



# **DESK RESEARCH REPORT ON GOOD PRACTICES ON POLICY ADVICE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

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## INTRODUCTION

In May 2015 UNESCO, together with UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR initiated the World Education Forum, which resulted in the adoption of the Declaration for Education 2030. The Declaration set out a new vision for education for the next fifteen years. One of the targets defined in the Declaration is the commitment to quality education and to improving the learning outcomes, which requires strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and mechanisms to measure the progress. Authors of the declaration claim that they „will ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems“. (UNESCO, 2015.)

Educational effectiveness is one of the measurable facets of educational quality, which provides a possibility to estimate to what extent the countries succeeded in achieving the vision of future education. Effective and efficient use of resources plays a decisive role in leading to the achievement of high educational targets. The most important and valuable human resources in education are teachers and school leaders.

European Commission also highlights the quality of teachers and teacher education as one of the priorities, assuming that teachers and school leaders are central to the learning process in schools (European Commission, 2018a). It is commonly acknowledged that teacher quality is the most important factor in determining the student outcomes. Therefore, it is vitally important to study, review, assess and apply good practices in policy implementation regarding the career paths and professional development of teachers and school leaders. European Union countries seek to make teaching a more appealing and efficient occupational activity. Policies to support, develop and incentivise teacher quality are central to the European Commission's ET 2020 strategic objective Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training (European Commission, 2018b).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

We chose the context-input-process-output (CIPO) model as a conceptual framework for our desk research. The model is used by OECD and other educational agencies (OECD, 2011) and is suggested as a basic theoretical model for studying educational effectiveness and improvement by leading researchers in this field (Chapman, Muijs, Reynolds, Sammons & Teddlie 2016; Kuger, Klieme, Jude & Kaplan 2016; Scheerens, 2016). The desk research focuses on a group of selected European Union countries, which, within different socio-economic and cultural contexts, provide efficient education and continuous professional development for teachers and school leaders (input), and implement policies and practices (process) leading to quality schooling measured by the level of student achievement (output).

The basic structure of CIPO model was developed in the 1960s to inform the design of ILSAs undertaken by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (Purves, 1987). The outcomes of international large-scale student achievement studies (ILSAs) reflect just one of the many aspects of quality schooling in national education systems of the participating countries. However, the level of student achievement in ILSAs is considered as one of the key indicators in the European Commission's Education and Training Monitor as well as in OECD member states reports on education.

The continuous professional development of teachers and school leaders, primarily of principals and head teachers, has become a cornerstone of national policies (Chapman et al, 2016). However, initial training of teachers and school leaders across the countries differ. A range of approaches towards the

initial preparation of teachers and school leaders has been attributed to different political, social and professional contexts, which has led to the provisions being tailored to the particular requirements of each society (Clarke & Wildy, 2010). In order to benefit from experience accumulated by individual EU member states, it is necessary to select and share good practices and policies which can be effectively applied in different educational environments.

## RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS AND MATERIALS

The desk research was conducted by using online research publications, documents and other written materials, published during the last ten years. The main groups of publications include:

- Publications of the international organizations, e.g. OECD, European Commission, Eurydice.
- International handbooks, e.g., The Routledge International Handbook of Educational Effectiveness and Improvement, International Handbook of Teacher Education Worldwide.
- Publications of researchers with established international reputation, e.g., P. Sahlberg and J. Scheerens.

### Selection criteria for examples of good practices and policy implementations:

- Successful recruitment and attainment of motivated teachers and school leaders
- Coherent and effective policies and practices of professional development of teachers and school leaders
- High learning outcomes judging by results of PISA 2015, TIMSS 2015 and PIRLS 2016 (at least in top six among the EU countries)

### Selection criteria for the countries:

- Examples of good practices and policy implementations from different geographical regions of Europe: „old“ EU member states (Finland, Ireland, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Austria), representing all three dominant European educational models (Scandinavian, Continental and Anglo-Saxon) and „new“ EU member states (Lithuania, Estonia, Slovenia), representing two different regions of Central-Southeast Europe (Baltics and Balkans)

## RESULTS AND DESCRIPTIONS

There is an abundance of theoretical literature about structure and contents of initial teacher education, in-service training and continuous professional development, acquisition and further elaboration of professional competencies, curriculum development, principles of effective teaching and educational leadership in schools, etc. However, due to differences in cultural and socio-economical contexts, countries tend to apply different policy strategies and to provide a variety of examples of good practices. Our aim was to select and present examples from several above selection criteria meeting EU member states which could serve as landmarks and sources inspiration for other partners.

### Initial teacher education

In the national education policies of the EU countries, there is an associated tendency to seek for higher levels of formal qualifications in initial teacher education (ITE), but also a trend towards more

diversified forms of professional development than were available in the past. (European Commission, 2018a) Therefore, the focus of our study is on several differing policy strategies – strategies of achieving high academic standards and status of teachers and strategies of overcoming the shortage of practitioners; prioritizing formal institutional training or continuous school-centred professional development of school leaders.

