



21st century challenges for the  
**EDUCATOR PROFESSION**  
A CALL FOR SYSTEM CHANGE

**LIFELONG  
LEARNING  
PLATFORM**  
EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION



Co-funded by  
the European Union

**POSITION PAPER 2024**

# Acknowledgements

## 21st century challenges for the educator profession; a call for system change The changing role and challenges faced by education and training professionals

- **Chief editor:** Brikena Xhomaqi, Director, Lifelong Learning Platform
- **Editors:** Andrei Frank, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, Lifelong Learning Platform  
Erika María Rodríguez Somlyay, Policy and Project Officer, Lifelong Learning Platform  
Maria Gonçalves Ribeiro, Project Officer, Lifelong Learning Platform
- **Co-editors:** Andrea Lapegna, Deputy Director, Pauline Boivin, Project and Policy Manager
- **Graphic design:** María Arguedas, Communications Assistant

© Lifelong Learning Platform 2024

Reproduction for non-commercial use is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by  
the European Union

This paper draws on the results of the Lifelong Learning Platform's annual theme activities such as the LLLP Working Group on Policy Coherence (10 April 2024 and 11 September 2024), the Lifelong Learning Lab (17 June) and the 14th edition of the Lifelong Learning Week (18 November-22 November 2024). In addition, it reflects LLLP members' concerns throughout some months of consultations.

LLLP designs its positions through different activities, but it also relies on the expertise of partner and member organisations with special knowledge on the topic. We would like to thank the participants listed below who contributed with their views to a series of focus groups and interviews in May-June 2024:

- Dr. Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont, Professor emerita University of Neuchâtel
- Dr. habil. Benjamin Dreer-Göthe, University of Erfurt
- Dr. Bhavani Sridharan, Australian Catholic University
- Dr. Claudia Bade, University of Leipzig
- Daiana Huber, Senior Researcher CPIP

- Dr. Elizabeth Cook, Edith Cowan University
- Dr. Esther Adi-Hapha, Bar-Ilan University
- Dr. Eva Hartell, KTH Royal Institute of Technology
- Dr. Fabián Barrera Pedemonte, Universidad de Los Andes
- Dr. Ingrid Noguera Fructuoso, Autonomous University of Barcelona
- Klára Antesberger, Eötvös Loránd University
- Dr. Leonie Brummer, University of Groningen
- Maria Teresa Cairo, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Catholic University of Milan)
- Dr. Maria Zeniou, University of Central Lancashire, Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus)
- Prof. Dr. Regina Mulder, University of Regensburg
- Dr. Sikunder Ali, Norwegian University Of Science And Technology
- Dr. Theodora Papatheodorou, Norland College
- Dr. Vesife Hatisaru, Edith Cowan University
- Prof. Dr. Winnie-Karen Giera, University of Potsdam
- Xavier Prats Monné, Special Advisor Teach for All

# Index

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Preamble</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Europe’s Educators: Understanding challenges and celebrating professional diversity</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>The big picture: Systemic adaptation for the educators</b> .....	<b>16</b>
What the EU does and can do?.....	18
Recruiting and retaining educators.....	22
The necessity of training and recognition of learning abroad (including transferability and portability).....	23
Baseline needs: Working conditions.....	28
The evidence of valuation: appraisal and career structure.....	31
Guaranteeing education as a public good.....	34
Co-creating policies with educators.....	37
Collecting targeted data on educators.....	40

<b>It takes a village: The role of organisations in supporting educators</b> .....	<b>42</b>
Contextualisation.....	43
<b>Professionalising educators</b> .....	<b>44</b>
Participation in training.....	44
Improving training provisions quality.....	47
Valuing everyone.....	49
Improving learning environments: infrastructural and HR management.....	50
Collegiality and distributed leadership.....	53
Pedagogy and andragogy experimentation.....	56
<b>Between system and agency: the role of each educator</b> .....	<b>60</b>
Contextualisation & defining the ideal educator profile.....	61
Educators’ missing resource: Time.....	63
Trial and error: innovative pedagogies and self-regulated learners.....	65
Participation in decision-making mechanisms.....	68
Involvement in social and civil dialogue.....	68

# Recommendations

## Value and Recognise the professionals

Policymaking at EU, national, regional and local levels must endorse a broader definition of the role, understanding that the professionals in education and training are not only teachers in compulsory and initial education. It is crucial that any future reform and strategic approach to the sector considers how the professionals (teaching, supporting and leadership staff) engaged in the learning process in early childhood education and care, compulsory education, VET, higher education, adult education, youth work, volunteering, and all forms of formal, informal and non-formal learning must be supported and collaborate with each other.

