guidance on raising achievement and formative assessment approaches for learners more vulnerable to exclusion.

#### **UNESCO Resources for effective leaders**

##### [GEM Report Summary 2024/25](#)

Leadership in Education: Lead for Learning: Report Summary

[Assessment Policies and Practice to support inclusive schools](#). European Commission Working Group

#### **Data collection and use**

**Resource:** [Conceptual working paper](#): Out-of-School and Out-of Data? Out-of-school learners in the European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE).

#### **Examples of country guidelines on data collection and use:**

- [Example of national guidelines](#)
- [Example of EU Qualitative Data Analysis on teacher experiences](#)

**Scotland Suite** of resources to support schools and teachers on [effective tracking and monitoring](#) and [effective use of data](#).

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/effective-use-of-data/resources-to-support-effective-tracking-and-monitoring/>

This resource has been developed in partnership with practitioners and leaders to support effective use of data. It features six common themes from research to support effective use of data. This resource includes:

- workshop templates that presenters can adapt to suit their own context
- information to support tracking and monitoring

- a literature review on using data for improvement in education
- a glossary of commonly used terms
- podcasts that explore effective use of data
- links to further exemplification

### [National Parent Forum for Scotland](#)

Open access information on education and related matters of particular interest and relevance to parents.

### **Example of online software for monitoring and evaluation processes at school level:**

EU: [Dashboard of Indicators](#) has been co-created to depict a more meaningful definition of integration, including the voices of migrant and refugee children, their families and those who work directly with them in schools, NGOs, and policy makers. The dashboard compares data across European countries.

It encompasses 30 indicators:

- **14 for integration results** at the micro level, divided into 5 dimensions: 1) access to rights, 2) language and culture, 3) well-being, 4) connectedness and 5) educational achievements;
- and **16 for barriers and facilitators** of integration at the meso and macro levels, related to: 1) political leadership, 2) school segregation, 3) school organisation and teachers, 4) learning support, 5) mental health services, and 6) negative attitudes.

The data contained in the Dashboard brings together information obtained from both primary data collection (carried out between 2021-2023, encompassing 24,419 children and 406 sites) and secondary documentary sources (Eurostat, national ministries and statistical offices, MIPEX, PISA, Eurydice).

The co-creation of the Dashboard of Indicators and the data contained in the Dashboard were produced in the six IMMERSE countries: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, and Spain. Nonetheless, the overarching IMMERSE project and its corresponding Dashboard of Indicators have been designed to maintain applicability across national borders and encompass a pan-European perspective.

### **Using dashboards**

#### [Research paper](#)

Schwendimann, Beat & Rodríguez-Triana, María & Vozniuk, Andrii & Prieto, Luis & Shirvani Boroujeni, Mina & Holzer, Adrian & Gillet, Denis & Dillenbourg, Pierre. (2016). Perceiving Learning at a Glance: **A Systematic Literature Review of Learning Dashboard Research**. *IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies*. 10. 1-1. 10.1109/TLT.2016.2599522.

This paper presents a systematic literature review of the state-of-the-art of research on learning dashboards in the fields of Learning Analytics and Educational Data Mining.

Research on learning dashboards aims to identify what data is meaningful to different stakeholders and how data can be presented to support sense-making processes.

**Research paper:** Kasepalu, R., Chejara, P., Prieto, L.P. *et al.* Do Teachers Find Dashboards Trustworthy, Actionable and Useful? A Vignette Study Using a Logs and Audio Dashboard. *Tech Know Learn* 27, 971–989 (2022).

**This research** was conducted by academics at Tallinn University, Estonia, with teachers in upper-secondary schools, using dashboards and logs in collaborative learning classrooms.

**Teacher education/training in using dashboards** – to record what is being done and to analyse data for changes to drive progress. Evidence from research suggests teachers do not always use dashboards in the best way, and are not always positive about their use.

See for example:

<https://lirias.kuleuven.be/retrieve/673048>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10758-021-09522-5>

### **Learn and Work Eco-system Library**

A U.S. website intended for use as a searchable resource/repository of information in relation to education and work. More focus on post-school education/adult education, training and certification. Searchable [glossary of terms](#).