Initial teacher education is one of the most important factors in assuring an effective functioning of an education system. Teacher education can also be seen as an element of the more general policy objective of increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession (European Commission, 2018a). In high performing systems, the future teachers are trained in academic universities, where they receive sound theoretical ground as well as relevant practical skills. The necessary precondition of a successful training is a careful selection of highly motivated and academically oriented applicants. In countries where student outcomes are high, the following features are evident:

- Teacher education is required to be research-driven.
- Graduate teachers are capable of applying research to their work in a constructive and reflective way.
- Relatively small numbers of institutions are involved in ITE provision allowing for a critical mass to conduct research at a high level.
- Such institutes span/combine education sectors allowing for meaningful synergies in ITE for early childhood, primary, second-level and other sectors of education". (Sahlberg, 2012.)

A coherent system of teacher education should extend across all the phases: ITE, the period of induction and/or probation, and the continuing professional development of teachers and school leaders in terms of capability in pedagogy and management. European Commission urges to take policy measures in order to make the teaching profession more attractive, especially in countries which experience difficulties of recruiting and retaining the teaching corps:

*„Policy makers might consider how the education system as a whole should support the teacher education continuum, particularly after ITE. The urgency for action in this area is clear, in particular in countries where high numbers of teachers leave the profession prematurely. Yet an expectation of mentoring, particularly for beginning teachers, may be relatively easy to initiate. However, it cannot be assumed that all teachers will be effective mentors, and training for mentors should be a key component of any initiative in this area. Professional development may be closely linked to career progression and working conditions. Policies on selection and recruitment, appraisal, salaries, management structure and school leadership have considerable impact on the actors involved". (European Commission, 2018a).*

## High academic standards and research-based education – Finland and Ireland

During the last several decades the phenomena of Finnish education has increasingly attracted attention of researchers, politicians and practitioners from all over the world. The interest was mainly evoked by Finnish leadership in PISA and PIRLS international large-scale student achievement studies. Finland was third among the EU countries in PISA 2012 maths study, and first – in reading literacy and science studies. The results of PISA 2015 confirmed the leading position of Finland among the European countries. The country was fourth among the EU member states in maths study, first – in reading literacy and second – in science. The results of PIRLS 2016 study of reading literacy in the 4th grade placed Finland the second among the EU countries just after the Republic of Ireland. However, achievements of the country in international large-scale student achievement studies is just one of the many dimensions of educational quality. Finnish schools are well-known for their positive educational

climate and ability to provide quality education to all children despite different socio-economic and cultural status of their families. Initial teacher education appears to be one of the key elements of Finnish success.

In Finland, teachers for both primary and secondary school have to undergo university training. The degree programme is set at master's level (300 ECTS) and the studies take about five years to complete. The combination of a three-year bachelor's degree and a two-year master's degree in appropriate subjects qualifies teachers to teach subjects in primary and secondary schools or general subjects in vocational institutions. Teacher education, especially class teacher education, is one of the most desired study programmes, because a career in teaching looks very attractive for university entrants. Because of an overwhelming number of applicants to class teacher education, only up to 15% of them can be accepted (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011). At the University of Helsinki, the main institution of higher education in Finland, roughly about 10% of applicants are accepted each year. For example, 3200 candidates applied to different teacher education programmes at the University of Helsinki in 2013, and only 340 of them were accepted. The total annual number of Finnish applicants in all five categories of teacher education programmes in eight universities that educate teachers is about 20 000 (Sahlberg, 2015). Because the applicant numbers are so high, a carefully prepared and fair system of student selection must be in place. As the first step of the selection process, the matriculation grades of the applicants are considered. Additionally, the applicants take the literature test (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011). Applicants who meet the established standards are then invited to take part in a university-specific admission screening. In the third and the final stage, each university develops its own selection process that usually consists of interviews and discussion groups. The admission process is arranged in such a way that it is not possible to enter teacher education based on good matriculation grades alone. Prospective subject teachers can be assessed either before entering university or at a later stage of studies if they choose the consecutive model of university training. Sahlberg (2015) notes the importance of a careful quality control at the entry into the teaching profession in Finland. Due to the elaborate system of admission, it is difficult to get into teacher education without solid knowledge, skills, and moral commitment to teach. As a result of rigorous selection procedure student teachers' study progress and graduation rates are among the best in most universities. According to Sahlberg (2015), three main conditions emerge for attracting the best young people into teaching and keeping them in schools:

*„First, and most important, it is paramount that teachers' workplaces allow them to fulfill their moral missions. In Finland, as in many other countries, a teaching career is the result of an inner desire to work with people and to help both people and society through teaching. Teachers in Finland possess a strong sense of being esteemed professionals, similar to medical doctors, engineers, or lawyers. Teachers at all levels of schooling expect that they will be given the full range of professional autonomy they need to practice what they have been educated to do: to plan, teach, diagnose, execute, and evaluate. They also expect to be provided with enough time to accomplish all of these goals, both inside and outside of normal classroom duties...*