## An ecosystem of professionals

Recognise the value of all professionals working in the sector, supporting those educators directly engaged in learning. Ancillary staff, heads of education and training institutions (at all levels), social workers supporting education and training institutions, guidance, mentoring and validation professionals are some of the professions that must be better supported and made more attractive. The educators do not operate in a vacuum and without a strong ecosystem of professionals they cannot support learners and achieve their ambitions.

## Investment in the educating profession

The EU must take decisive actions to finance the professionals working in education and training since quality education cannot be achieved without adequate public funding and sufficient investment in the profession delivering learning processes. EU Member States must return to pre-2008 investment. None of the EU targets can be met without dedicating a significant increase to education in training in the next Multiannual Financial Framework and/or in the national budgets - which ought to foresee a 20% of public expenditure on the sector as per UNESCO commitments.

## Baseline professional needs

Improve working conditions: foresee decent salaries, adequate working environments and more opportunities for career paths. The wages of the profession do not match those of other tertiary-educated professions, while frequent educator strikes signal extreme dissatisfaction with the poor working conditions and major challenges faced in the learning environment. Educators need stable contractual forms; safe, healthy and well-equipped workplaces; support structures and balanced workloads; adequate social protection and pension; and professional standards to regulate their career structure.

# Recommendations

## An intellectually stimulating profession

Drastically increase educators' participation in professional development for their own needs. This includes the provision of paid training leave, the provision of adequate information on available training, and the provision of flexible and problem-based training embedded in daily activities. Curricula for teacher training must be revised to include sustainability, digitalisation, inclusion, innovation, and new pedagogies and andragogy. This can be facilitated through European, national and regional strategies for an attractive profession.

## The voice of educators

Implement a true and diffused whole-of-government approach, embedding civil and social dialogue whenever discussing education and training reforms. Practitioners must be able to express their needs on policies impacting them, and to this end, they need to be empowered to collaborate with each other across formal, informal, and non-formal learning environments.

## Distributed leadership

Member States and education and training institutions must implement a distributed leadership model in the day-to-day management of an education and training institution to boost motivation, competence, and overall learning outcomes while fostering interdisciplinarity.

## Innovate the working place

Ensure modern learning spaces that allow for innovative pedagogies, interdisciplinarity, collaboration with external stakeholders and meaningful connections with the surrounding community. The learning space, beyond infrastructural adaptations, requires an adapted curriculum to test new pedagogies and andragogies, as well as more formative assessment, action research, and collaborative learning. Educators, as any professional, want to and must work in modern spaces!

# Preamble

The current paper was developed by means of desk research performed by the Secretariat of the Lifelong Learning Platform over the period January-August 2024, with targeted updates performed over September-October 2024 in the case of large-scale publications related to education and training being published. This was followed by a series of three focus groups and several specific interviews with researchers, practitioners and individuals who previously were engaged in policy making on the topic at EU and/or national level. Those experts contacted for focus groups and interviews are listed in the acknowledgements section of this paper. The focus groups and interviews took a semi-structured format, with a series of questions circulated in advance but then adapted based on the direction of the conversation. Their perspectives have been incorporated in the paper without specific quoting, while their prior research has been used in the desk research process. The paper has also been subjected to a wide-scale consultation involving all 43 members of the Lifelong Learning Platform, as they represent educators operating in different sectors.





# Europe's Educators: Understanding challenges and celebrating professional diversity

The Lifelong Learning Platform - European Civil Society for Education (henceforth LLLP) promotes a vision of lifelong learning in which formal, informal and non-formal learning environments and stakeholders collaborate, placing learners at the centre of the learning processes<sup>1</sup>. LLLP presented interlinkages among learning environments in its 2019 [Position Paper on 21st Century Learning Environments](#). It addressed the funding for such learning environments in the 2022 [Position Paper on Investment in Education and Training](#), reflecting on the impact that this collaboration has on learning outcomes in the 2023 Position Paper on Key Competences for All, the 2020 [Position Paper on Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Societies](#) and in the 2021 [Position Paper on Rethinking Assessments](#). This paper focuses on educators, who too often are considered a 'profession of last resort'<sup>2</sup>. Based on our Lifelong Learning Glossary, we understand educators as all those who professionally guide and support learners in their learning process: teachers and instructors in formal vocational education and training, as well as trainers, coaches, and other professionals in non-formal settings and coaches supporting learning in the workplace.