Example: <https://learnworkecosystemlibrary.com/glossary/quantitative-and-qualitative-data-in-education/>

OECD, 2015a. *Starting Strong IV. Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: OECD Publishing

OECD, 2015b. *Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing

### **Multimedia**

This area contains Multimedia materials including key messages, Agency presentations and links to videos from the Agency YouTube channel, for example:

**Key Principles** to support policy development and implementation for inclusive education

**The Agency's Vision** for Inclusive Education Systems

# WEBINAR 2 ON COLLABORATIVE WORKING AND THINKING ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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The second webinar in the series focused on collaborative working and thinking across all levels of the education system. The webinar reviewed a research-based collaborative supports planning model for inclusive classrooms rooted in social learning theory. This partnership model provides an example of how to involve learners and families, including a parent's perspective.

The webinar discussed how collaborative working and thinking were promoted in the region of Flanders in Belgium. Additionally, it addressed the role of inclusive education centres and collaborative structures to support schools with the implementation of inclusive education for all learners. An example from Norway of the process around a White Paper on social inclusion and social mobility was presented and followed by a short questions session.

The webinar, held on Thursday, 13 February, 2025, featured insights from Dr Kathleen Mortier, an expert in the field, currently a consultant for EASNIE. Ms. Mieke Meire, a practitioner with solid experience in different roles in education and inclusive education. And lastly by Ms Bodil Hafsås, the representative of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, and the project manager for a white paper on social inclusion and social mobility, especially targeted at children and young people, and their families.

The webinar included educational stakeholders from Italy, Spain, and Portugal, particularly policy makers at national and regional levels, practitioners such as school leaders, teachers, support staff, regional/school cluster leaders, teacher educators, as well as community and family organisations.

Following the webinar, EASNIE provided the attendees with additional resources and examples of practice on the topic.

## Agenda

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Time	Session
15:00 – 15:10	Practical information
15:10 – 15:20	Welcome and introduction Video presentation on the work of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE)
15:20 – 16:20	Presentation 1. <i>Collaborative working and thinking</i> at the individual and classroom level by Dr. Kathleen Mortier

16:20 – 16:30	Q&A on Presentation 1
16:30 – 16:45	Break
16:45 – 17:10	Presentation 2. The power of collaborative thinking in inclusive school systems by Ms. Mieke Miere, Catholic Education, Flanders
17:10 – 17:40	Presentation 3. Cross-sectoral collaboration in Norwegian Ministries by Ms. Bodil Hafsås, Policy Director in the Ministry of Education and Research, Norway
17:40 – 17:50	Q&A on Presentations 2 and 3
17:50 – 18:00	Closing remarks and feedback on the webinar

## Additional resources

This document provides a list of additional resources and examples of practice, on the topic of collaborative working and thinking across all levels of the education system.

As a part of the capacity building activities of the Combatting Disparities in Access to Inclusive Education in Portugal, Italy and Spain project (EUROCH) (2022–2024), the second in our series of three webinars took place on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025. The topic of collaborative working and thinking across all levels of the education system was chosen by Italy and Spain. This aims to further contribute to capacity building in the three project countries, following the first webinar on Monitoring and Evaluation at School Level. held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

As countries continue to build capacity at all levels of the education, it is clear that different ways of working and thinking are needed, to address challenges at every level. It is now widely accepted that inclusive education systems require all stakeholders to work together towards the shared goal of high-quality education for all. This means a move away from working and thinking in silos, to more collaborative approaches to find solutions, by working with those from different levels and sectors of the system, as well as with those working outside education, but who are closely engaged with it.

Three speakers at this webinar explored some aspects of collaborative approaches, and provided a range of evidence-based examples of practice at three key levels:

4. Individual learner: Collaborative support planning between teacher, parent/ learner and the support person leads to positive outcomes within a mainstream classroom.
5. Whole school: An overview of the system of support within Belgium Flanders, indicating how coordinated collaboration between a range of stakeholders enables

an effective system of support for teachers and for learners within and across schools.

6. National level: Norway is currently developing a White Paper, to address some challenges within the education system. In a completely new and innovative approach to working and thinking, five Ministries in Norway are currently working collaboratively to design, develop and resource changes in the education system.

## Collaborative working and thinking: additional materials

### Concrete tools

Collaborative Support Planning is a strategy to develop supports for learners in mainstream school settings. The supports are effective because they respond to the need of the individual learner and they also take into account the particular context (teacher preference, classroom, particular circumstances). This way of thinking and collaborating can be easily adopted in primary schools, but also in secondary schools there are different ways to set up interaction around supports for learners, including the learners themselves can be powerful. The first resource (Annex 1) is the **PPT presentation of the webinar** which can be used as a basis for designing trainings at school level about support planning.