*Second, teacher education should be sufficiently competitive and demanding to attract talented young high school graduates. Teacher education attracts many of Finland's high school graduates because it constitutes a master's degree programme and is therefore challenging enough for them. In addition, due to the high quality of Finnish students entering teacher education programmes, the curricula and requirements have become very demanding, comparable to other degree programmes offered by Finnish academic universities. Graduates who hold a master's degree can, without further work, apply for doctoral studies. That same degree also qualifies an individual to work in government or local administration, teach in the university, or compete with other master's degree holders in private sector employment. It has been*

*questioned in Finland now and then whether primary school teachers necessarily need master's-level academic and research-based qualifications. However, Finnish experience suggests that if the primary school teaching degree requirement were lowered, many potential teachers would seek studies in professional fields that would give them higher academic status and thus open more employment opportunities later in their careers...*

*Third, the salary level is not the main motive to become a teacher in Finland. Teachers earn slightly more than the national average salary... Although making money is not the main reason for becoming a teacher, there should be a systematic way for salaries to increase. Finnish teachers climb the salary ladder as their teaching experience grows, reaching the peak after about 20 years of service. The same salary scheme is applied in all parts of the country and is determined in a national labor contract that the Trade Union of Education negotiates with the Local Government Employers that promotes the interests of Finland's municipalities and joint municipal authorities on the labor market". (Sahlberg, 2015, 103-105.)*

Another specific feature of the Finnish teacher education system is that it applies a research-based approach. Research-based teacher education is based on the following key principles:

- Teachers need a deep knowledge of the most recent advances of research in the subjects they teach. In addition, they need to be familiar with the research on how something can be taught and learned.
- Teachers must adopt a research-oriented attitude toward their work. This means learning to take an analytical and open-minded approach to their work, drawing conclusions for the development of education based on different sources of evidence coming from the recent research as well as their own critical and professional observations and experiences.
- Teacher education in itself should also be an object of study and research (Niemi, 2008).

Research-related activities form a significant part of teachers' education, and the basic requirement today for permanent employment as a teacher in all Finnish comprehensive and upper-secondary schools is the possession of a research-based master's degree. Therefore, the teacher education programme is based and permeated on research. An integral element of Finnish research-based teacher education is practical training in schools. Combining a research-based approach with practice-based approach remains an ongoing challenge for teachers' education. (Aspfors, Eklund, Hansen, Wikman, 2019.)

There are two kinds of practice experiences within Finnish teacher education programs:

*„A minor portion of clinical training occurs in seminars and small group classes within a department of teacher education (part of a faculty of education), where students practice basic teaching skills with their peers. Major teaching practice experiences occur mostly within special teacher training schools governed by universities, which have curricula and practices similar to those of ordinary public schools. Students also use a network of selected field schools for practice teaching. In primary school teacher education, students devote approximately 15% of their intended study time (for example, in the University of Jyväskylä, 40 ECTS credits) practice teaching in schools. In subject teacher education, the proportion of teaching practice in schools constitutes about one-third of the curriculum". (Sahlberg, 2015.)*

When after graduation Finnish teachers start their professional career in schools, a period of induction plays an important role in the process of their continuous professional development. Until recently, the practices of induction in Finnish schools were rather diverse: in some schools, induction was a well-defined responsibility of school principals or deputy principals, while in other schools induction



responsibilities were assigned to experienced classroom teachers. Sahlberg (2015) notes that teacher induction is an area that still requires further development in Finland.

Curriculum change is another challenge for teachers working in Finnish schools. With the introduction of new curricula, development of the system of tutoring becomes one of the priorities of the national system of education:

*„The goal of the national tutor teacher model is that all the basic education schools in Finland will have a tutor who supports and advises other teachers to introduce new curricula. The aim of tutoring is to support schools and teachers in the school reform. That support includes utilisation of innovative pedagogy and the promotion of digitalisation of teaching, using the new and wider learning environments. Tutors both instruct individual teachers and organise guidance and support for different teacher groups. Tutor teachers are networking with their counterparts in their own municipality and regionally. Tutor teachers started their work in spring 2017. Nearly 80% of municipalities nationwide are already involved in the first phase of the project. Tutoring will be expanded and strengthened in the years to come, increasing the number of participating municipalities. There are government subsidies available both to train the tutor teachers and to finance their work. There will also be regional co-ordination and development funds in the future, which will enable hiring regional coordinators to support municipalities in the region and further develop tutoring. Different models of tutoring will be collected and shared with all the schools in 2018“. (European Commission, 2018a.)*

Despite the widely acknowledged fact that initial teacher education in Finland is among the best in Europe, the Finnish government undertakes further steps in improving the teacher provision in the country. One of the points of criticism is insufficient coordination between academic teacher education and continuing professional development of teachers. The government has recently made important policy decisions in order to create a coherent system of initial teacher education and in-service training:

*„The Ministry of Education and Culture in January 2016 appointed a Teacher Education Forum to support the reform of Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development. Close to one hundred forum members and experts participated in work on the Teacher Education Development Programme. In addition, nearly 2 000 experts from the education sector, students and teachers, were involved through an online think-tank. The objective of this reform programme is to introduce a systematic, coherent structure for teachers' competence development spanning their entire career. The programme aims to ensure that teachers have opportunities for competence development at any point in their professional lives. Particular attention has been paid to building up the competences of beginning teachers and to offering them support during their first years in the profession. The programme will promote competence development in teams and networks, and make mentoring a more systematic element in the induction of novice teachers. Investment in educational leadership aims at supporting schools towards becoming learning organisations. The Teacher Education Development Programme is implemented in broad co-operation through twenty innovative development projects starting in autumn 2017. It is part of the government's key project aiming to reform comprehensive school, learning environments and teachers' competence“. (European Commission, 2018a.)*

There is no doubt that Finland will remain at the focus of attention of both researchers and practitioners from all over the world as an example of the country that manages to maintain high quality of education at the same times periodically seeking to update its model of initial teacher training and continuous professional development in order to provide the best possible education for all.

The Republic of Ireland is another European country which manages to achieve high educational outcomes. Ireland was the first among the EU member states and slightly exceeded Finland in PIRLS



2016 reading literacy study and the second among the EU countries after Finland in PISA 2015 reading literacy study. Irish students also demonstrated good results in TIMSS 2015 study, where Ireland was the second among the EU countries in the 4th grade math study, the first in the 8th grade math study, and third in the 8th grade science study. Like in the case of Finland, it seems natural to relate good performance of Irish students with high quality training of Irish teachers.

In Ireland, teaching as a profession has traditionally enjoyed a relatively high status, and has been a popular choice with high performing school leavers (Harford, 2011). The report on Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland (Sahlberg, 2012) outlines that Ireland has several advantages in its current system of teacher education that distinguish the Irish system of education from many others. The career of teaching is much desired in the country and it carries strong social prestige unlike in most other countries in Europe. Teaching is perceived as a profession with a status as high as the status of lawyers, doctors or engineers.

Entry into teacher education courses in Ireland is based on students' performance in the Leaving Certificate examination and is highly competitive. The academic standard of applicants is „amongst the highest, if not the highest, in the world“ (Sahlberg, 2012). Three subjects – English, Irish and Mathematics – are compulsory for student entry. Some universities also operate their own systems of admission, which include an interview with the applicants. Both consecutive and concurrent models are available in Irish higher education institutions (HEIs). Entry to concurrent courses may involve submission of a portfolio or other selective criteria. Though postgraduate degree is not obligatory in order to teach in Irish schools, a vast majority of post-primary teachers obtain postgraduate diploma in education.

All courses incorporate school practice, which must be successfully completed, in order to graduate. Most schools have established relationships with universities and regularly take students on placement (O'Flaherty, McMahon, Conway, 2019). Currently many institutions of higher education in Ireland offer teacher training programs. Despite positive evaluation of initial teacher education in Ireland, worries are voiced that it will be difficult to assure the quality of ITE unless the size of the teacher education institution is sufficiently large and thereby has a „critical mass“ through full-time professional staff, and competitiveness for good teaching, research and international cooperation. Educational experts think that all these characteristics are essential for the overall quality of teacher education (Sahlberg, 2012). They assume that teacher education in the country should be concentrated into a smaller number of centres, which could be professionally and academically stronger.

In order to develop better coordination and ensure a higher quality of teacher training in Ireland, a Teaching Council was established in 2006. Currently the Council acts as the body which sets professional standards for the teaching profession and drafts teacher education policy. The aim of the Council is to achieve and maintain a high level of professionalism for teaching and teachers. The Teaching Council ensures standards are upheld in the teaching profession by

- setting the requirements for entry into teaching;
- maintaining a register of teachers who meet the Council registration requirements;
- establishing and monitoring standards for all phases of teacher education;
- developing and promoting a code of professional conduct; and
- investigating complaints regarding the fitness to teach of registered teacher (European Commission, 2018a).

Another important policy decision was recently undertaken in order to ensure continuous professional development of Irish teachers. A new system, called *Droichead*, was introduced for school appraisal of newly qualified teachers. In accordance with the previous system, newly qualified primary teachers have to be appraised by the Inspectorate after a series of evaluation visits. In case of positive evaluation, they can be included into the register maintained by the Teaching Council. The new system combines school-based and external evaluation and is considered as an extension of the induction process for the novice teachers:

*„In Ireland, Droichead (Irish for 'bridge') is an integrated induction framework for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). It reflects the importance of the induction phase on the teacher's lifelong learning journey where the new teacher is formally welcomed into the profession of having completed Initial Teacher Education. It lays the foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career. Droichead includes both school-based and additional professional learning activities. The first step in the Droichead process is to establish a Professional Support Team (PST). This is a team of registered and experienced teachers who work collaboratively to support the novice teachers during the Droichead process and who support his or her entry into both the school and the profession. A National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) Droichead Associate provides follow-up support and professional development to the support team, newly qualified teachers and the school staff. It is important that there is a whole-school approach to Droichead as each staff member will support beginning teachers in different ways; from a tea or coffee and informal chat in the staff room, to co-planning and sharing resources and ideas to a more structured approach involving observation and feedback.*