The outpour of support for educators during COVID-19 came late since they were not prepared and supported to deal with the pandemic. Moreover, the lessons learned during those unprecedented times were forgotten, as reforms for re-valuing the profession were not provided in the aftermath of the pandemic. The shortages of educators occurring in Europe were disregarded almost completely in the 2023 European Semester cycle<sup>3</sup>, and timidly appeared in the 2024 cycle<sup>4</sup>. The Education and Training Monitor did spotlight shortages already in 2019<sup>5</sup>, but repeated this in 2023<sup>6</sup>. Across this period, the vocational crisis continued to deepen with an inability to attract young educators and retain those experienced<sup>7</sup>. The challenges identified in 2019 touched upon the demographic make-up of the educator profession, with over 30% of teachers nearing the retirement age, and with even higher numbers in the Baltic countries, Italy, Greece or Hungary. Subject-specific shortages were also highlighted as well as the gendered nature of the education profession with a majority of professionals in lower levels of learning being women while a majority of professionals in higher levels of learning or in leadership positions being men<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> See more on the learner-centred approach in LLLPlatform 2023 [Position Paper on Key Competences for All: a lifelong learning approach](#).

<sup>2</sup> UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#).

<sup>3</sup> LLLPlatform (2023). [Reaction European Semester 2023](#).

<sup>4</sup> LLLPlatform (2024). [Mapping of Country Specific Recommendations 2024](#).

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2019). [Education and Training Monitor 2019](#).

<sup>6</sup> European Commission (2023). [Education and Training Monitor 2023](#).

<sup>7</sup> Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE.

<sup>8</sup> European Commission (2019). [Education and Training Monitor 2019](#).

The same challenges were identified in 2023, with the Baltic countries and Hungary being yet again mentioned in terms of demographic challenges and an ageing teaching profession<sup>9</sup>. With the situation showing no improvement in the past years, there is a clear need for more political commitment and attention to the topic.

The scope of the teacher shortage challenge is very limited considering that media and policy attention is primarily placed on teachers in compulsory education and academic staff in higher education, based on recent EU initiatives and collective bargaining negotiations<sup>10</sup>. This leads to incomplete reforms and to a lack of acknowledgement that the work of teachers is interconnected with that of all professionals in the sector. At EU level, the [European Education Area](#) has a dimension for teachers but, yet again, it mostly focuses on compulsory education. In this paper, we acknowledge that teachers and academic staff require more and better support based on challenges which will be explained below but we also wish to broaden the understanding of who needs support towards all the other types of stakeholders

in the sector such as: adult educators, trainers (in learning providers or workplaces), youth workers, volunteers, parents, ECEC professionals (including registered and trained childminders and nannies), counsellors (for careers, lifelong guidance), validation professionals, social workers linked to education and training, support personnel (psychologists, nurses, technicians, librarians, administrators), heads of institutions. This paper will not create a hierarchy among professionals. The paper starts from the systemic level, looking at the EU for its supra-national focus, but recognising that educators remain subject to each Member States' labour laws. Moreover, the EU has only support competences in education and training<sup>11</sup>. This means that systemic level policy reforms will refer to national levels. It continues with the organisational level, namely considers reforms in each education and training institution and organisation. The last section, on reforms needed at the individual level, considers educators' needs and what they can do to improve work environments.

The reforms are needed because of compounding challenges. Firstly, the system increasingly focuses on teaching to the test and standardising learning outcomes<sup>12</sup>, to match labour market needs. The labour market orientation of learning created disruptions frequently connected to how volatile the needs of the labour market are. The specific skills needed for specific at-risk industries change rapidly and this has led to a so-called skills crisis<sup>13</sup>. Though clearly the absence of professionals in a sector is not only a matter of a lack of specific skills, this narrative has still hastened the EU to develop an Action Plan on combating labour and skills shortages<sup>14</sup>. LLLP published a [Reaction](#) to this Action Plan, highlighting that lacking long-term planning and focusing only on immediate skill needs confuses educators<sup>15</sup>. LLLP argues that education and training's goal must be key competences development<sup>16</sup>, while educators feel pressured by the teaching-to-the-test demands or demands focused on developing short-term, specific skills rather than focusing on a key competences approach<sup>17</sup>. Secondly, demographic changes, including through ageing workforce or migration<sup>18</sup>, put