The second resource (Annex 2 and 3) consists of **templates of support plans** for Kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools. It also includes **6 examples of support plans** that were developed in Belgium for learners with a range of different support needs in Kinder, elementary and secondary levels. The plans can be used in trainings to explain the difference between learner goals and support and as an example of an easy-to-use plan to guide the meetings and for teachers to use in their classrooms

### Country examples

#### *Belgium*

The first country example is the PPT presentation of Mieke Meire (Annex 4) that shows the **collaborative networks that have been set up in Flanders, Belgium** to support schools and teachers who need assistance related to the inclusion of learners with special needs. These centres both draw on a community of practice model to develop learning based in interaction related to concrete cases and they also bring in experts from special education as needed.

#### *Norway*

The second resource is the PPT presentation **about cross-sectoral collaboration in Norwegian Ministries** by Ms. Bodil Hafsås (Policy Director in the Ministry of Education and Research in Norway) (Annex 5). This presentation highlights the purpose and the possibilities of cross-sectoral work but it also addresses the challenges.

#### *Wales*

Wales have implemented an ALN (additional learning needs) system ([Additional-learning-needs-transformation-programme](#)) **which replaces the SEN system and which has**

**collaboration built into the process.** The new system encourages improved collaboration and information sharing between agencies, which are essential to ensure that needs are identified early and the right support is put in. Additional information about Early Years Service and the Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer can be found here: [Early-Years-Service](#)

### *UK-Northern Ireland*

In Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), **every post-primary school is a member of an area learning community (ALC)**. The aim of the ALC is for schools to come together (along with further education colleges and other training providers) and plan a broad and balanced area-relevant curriculum. The ALCs improve collaboration and facilitate better transition.” In addition, **Community and Schools Teams** are responsible for the development and delivery of functions and services aimed at promoting links between schools and their local communities. One example is Community Planning, which aims develop an integrated approach to local strategic planning across 11 Councils. The Education Authority is one of 12 statutory partners. Each council has a **Community Planning Partnership Board**. The Community and Schools Team co-ordinates the Education Authority’s response to Community Planning: [Community-and-schools collaboration](#)

### *The Netherlands*

Mainstream and special schools are required to work together to provide inclusive education for all children ([systems-of-support-and-specialist-provision](#)). As such, several **dozens of school networks have been formed and are governed by new education authorities** to facilitate the provision of high-quality education to all students ([Networks of support - Netherlands](#)). The inspectorate evaluates not only individual schools, but also the networks. In particular, the inspections focus on how each school, in collaboration with other schools in the network, provides adequate support to all students and suggests areas for improvement

### *Lithuania*

The ‘Open Vilnius’ initiative ([open-vilnius](#)) aims to **make the city an open learning space and encourage learning outside the classroom**: in the streets of Vilnius, parks, museums, businesses and other organisations. The platform provides ideas and lesson plans, itineraries for integrated activities, and spaces and lessons offered by institutions and companies in Vilnius. Streets and parks, architecture and urban planning, museums and galleries, institutions and businesses all become a school for all teachers and students in the capital ([Background paper immersive learning](#)).

### *Montenegro*

This 2019 report ([UNICEF Montenegro](#)) consists of an analysis to provide a knowledge base for professionals and decision makers from different sectors on **how to apply, effectively and efficiently, consolidated interventions and multisector system support** and response throughout the lifecycle of children with disabilities in order to achieve

important improvements in the situations of children with disabilities and their families and in the realization of their right in Montenegro.

### *Macedonia*

Similarly, UNICEF produced a policy brief on the “Assessment of **Capacities of Services provided by Health, Education and Social Sectors** for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities.” in Macedonia. This analysis of cross-sectoral work can be found following this link [UNICEF Macedonia](#).

### **Agency materials**

#### *Guidance for Establishing a Culture of Effective Communication in Education*

This [BRIES-guidance](#) aims to encourage decision-makers (school leaders, policy-makers and public education authorities at all governance levels, depending on specific national contexts) to **reflect on the communication structures and processes in place in their education systems**. The intention is to establish a culture of effective communication in normal times that allows stakeholders to be prepared for times of crisis. The guidance is an open-source resource and is available in all 25 Agency languages.