*Droichead is a non-evaluative professional induction framework, which is markedly different from the traditional forms of post-qualification professional practice which applied in schools at primary (probation) and post-primary (post-qualification employment) levels in the past. The current model was launched in September 2016 and is planned to be the professional induction programme for all NQTs by the school year 2020/2021. Schools will have an interim period to transition into this model". (European Commission, 2018a.)*

## School leadership

Education policies that aim to build emphases on school leadership capacity consequently have an important role. Research evidence shows that school heads are second only to classroom teachers in their influence upon student outcomes (Day & Sammons, 2014). The provision of appropriate continuing professional development for school leaders is of great importance, especially when it is considered that, conventionally, leadership rarely features in initial teacher education programmes (European Commission, 2018a).

## The academic approach: post-graduate and master's studies in Ireland and the Netherlands

Several countries tend to apply the academic approach for raising the quality of school leadership across the education system. The national institutions offer, among other options, academically-oriented training, which can be undertaken at different stages of the professional career of school leaders – pre-appointment, induction and further professional development.

In the Republic of Ireland, the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) has been established in 2016 on a partnership basis between the Department of Education and Skills and the associations representing the country's school leaders in primary and secondary education. The Centre is established for an initial period of three years following which its role and purpose will be reviewed by the Steering Group. The

initiative aims to facilitate the development of a coherent continuum of professional development for school leaders. The Centre is expected to become a centre of excellence for school leadership and the lead provider of support. The CSL's responsibility extends across the continuum of leadership development commencing with pre-appointment training through to induction of newly appointed principals to continuous professional development throughout the leader's career. The Centre also serves as an advisory body for the Department on policy in this area. During the initial phase, the Centre will have a particular focus on the needs of newly appointed principals and experienced principals experiencing professional difficulty and/or challenging situations.

The Centre offers post-graduate studies in school leadership. The programme is jointly awarded by the University of Limerick, the National University of Ireland, Galway and University College Dublin. The programme is part-time and lasts 18 months. There are six taught modules delivered in 12-week semester-long blocks. The content is based on the four domains of the Quality Framework for Leadership and Management. Leadership visits are an integral part of the course with participants visiting schools other than their own and a leadership and management setting outside of the education field. The course is open to all teachers with five years' experience in teaching who are registered with the Teaching Council. The Post Graduate Diploma in School Leadership for Aspiring School Leaders commenced in September 2017, and 247 participants completed the course in December 2018 (Centre for School Leadership, 2019).

The Netherlands is the country known for a high-quality education system and does well in international student achievement studies: the country is ranking 2nd among the EU member states in PISA 2015 math survey. It is not mandatory for school leaders in the Netherlands to undertake professional training, but there is a wide range of leadership training offers. Courses are tailored to different target groups, including principals with different levels of experience, middle managers in secondary education schools, and teachers who aspire to become school leaders.

The Dutch School Leaders Association and the Dutch School Leaders Academy play an important role in supporting continuous professional development for school leaders. The Academy accredits and certifies professional development offers, disseminates information related to leadership development, initiates research on effective leadership, and organizes conferences and meetings. Both Dutch School Leaders Association and Dutch School Leaders Academy jointly developed professional standards for school leaders and maintain a registration system for school leaders who meet the professional standards (Nusche, Braun, Halasz, & Santiago, 2014).

Similar to the Irish Centre for School Leadership, Dutch educational institutions offer school leaders an opportunity to obtain an academic degree. E. g., the Netherlands School of Educational Management (NSO) is an association of academies from five universities and offers accredited courses of Master's in Education Management and Master's of Integral Leadership.

## Licensing, certification and mentoring – Slovenia, Austria and Estonia

Slovenia is another high performing country in international student achievement studies. The country is the leader among the EU member states of the 8th grade students in science in TIMSS 2015 survey. As well as the rest of the late EU entrants, Slovenia has a relatively short history of training school leaders. However, it has well-established structures of leadership training at all stages of continuous professional development. In Slovenia, change management is a compulsory element of the obligatory initial training all school leaders (head teachers) have to go through to acquire a headship license.

School leaders' responsibilities are defined in legislation, but there is currently no career promotion, comparable to that of teachers. The school councils evaluate school leaders' competences annually, but the criteria are mainly quantitative and serve as a basis for the annual financial reward. Guidelines for school leaders' promotion are currently being developed within a project funded through the European Social Fund, but wide consensus will be required if system-wide implementation is to be considered (European Commission, 2017).