pressure on territories and increase learning environment diversity. This requires adaptation, specialised support services and better educator training, the absence of which leads to burnout<sup>19</sup>. In 2021, teachers under 30 years old made up 8% of the workforce (in primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education) while those aged 50 and above accounted for 39%<sup>20</sup>. Attrition<sup>21</sup> in the profession, coupled with recruitment and retention challenges will lead to a deepening crisis in the coming years. Thirdly, global crises (climate crisis, growing populism) or opportunities (digital transition and AI) affect requirements placed on education and training and in particular on educators and their profession<sup>22</sup>. Competences in teaching sustainability become crucial to mitigate ecoanxiety. Digital technologies and AI in education require educators to be up-to-date with technology and its influence on learners, understanding privacy, data protection, ethical implications, and copyright. Education and training are relied on to provide shared knowledge, ethos, and values which supports the promotion of democratic societies, citizenship and freedom.

9 European Commission (2023). [Education and Training Monitor 2023](#).

10 Servet Yanatma (2023). [Teachers in Europe are expected to continue striking for better pay and working conditions in 2024 after many of their salaries fell in real terms](#); European Commission (2024). [Proposal for a Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education](#); Council of the EU (2022). [Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success](#).

11 EUR-lex (2022). [Division of competences within the European Union](#).

12 LLLPlatform (2021). [Position Paper on: Rethinking assessments: Prioritising Learners' Wellbeing](#).

13 OECD (2023). [Building the future of education](#).

14 European Commission (2024). [Action Plan on Labour and Skills Shortages in the EU](#).

15 LLLPlatform (2024). [Reaction Action Plan on Labour and Skills Shortages](#).

16 LLLPlatform 2023 [Position Paper on Key Competences for All: a lifelong learning approach](#).

17 European Commission (2023). [Assessing learners' competences](#).

18 OECD (2023). [Building the future of education](#).

19 NESET (2021). [A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and well-being in schools in the EU: Analytical report](#). European Commission: Luxembourg.

20 European Parliament (2024). [Teachers: Key to achieving the European education area](#).

21 Attrition is a term used in human resources to describe the rate at which employees leave their jobs.

22 Ibid.



The challenges raised above are compounded by decreasing investment in education and training. During the 2010s, much funding was reduced in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis. The share of public education expenditure dropped from 11% to 10.3% from 2006 to 2015<sup>23</sup>. While the share of public expenditures and expenditures as percentage of GDP stabilised until COVID-19, what came after was a pattern of decreases in education and training due to competition from other policy sectors<sup>24</sup>. Spending in education and training dropped by 0.6% of total public expenditure compared to pre-COVID-19 while in numerous other sectors it increased by 2%<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, the educators have to deal with greater challenges with less resources, with weaker working conditions and wages lower than professions with similar qualification levels<sup>26</sup>. Wage increases in EU compulsory education were swallowed by inflation while arriving after years of precarious wages. Contracts in education and training, especially in higher education<sup>27</sup>, remain precarious.

Young educators are also usually starting their careers in underfunded and disadvantaged education and training institutions. As they are not adequately supported, mentored and guided in their new profession due to the scarce resources in their institution, this leads to stress and burnout making newcomers leave the profession quite early. The profession remains gendered, with staff in early childhood education and care (ECEC) or lower International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels predominantly female, contributing to lower wages in education and training according to societal gender pay gaps<sup>28</sup>. Teaching loses ground to administrative or research tasks, with more working hours, rigid timetables, inflexible curricula, and imbalanced accountability demands accrued to the contractual situation. This puts further pressure on educators and threatens their well-being and resilience<sup>29</sup>. PISA results show concerning results of students learning outcomes (in terms of basic skills<sup>30</sup>, digital skills<sup>31</sup> for instance) and this puts

pressure and solely responsibility on education and training to solve the learner achievement decline<sup>32</sup>. The quality of education and of educators is inextricably linked with equity. Recruitment, retention and shortages are more pronounced in those most disadvantaged education and training institutions and organisations<sup>33</sup>. When addressing this complex situation, the EU and Member States must pay attention to not widening equity gaps.