#### *Changing the Role of Specialist Provision*

Collaborative work between educators with general education and special education backgrounds is a key component of change toward inclusive system. The [Changing Role of Specialist Provision in Supporting Inclusive Education](#) (CROSP) involved developing a **roadmap for changing the role of specialist provision**. A policy Self-Review Tool [CROSP-tool](#) (available in 25 languages) can be used by policy-makers at national/regional/local level, as well as decision-makers and professionals at school level. It aims to enable them to reflect and develop a continuum of support for inclusive education.

#### *Resource for developing collaborative practice*

This resource ([Increasing-inclusive-capability-stakeholdercollaboration](#)) was developed as part of an Agency work ([Organisation-of-provision-to-support-inclusive-education](#)) and it provides a framework for collaborative dialogue that is essential for progress toward inclusive practice and policy. The materials included, when used as a basis for reflection and discussion, should have an impact on the values and attitudes as well as knowledge and understanding of all those engaged in the debate. This leads to increased ‘ownership’ of and a shared commitment to inclusive policy and practice among all stakeholders, these materials should help communities to achieve greater clarity around inclusive education and overcome any barriers presented by different professional contexts – different language, culture and traditions.

### **Supporting research and reports**

The research included directly relates to the content of this webinar and can be used to either support policy positions about collaborative working and thinking in inclusive education or can be used as a reference in trainings. It can also provide a theoretical

foundation to support a change in collaborative practices from an expert to a partnership model.

### *Collaborative Support Planning with Parents*

This article discusses the outcomes of a **parent-teacher collaborative teaming model** which was discussed during the webinar. Results suggest that implementation of the plans of supports was associated with increasing engagement in classroom activities, social interactions with peers, student-initiated interactions, and academic skills.

Reference (Annex 6): Mortier, K., Hunt, P., Desimpel, L., & Van Hove, G. (2009). With parents at the table: creating supports for children with disabilities in general education classrooms. *The European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 24(4), 337-354.

### *Communities of Practice in Inclusive Education*

This article reports on the **experiences and the perspective of parents and teachers who worked as communities of practice while designing support plans** in inclusive education. It discusses why the teachers and families consider this way of support planning is: efficient, clear and transparent, practical, creative and it creates connection and trust.

Reference (Annex 7): Mortier, K., Hunt, P., Leroy, M., Van de Putte I., & Van Hove, G. (2010). Communities of practice in inclusive education. *Educational Studies*, 36(3), 345-355.

The second article on this topic is a conceptual paper that discusses **how communities of practice, as an alternative theoretical framework of knowledge, can address some of the persistent barriers to inclusive education for these students**. Adopting this framework of fluid knowledge based on local narratives can help inclusion teams recognize the unique ways in which they can move their practice forward; it can also help teacher preparation programmes shift away from a diagnostic focus when preparing teacher candidates to include students with disabilities.

Reference (Annex 8): Mortier, K. (2018). Communities of practice: a conceptual framework for inclusion of students with significant disabilities. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 24(3), 329-340. doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1461261

### *Experiences of Latino families in inclusive education*

**Improving family-school partnerships with immigrant families** is something that school systems are challenged with. This research with Latino families who have children with disabilities in the US, disabilities led to insights about stressors and barriers, how families can be empowered, and how trusting partnerships can be facilitated.

Reference (Annex 9): Mortier, K., & Arias E. (2020). "The Latino community is not accustomed to arguing for the rights of their children": how Latina mothers navigate special education. *Journal of Latinos and Education*. doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2020.1804912

## OECD Report on Cross-sector collaborations

Reference: OECD (2022) Cross-sector and interprofessional collaborations: A powerful tool for the teaching profession? [OECD Cross-sector-collaboration](#)

### *ET Working Group Schools (2020)*

Reference: European Ideas for Better Learning. The governance of school education systems. Final Report of the Working Group. [ET+2020+Schools](#)

This report includes examples of networks to support development and includes several country examples.

# WEBINAR 3 ON EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND USE AT SCHOOL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

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The third webinar in our series explored a range of topics related to resource allocation within inclusive education systems. Featuring insights and examples from multiple countries, with a particular focus on Portugal, the aim was to provide a comprehensive understanding of how different nations approach resource allocation to promote inclusion and equality in education.