The main institution which offers training for school leaders is the National School for Leadership in Education (NSLE). NSLE was established in 1995 by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for training and professional development of head teachers and candidates. The purpose of NSLE programme of initial head teacher training is to implement the Headship Licence Programme. Slovenian legislation regulates that all head teachers are required to participate in the training programme leading to the Headship Licence. The participants are head teacher candidates, i.e. newly appointed head teachers or aspiring head teachers. The programme is implemented in small groups of around 20 participants, by which different forms of active work are made possible, such as workshops, group work, case studies, role playing, shadowing, exchange of participants' experiences, presentations of particular organizations, face-to-face meetings with experienced head teachers, etc. The goal of the Headship Licence Program is to train participants for the tasks of school and kindergarten leadership and management as defined within education legislation, as well as to develop skills and competences contributing to personal and organisational efficiency. The programme for Headship Licence consists of six compulsory modules:

- Introductory module: head teacher as a manager and as a leader, teamwork, change management, trends in education
- Organizational theory and leadership: organisational theory, models of school organisation, school leadership
- Planning and decision-making: vision, planning, approaches to decision-making
- Head teachers' skills: managing conflicts, running meetings, communication skills, observing lessons
- Human resources: culture, motivation, professional development, teaching and learning
- Legislation

The main objectives of the programme are

- to qualify the participants for leadership and management tasks defined in Slovenian education legislation,
- to develop knowledge and skills that contribute to personal efficiency and organizational effectiveness, and
- to prepare the participants for the Headship Licence (NSLE, 2019).

NSLE also offers a specialised one-year mentoring programme for newly appointed school leaders. The program is implemented in the form of five one-day meetings of newly appointed head teachers and mentors to head teachers. NSLE coordinates the programme, and an experienced mentor accompanies each newly appointed school principal. Following every meeting, intermediate activities take place, as well as individual collaboration between the mentor (experienced head teacher) and the newly appointed head teacher. This program strives to offer systematic support to head teachers at the beginning of their mandate and to enable effective engagement of newly appointed head teachers in the process of leadership and headship. The new head teachers acquire knowledge and skills in the

area of leadership in education, thereby continuing their professional development and life-long training as head teachers. The programme is a combination of face-to-face meetings and workshops where all participants and their mentors meet.

The training programme Headship Development is designed for head teachers after two mandates of headship. Usually after ten plus years of headship, a need emerges to acquire additional knowledge and skills, which the individual has started to develop within the programmes of the NSLE. The Head Teachers Development Program thus systematically promotes life-long learning of head teachers and introduces new forms of networking. The programme is composed of four intertwined methods of work: three three-day modules, one one-day elective activities, mutual advisory work and project work (NSLE, 2019).

In Austria, there are several learning opportunities for school leaders – compulsory management training, courses at teacher training institutions, and training at the Leadership Academy. Newly appointed school principals have to complete a compulsory management training programme within the first four years of their principalship in order to get the extension of the contract. Usually, it is a part-time modular course offered by an institution of in-service training, combined with periods of self-study. There is no required pre-service preparation for the candidates for principalship in the country. There are also no compulsory induction programs. Further participation in professional development programs is expected but not compulsory.

The Leadership Academy was established in 2004 in order to offer regular training for school principals, inspectors, government officials and other staff with managerial responsibilities. The Academy started with 300 participants, and since then more than 3000 professional educators have studied in the Academy. The formal goal of the Academy is sustainable improvement of the preconditions and processes of young people's learning in all educational institutions (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008a).

*„The Leadership Academy is the national forum for continuing education at an executive level in schools. It offers innovation training for head teachers as well as for education management personnel from all types of educational institution. The Academy is based on an understanding of leadership that focuses on dialogue and providing excellent education and personal formation (Leadership for Learning). Leadership is regarded as the capacity to promote the quality of education on offer and to show initiative, creativity, courage, conviction, persuasiveness and confidence in the capacity for innovation already present in the system. The Leadership Academy (LEA) holds four three-day forums each year. At every forum, participants reach a new milestone on the way to membership of the Academy. Successful graduation and admission to membership of the Academy is decided on during the certification process at the fourth forum. The LEA course includes: plenum meetings with motivational impulse lectures (full assembly); workshops in collegial coaching groups; reflection on innovation and development of project ideas (groups of six); learning partnership sessions for the exchange of ideas and collegial brainstorming; workshops in regional groups (Federal State) for regional net-working and for the presentation and exchange of ideas“ (European Commission, 2018a).*

Leadership Academy applies the Leadership Competence Scale, which enables the assessment of leadership qualities, capabilities and behaviour according to various types. On the one hand, this leadership model provides a theoretical basis for the analysis of leadership and management, on the other, it offers an instrument which helps examine personal leadership behaviour and the added value which is gained by participating in the Leadership Academy. When the assessments are analysed, general areas for development can be discerned, as well as particular areas of strength and excellence which apply across the whole group of participants. The first results indicate that showing the direction for innovation and change and enabling the development of organisational achievement are crucial elements for the challenge of leadership. The establishment of the Leadership Academy was an



innovative and carefully crafted response to a need to prepare a large number of school leaders over a relatively short period of time (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008b). The policy measure had positive impact on leadership practice in Austrian educational institutions.