23 Eckard Voss, Barbara de Micheli, Katharina Schoneberg and Simone Rosini (2017). [Investment in Education and Training](#).

24 European Commission (2024). [Investing in Education 2024](#).

25 Ibid.

26 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE; European Commission (2023). [Education and Training Monitor 2023](#); European Parliament (2024). [Teachers: Key to achieving the European education area](#); OECD (2024). [Education at a Glance 2024](#).

27 OECD (2021). [Reducing the precarity of academic research careers](#); Jason Arday (2022). [‘More to prove and more to lose’: race, racism and precarious employment in higher education](#). British Journal of Sociology of Education, 43:4.

28 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE.

29 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE.

30 OECD (2023). [PISA 2022 Results \(Volume I\)](#).

31 Eurostat (2023). [56% of EU people have basic digital skills](#).

32 Education International (2024). [Teacher and Education Support Personnel Well-being - Vital for Education. Policy Brief](#).

33 European Parliament (2024). [Teachers: Key to achieving the European education area](#).

32 Education International (2024). [Teacher and Education Support Personnel Well-being - Vital for Education. Policy Brief](#).

33 European Parliament (2024). [Teachers: Key to achieving the European education area](#).



# The big picture: Systemic adaptation for the educators

Systemic reforms for educators depend on the general objective of learning. The UN 2024 International Commission for the Future of Education reimagined the objective of learning as a shared societal goal striving towards a common good<sup>34</sup>. This aligns with LLLP's vision of learning as a public good, under everyone's responsibility<sup>35</sup> and focused on the development of key competences for all<sup>36</sup>. Such a vision requires an educational approach which is collaborative, and emphasises reflection, research, knowledge-creation and innovation<sup>37</sup>. When envisioning what educators want and need, this paper builds on the vision of learning proposed in LLLP's 2023 Position Paper on Key Competences for All.

Therefore, all future recommendations that we propose in this chapter aim at adapting the educating profession to the 21st century vision where the central goal of learning is to ensure each learner can holistically develop and be an active participant in society. This chapter considers the challenges to educators' retention and recruitment, including working conditions, participation in decision-making, well-being, and access to training. The goal will be to assess what reforms are needed at the systemic level to ease educators' conditions and improve the profession's attractiveness.

---

34 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.](#)

35 LLLPlatform (2022). [Position Paper on: Investment in Education and Training: A public good for all.](#)

36 LLLPlatform 2023 [Position Paper on Key Competences for All: a lifelong learning approach.](#)

37 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession.](#)

# What the EU does and can do?

Based on the 2024 Council Recommendation Europe on the Move, the mobility of staff within Erasmus+ and beyond has to be strengthened so as to give educators the opportunities to innovate, explore new practices and learn from their peers across the EU. The Erasmus+ programme is supporting the innovation that educators create via the European Innovative Teaching Award. The Erasmus+ Teacher Academies give the chance to educators to access learning opportunities and communities of practice with other educators<sup>38</sup>. This funding is complemented, according to estimations from the College of Commissioners<sup>39</sup>, by more than €43 billion earmarked in European Social Fund Plus for education,

training and skills, and around €73 billion in Recovery and Resilience Facility<sup>40</sup>. However, the current levels of funding are still not at adequate levels. As detailed in [Mario Draghi's report](#), the next Erasmus+ programming period would require a five time increase to achieve its objectives.

At EU level, these funding resources are directed according to a series of Council Recommendations, Conclusions and Resolutions<sup>41</sup> as well as strategies such as the European Education Area (EEA) and the Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP) which recognise teachers and trainers as central aspects of any reforms in education and training. This led to the provision of tools for

their use such as SELFIE for Teachers, the Guidelines for Ethical Use of AI, and similar resources to aid them with societal changes which impact their profession. The challenge here is that such initiatives provide patchwork solutions for systemic challenges **without sufficiently challenging Member States in reforming structural issues**. Moreover, the focus on teachers in compulsory education misses out on the great variety of educators enriching the lifelong learning journey of learners. The resources from the EU level are appreciated but by a handful of educators that have the capacity to work with them considering the increasing demands on them. Moreover, the earmarked funding is not monitored in terms of how much actually goes to the educator profession, being a lump sum for the entire sector. These constraints in monitoring and data availability also hinder the eventual evaluations conducted which cannot provide a clear picture of the impact of the invested funds. This situation means that even if Member States are earmarking with more granularity such EU funds, the data is not properly collected and used meaningfully to address educators' challenges.