Presentations included:

- Professor Mel Ainscow, who focused on promoting inclusion and equity in education with lessons from Portugal.
- Associate professor Simoni Symeonidou, who discussed making the most of financial and human resources for inclusive education.
- Dr. Paula Hunt, who presented on intentional and purposeful resource allocation for inclusive education.

Educational stakeholders from Italy, Spain, and Portugal, including policymakers at national and regional levels, practitioners such as school leaders, teachers, support staff, regional/school cluster leaders, teacher educators, as well as community and family organisations, were invited to participate in this webinar.

Following the webinar, additional resources and examples of best practices were shared with the attendees.

## Agenda

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Time	Session
16:00–16:05	Practical information
16:05–16:15	Welcome and introduction Video presentation on the work of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE)
16:15–16:45	Presentation on <b>Promoting inclusion and equity in education: lessons from Portugal</b> by Prof. Mel Ainscow
16:45–16:55	Q&A
16:55–17:05	<i>Break</i>

17:05–17:30	Presentation on <b>Making the most of financial and human resources for inclusive education</b> by Dr. Simoni Symeonidou
17:25–17:50	Presentation on <b>Intentional and purposeful resource allocation for inclusive education</b> by Dr. Paula Hunt
17:50–17:55	Q&A on presentations 2 and 3
17:55–18:00	Closing remarks and feedback on the webinar

## Additional resources

This document provides a list of additional resources and examples of practice, on the topic of effective strategies for resource allocation and use at school and regional levels.

As a part of the capacity building activities of the Combatting Disparities in Access to Inclusive Education in Portugal, Italy and Spain project (EUROCH) (2022–2024), the third webinar in our series of three webinars took place on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The topic of effective strategies for resource allocation and use at school and regional levels was chosen by Portugal.

### Inclusion as a guiding principle for educational reform in Portugal

<https://internationalednews.com/2022/03/30/time-for-an-inclusive-turn-mel-ainscow-on-inclusion-as-a-guiding-principle-for-educational-reform-in-portugal/>

### Financing and funding

Alves, I. (2019). Enacting education policy reform in Portugal – the process of change and the role of teacher education for inclusion. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(1), 64–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2019.1693995>

[Funding models of inclusion in an international perspective J. banks.](https://brage.inn.no/inn-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/3119061/f97a8292-315f-49e5-825e-335a6f8fcf6b.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y)

<https://brage.inn.no/inn-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/3119061/f97a8292-315f-49e5-825e-335a6f8fcf6b.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

Buchner, T., & Proyer, M. (2019). From special to inclusive education policies in Austria – developments and implications for schools and teacher education. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(1), 83–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2019.1691992>

[FPIES Italy Country Report.pdf](#)

[FPIES Italy Country Study Visit Report.pdf](#)

[FPIES Portugal Country Study Visit Report.pdf](#)

Goldan, J., & Schwab, S. (2018). Measuring students' and teachers' perceptions of resources in inclusive education – validation of a newly developed instrument. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 24(12), 1326–1339.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1515270>

Meijer, C. J. W., & Watkins, A. (2019). Financing special needs and inclusive education – from Salamanca to the present. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23(7–8), 705–721. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1623330>

Reviews of National Policies for Education. Review of Inclusive Education in Portugal, OECD 2022.

Symeonidou, S. (2017). Initial teacher education for inclusion: a review of the literature. *Disability & Society*, 32(3), 401–422.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1298992>

Semon, S., Lane, D., Jones, P., & Smith, S. M. (2020). Job-embedded professional development: implementing co-teaching practices in general education classrooms. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–16.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1821448>

## **Intentional and purposeful resource allocation for inclusive education**

### *Romania*

[EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation](#)

[Roma in 10 European Countries - Main results](#) (includes Italy, Portugal and Spain)

[Roma inclusion in Romania](#)

[The World Bank in Romania: Overview.](#)

### *Mongolia*

[UNESCO](#)

[UNICEF](#)

[Mongolia case study: the evolving education needs and realities of nomads and pastoralists](#)

[School in the steppes: In rural Mongolia, keeping kids learning while at home](#)

[Nomadic Nature Trunk Program](#)

[Early Childhood Education in Mongolia - De educatione meridie](#)

### *Sierra Leone*

[Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education \(MBSSE\)](#)

[UNICEF](#)

[Assessing The Effective Implementation Of Sierra Leones National Policy On Radical Inclusion To Address Gender Inequality And Promote Equal Access To Girls Education](#)