Estonia follows the success of Finland by becoming a number one EU country in PISA 2015 survey in math and science and ranking third in reading literacy, falling slightly behind Finland and Ireland. However, like most of the other „new“ EU countries, Estonia cannot boast of high popularity of the teaching profession. Enrolment rates in teacher education programmes are constantly falling down and does not seem to be an attractive option for university entrants. An ageing teacher population and the diminished prestige of a teaching profession may enhance pressure on the education on teacher recruitment in the future. The mismatch between high student achievement in international surveys and low popularity of the teaching profession is one of the specific traits of the Estonian education system. Estonians are well aware that it will be difficult to maintain leading positions in a situation of teacher shortage; therefore the country seeks to implement a variety of policy measures to retain the required teaching corps (Mikser, Schihalejev & Trasberg, 2019).

The development of school leadership is another challenge faced by the national system of education. Estonia has to find ways of attracting new talents to prepare for and eventually take up school leadership positions. There is an evident need to make the choice of leading the school more rewarding, and this requires re-thinking of the school leader career and finding ways to make leadership positions more financially attractive. Policy measures in making the profession more preferable may include a distinct career structure for school leadership (linking career progression to specific leadership responsibilities as underpinned in school leader professional standards); an independent salary scale for school leadership; and appraisal results to inform career advancement.

In addition, there is a pressing need to develop and ensure the implementation of a regular and more systematic approach to school leader appraisal. The use of a central reference on which to base school leader appraisal is highly desirable in increasing the objectivity of appraisal procedures. Earlier efforts to develop professional standards for school leaders in Estonia can provide input for the plans to develop an “authoritative” set of professional standards. The challenge is to develop appraisal processes, frameworks and conditions that do not require an excessive investment of time and effort, that serve as an effective tool for improving practices and that are perceived as useful and relevant by school leaders (Santiago, Levitas, Rado, & Shewbridge, 2016).

*„In 2014, Estonia started a national professional training programme, designed to create a pool of mentors whose expertise is channelled to support newly appointed school leaders. The objective of the programme is twofold: to provide high-quality mentoring support to the school leaders and to promote internal mentoring systems at the mentors' own schools. There is a public competitive process to apply for the mentoring position. Applicants must have at least five years' experience and demonstrate very high motivation. The training for mentors is carried out by a private company in cooperation with Innove, a non-profit foundation governed by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. Training for mentors includes communication, needs analysis, coaching and feedback skills. There is a special development programme to support the new principals during their first two years in the new position. It consists of eight two-day seminars, visits to schools, in Estonia and abroad, and meetings with experts and practitioners. Mentoring is a major component of the programme. All participants are assigned a mentor who has graduated from the national mentoring programme. Mentors and mentees are matched according to the mentees' needs. They are both prepared for the cooperation and jointly determine an individualised agenda. The mentor is supposed to act as a critical friend to the principal using coaching skills. The mentor and mentee meet at least once a month and have additional sessions via e-mail, phone, etc. Mentors' expenses are covered, and work remunerated.*



*At least once a year mentors in the national pool meet to discuss their experiences and to receive additional training. During the first two years, the programme has offered mentors to 32 principals. The feedback shows that the relationship has been mutually beneficial". (European Commission, 2018b.)*

## TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The selection of country cases presented above does not include examples of monetary policies. Competitive teachers' salaries are part of an effective professional career model. Teachers' salaries represent the largest single cost in formal education and have a direct impact on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. They influence decisions to enrol in teacher education programmes, work as a teacher after university graduation, return to the teaching profession in case of a career interruption and/or to remain a teacher (OECD, 2018). However, country approaches to teachers' salary issue vary a great deal. They depend on the standard of living in each country, the purchasing power of teachers, the salary scale of other professions which require similar level of education, etc. The impact of monetary policies may vary across different country contexts, but, in general, the higher the salaries, the fewer the people who choose to leave profession.

Most of the EU countries consider a master's degree a necessary precondition for teaching; not only in secondary, but also in primary schools. Countries, which still practice to educate teachers at a bachelor's level, have nevertheless switched from college to university education. Teachers' colleges are gone, the number of specialized teacher training universities is also decreasing. Experts recommend not to scatter initial teacher training programmes across many different universities, but rather to concentrate teacher education in a smaller number of large university centres in order to make studies academically and professionally stronger. Master's studies imply acquiring competencies in the field of educational research, which are highly demanded in a contemporary school, which has become a complex and constantly changing educational organization. Higher level of formal education and research-based studies tend to increase the prestige of the profession and contribute to the better quality of training.

Further efforts of raising the quality of the teaching corps are reflected in higher entry standards. The dominant tendency in the EU countries is setting higher requirements for entrants to teacher education studies. Rigorous entry requirements are also related to the attractiveness of the profession: higher standards of education usually translate into better employment opportunities and higher earnings (OECD, 2018). Cases presented in the study reflect the process of careful selection of applicants. School leaving certificate with high matriculation grades does not apply as the only criteria for successful enrolment. In a number of countries additional entrance exams, aptitude tests or admission interviews are held in order to select the most talented and motivated students. The same applies to students who prefer to choose consecutive models in order to acquire teachers' qualification and to seek to enrol on one-year teachers' professional qualification studies.