For example, the Erasmus+ policy experimentation, which are calls dedicated to systemic policy reforms in EU Member States, could look at improving educator recruitment, training, career progression, innovation, partnership with other stakeholders, etc. The 2024 calls on policy experimentation focused on teachers only with regard to digital education<sup>42</sup>. This is a significant oversight that diminishes attention to educators. The development of national career frameworks for educators should be sped up, while any focus from the EU level on educators should be expanded beyond compulsory education. Educators in different sectors and levels of learning should be able to move more swiftly from one to another and address specific types of shortages. Furthermore, the recognition of qualifications and credentials within the EU must be improved, highlighting that educators' movement within the EU must be aligned with professional movements in other sectors. This can be addressed for example by a better earmarking of funding through the European Semester. The Country Specific Recommendations can point to the educator profession as a profession in crisis and genuinely direct

38 European Parliament (2024). [Teachers: Key to achieving the European education area](#).

39 This is the highest ruling body of the European Commission. It is composed of individuals accounting for the 27 EU countries. Together, the 27 Members of the College are the Commission's political leadership during a 5-year term. They are assigned responsibility for specific policy areas by the President.

40 European Parliament (2024). [Teachers: Key to achieving the European education area](#).

41 EUR-Lex (2020). [Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future](#); EUR-Lex (2021). [Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-2030\)](#); EUR-Lex (2021). [Council Recommendation on blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education](#); EUR-LEX (2022). [Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success](#); EUR-Lex (2022). [Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development](#).

42 European Commission (2024). [Online Info session: European policy experimentations 2024](#).

Member States towards concerted actions on this matter. In 2024, only five Member States<sup>43</sup> recommendations dedicated to educators<sup>44</sup>.

## Good Practice

### Policy experimentation with assessment - [Assess@Learning Erasmus+ Project](#)

Specifically referring to the policy experimentation calls in Erasmus+, projects like the one coordinated by the European Schoolnet yield results, based on counterfactual impact evaluation, which could lead to large-scale national reforms. Assess@Learning provided educators with resources to engage in formative assessment by means of digital tools. Though, once more, such projects tend to be limited to new digital tools, even if applicants creatively expand their focus to tackle immediate problems which the educators face. Assess@Learning ran from 2019 until 2022, performing a literature review on [digital formative assessment, a study on its social impact and a series of policy recommendations based on the policy experimentation](#). The goal is to see how the various policy experimentations that offer educators tools in their day-to-day activity can be better connected and leveraged.

43 BG, CY, MT, NL, SE

44 LLLPlatform (2024). [Mapping of Country Specific Recommendations 2024](#).

At the moment of drafting, the new College of Commissioners is being formed, with the Commissioners-designate being subjected to confirmation hearings in the European Parliament. Nevertheless, based on the Commission President's 2024-2029 [Political Guidelines](#) and the current format of the [Mission Letters](#) for the Commissioners-designates some threads on the support for the educator profession can be identified. The Political Guidelines hint towards the need to embed lifelong learning in the career prospects of teachers while also the need to develop a STEM Education Strategic Plan which should also address

the lack of qualified teachers in areas linked to science, technology, engineering and maths. The Mission Letters contain references to an EU Teachers Agenda which should improve their working conditions, training and career prospects. Most of the initiatives in the pipeline are overtly focused on teachers working in primary and secondary education, with some references towards staff working in higher education. There is insufficient focus on the diverse personnel working in education and training in all sectors and in non-formal and informal environments as well.

# Recruiting and retaining educators

The challenges discussed when arguing for policy transformations need evidence-informed policies that comprehensively cover **recruitment** (access to and attractiveness of the profession, initial training and deployment) and **retention** (career pathways, in-service training and professional support, employment, and working conditions)<sup>45</sup>. An emergency response has been hiring educators from other professions or temporary and short-term staff. Temporary and short-term contracts can also affect well-being levels<sup>46</sup>, as well as a lack of resources or infrastructure which increases staff stress and can lead to burnout<sup>47</sup>.

Moreover, they often lack appropriate training and certifications<sup>48</sup>, while constant turnover hurts the quality of teaching, negatively impacting learners. Therefore, holistic and long-term strategies are required. The needed reforms around recruitment and retention can be subsumed under **support for practice** (initial teacher education and professional development), **working conditions** (workload, pay, task discretion) and **well-being and stress**<sup>49</sup>. The first two will be tackled in the following sections, while well-being and stress will be mainstreamed across the paper.

45 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#). European Parliament (2024). [Teachers: Key to achieving the European education area](#).


46 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#)


47 Education International (2024). [Teacher and Education Support Personnel Well-being - Vital for Education. Policy Brief](#).

48 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#)

49 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE

## The necessity of training and recognition of learning abroad (including transferability and portability)

 **LLLP calls Member States to develop national/regional strategies supporting educators' essential and evolving role. Training received must be updated with inclusion, equity, diversity, sustainability and digitalisation provisions. Strategies must conceive each building block as part of a lifelong learning journey, providing robust induction, guidance and formative assessment, that recognise the diverse role educators play. Qualifications should be transferable across the EU while professional development must be embedded in daily work.**

 **LLLP calls for permeability between different levels and sectors, industry and society through flexible (or diverse) career pathways and recognition of professional experience outside the**

**teaching environment, thus bringing real-world experience and teaching practices. This must be backed by robust standards for those newcomers into the profession from a different sector of activity.**

The starting point for reforms on educators must consider initial training (ITE), since this settles long-term habits and attitudes. Data on the training that educators receive is limited, with little tracking apart from formal education. Therefore, starting from the perspective of formal education (primary and secondary) and based on evidence from LLLP membership, some inferences will be made for other types of educators. Looking at ITE across the EU it lasts between 3-6 years depending on the foreseen level for practising one's career. Only 68.8% of teachers in lower secondary education report receiving ITE that contains

all components (content, pedagogy, classroom practice), while induction<sup>50</sup> is mandatory in most EU countries and 43.6% of teachers engage in it<sup>51</sup>. This weakened ITE ecosystem suffers a threefold inadequacy.

Firstly, the training provided and its recognition abroad is rigid. The training is quite long, considering the 1-3 years length across the EU<sup>52</sup>, for a profession that, as discussed later, is paid inadequately for the level of qualifications held by practitioners<sup>53</sup>. The training is also impacted by a lack of flexible learning pathways within the educator profession. Only 18 out of 43<sup>54</sup> education systems in Europe (including devolved administrations and countries outside of the EU) report having alternative pathways to educator qualifications, such as short professional-oriented programmes or employment-based training<sup>55</sup>. This strongly impacts how people can join the profession, how different profiles of educators could leverage their expertise to move from sector to sector and how the career can be made more interesting by such alternative routes. An independent issue from the recognition

of learning between sectors of learning is the recognition of qualifications of educators across borders. Nevertheless, though a separate case of recognition, it is also quite a problematic one, considering the existent barriers from country to country - and sometimes even from region to region. This puts further barriers on possible solutions to tackle shortages and make the profession more interesting considering how other professions would be able to provide worker mobility opportunities to their employees.

Secondly, the training provided is not updated for recent topics. LLLP supports reforms to “promote (...) **digital technology** to augment – but not replace – the critical human relationship that is the foundation of teaching”<sup>56</sup>. Curricular developments and educator training programmes should not “dump” technology onto educators and learners, but actually consider the social impacts and dimensions of equity and inclusion to support learners in developing relational and socio-emotional skills through digital tools<sup>57</sup>.

## Good Practice

### Responsible digitalisation for educators - [PLEIADE](#) Erasmus+ Project

Involving partners from Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Bulgaria and the UK, but also EU networks such as [ATEE](#) and [EDEN](#), the PLEIADE project was aimed at supporting educators to implement inclusive practices in their teaching. This led to an upscalable [Blended Teachers' Professional Development Pathway](#), as well as a series of [tools](#) and [good practices](#) for inclusion. The tools mentioned are very relevant for the last section of this paper, linked to innovative pedagogies, but for now, we underline the CPD Pathway developed which leverages technology but in a way that ensures that the learners' inclusion is prioritised and educators are not just saddled with digital tools that they need to understand how to implement. Such nuanced approaches could be considered for when national policies on teacher training are being developed.