Another observable tendency is the increased focus on the induction process. Most teachers leave the profession during the first several years of their teaching career, and for that reason the effective system of adaptation for the beginning teachers is crucial in order to retain young professionals. Besides that, teachers have to prove that they are fit for the teaching job. Therefore, they often have to undergo probational periods before gaining access to the permanent teaching position. Induction, where it exists, may occur at the same time as probation or be an integral part of it (European Commission, 2018b). Induction policy can be implemented in different ways. Tutors, mentors, professional consultants or support teams, both internal and/or external, may assist the beginning teachers and help them during the probation period to gain confidence and avoid early burnout. Sometimes the induction process leads to qualification exams, certification or appraisal of novice

teachers. Traditional models of mentorship are school-based – experienced teachers supervise and consult the young ones. However, universities are undertaking the mission of training professionals in this field and offer study programmes of mentorship and educational consultancy.

We can also observe continuous attempts to develop more effective policies of continuous professional development. In most of the EU countries, teachers are legally entitled to have paid days for their professional development. The problem (which is more evident in case of decentralized in-service training systems, but also exists in more centralized models) is that numerous public and private teacher training institutions and agencies provide them with a great variety of different in-service training courses of different lengths and contents.

In a free market of educational services, not all of these courses are relevant and respond to the needs of their school. Short occasional courses are less effective in terms of professional development than the longer and more focused ones, school-based training with participation of school leadership team make greater impact than individual visits to in-service training courses, etc. Schools have to elaborate long-term strategies of professional development for their teaching staff. Training of professional development consultants can contribute to better school-based career planning. On the national level, governments also seek to install systematic, coherent models of teachers' competence development spanning their entire career and to update the already existing schemes of regular teacher appraisal.

Countries where the teaching profession is less popular, have to solve a twofold problem – raise the quality of teacher education and make the teachers' career more attractive. They have to face the dilemma of the higher the requirements, the fewer the candidates. In case of a teacher shortage the policy of raising standards increases the risk of reducing the number of students willing to choose the teaching profession.

In the majority of countries, the pre-appointment training of school leaders is preferable and is considered as an advantage in case of competitive placement, but usually it is not a necessary pre-condition. Apparently, requirements of obligatory leadership training for those willing to apply for school headship could reduce the number of prospective candidates. On the other hand, requirements of leadership training for acting school heads are convenient in many EU countries. In cases presented above, we observe a wide array of options, including courses for beginning, mid-term and experienced school leaders. Different countries practise different induction procedures, including licensing, certification and/or appraisal.

In our understanding, a strong motivating factor for school leaders is the possibility of acquiring a formal postgraduate award: a postgraduate diploma or a master's degree. It is an attribute of higher academic status and prestige as well as an evidence of higher level of competence in education systems where school principals periodically have to undergo the appraisal procedure. However, the requirement should not be imposed on school leaders as not all good practitioners are academically oriented or can allocate time required for the academic studies. Therefore, a wide range of short-term courses for school leaders is no less important in order to offer possibilities of continuous professional development. Professional associations could play a dominant role in this respect as fellow professionals apparently know best which training options are most relevant and effective. Cooperation of professional associations and educational leadership academies/centres seem to be the most productive for further development.

## DISCUSSION

Current trajectories of development, judging by the presented examples of policy implementation, seem to be clear enough – higher level of studies, more demanding entry requirements, concentration of teacher education in fewer but larger university centres with

better resources and wider opportunities of research-based training. These strategies of setting higher standards are followed by offering a variety of alternative pathways to choose a teaching profession and new support services for continuous professional development of teachers and school leaders. However, all these measures of improving educational quality require additional investment. Besides this, country governments should also react to the permanent pressure for the increase of salaries for teachers. Therefore, the key question, which politicians will have to answer, is the following: are societies ready to invest more in teachers and how to make teacher education not only more effective, but also cost efficient?

In a neoliberal market of educational provision, one of the key questions is the level of state regulation and the involvement of stakeholders. Examples show that countries apply different approaches, especially during the period after the end of university-based teacher training. There are different systems of certification, licensing and appraisal; some of them are obligatory, others are not. Professional associations as stakeholders participate in these activities with different levels of involvement. The same applies to the provision of in-service training. Some systems are free market-based, some others rely only on the certified and/or state-owned providers, and still some others strictly follow the state strategy of continuous professional development with clearly defined goals, actors and activities. Even the most advanced countries (e.g., Finland) are not completely satisfied with the existing models and are looking forward its further development.

The problem of the attractiveness of the teaching profession still remains unresolved in many countries. Governments, which are facing the shortage of teacher supply, are applying various promotional measures to enhance the image of the teachers and attracting more motivated young people into the teaching profession. They launch promotion campaigns which are based on TV broadcasts, the use of social media, publications in press, etc. However, in these campaigns the issue of the moral purpose of the teaching profession often seems to be overlooked. Do teachers still have the privilege of fulfilling the moral mission of helping both people and society? Is working in disadvantaged areas and coping with poverty and discrimination appreciated as much as high school and country rankings in the international league tables? Maybe promoting teaching as a highly valued cultural and social mission and not just a service, which assists in developing a set of skills demanded by the labour market, would work better.

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