50 Induction is the support and guidance provided to novice teachers and school administrators in the early stages of their careers. Induction encompasses orientation to the workplace, socialisation, mentoring, and guidance through beginning teacher practice.

51 Eurydice (2018). [Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support](#)

52 Ibid.

53 OECD (2024). [Education at a Glance 2024](#).

54 Counting all EU Member States (including 3 education systems in Belgium), the 4 different education systems in the UK, and EEA and candidate countries.

55 Eurydice (2018). [Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support](#).

56 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#)

57 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#)

Similarly, better mainstreaming is required for sustainability education, which needs careful integration into curricula and practice. LLLP called for providing long-term support and training for all educators in adopting pedagogical approaches for learning for sustainability, including active, participatory, deliberative and learner-centred methods anchored in local contexts<sup>58</sup>. Such topics must be accompanied by greater attention in ITE to inclusion, equity and diversity. Considering the diversity of learners in European classrooms, educators expressed not being adequately prepared to adjust learners' needs<sup>59</sup>. Increasing participation of learners with disabilities in mainstream education and training institutions takes place even if educators are unprepared for adapting learning to fit all learners. Though a welcome development, this cannot be done without adequately preparing the educators for such a transition.

## Good Practice

### Expanding the teacher training curriculum - Erasmus+ EXCIITE Project

The Enabling eXtremely Creative, Inclusive, Inspiring Teachers for Europe (EXCIITE) project compiled the existing **practices on teacher training** across the countries represented by the project partners: Italy, Hungary, Belgium, Sweden and Spain. It performed a **needs-assessment for educators**, and then it delivered **self-assessment tools** for educators to identify their needs. Upon piloting these resources, they developed a **hub for resources** that would expand the curricula of teacher training towards creativity, inclusion, innovation and digitalisation. This was followed by a set of **policy recommendations** on how national policies on teacher training would welcome a wider diversity of topics on which educators should be well-versed.

Thirdly, adequate policies targeting **ITE** should be complemented by a mandatory induction period, which research shows to have positive effects on the satisfaction, effectiveness and retention of educators<sup>60</sup>. Though this is legally mandated in most EU countries, it has different implementations across the Member States, with only three countries having regulations on all four main elements of induction (mentoring support, career counselling, courses/seminars attended in person or online, reduced working/teaching load, team teaching with experienced teachers). Besides this, the implementation depends on each national or subnational institution and is insufficiently monitored across Member States<sup>61</sup>. Only

19% of novice teachers across EU countries reported having an assigned mentor in 2018<sup>62</sup>. Therefore, there is a systemic need for better monitoring and implementation of national obligations on induction. The specific design of training will be discussed in the following chapter considering that research shows a need to move away from course-based approaches and move towards lifelong, collaborative and educator-led processes<sup>63</sup>. For this reason, education and training institutions become the locus for creating a lifelong learning culture with interdisciplinary and applied models of training.

58 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#).

59 European Commission (2019). [Education and Training Monitor 2019](#).


60 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#). Benjamin Dreer (2022). [Teacher well-being: Investigating the contributions of school climate and job crafting](#). Cogent Education, vol. 9.

61 Eurydice (2018). [Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support](#).

62 Ibid.

63 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession](#). International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.

# Baseline needs: Working conditions

 **LLL calls for a valued profession which implies the provision of decent salaries and of working conditions, ensuring/promoting gender equality while providing more opportunities for career paths, safeguarding wellbeing and stimulating professional development.**

Salary is a key component of educators' discontentment, impacting the profession's attractiveness<sup>64</sup>. While each Member State faces its own challenges regarding working conditions, across the board, **educators earn less than other tertiary-educated workers**, in some countries with a gap of over 30%<sup>65</sup>. Although some Member-States

implemented salary increases, due to inflation, increases in real terms are still below other professions<sup>66 67</sup>. Real statutory wages decreased in over half of OECD countries since 2015<sup>68</sup>. This impacts attractiveness, requiring wage increases and career scales in parallel to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities that can ensure the sector is competitive and attractive for recruiting suitable candidates and afterwards retaining them<sup>69</sup>. Decent salaries also include improvements to regional allowances for teaching in remote areas, family allowances, reduced rates on public transport and tax allowances on the purchase of instructional materials<sup>70</sup>.

Moreover, overarching educator policies must be accompanied by frameworks for professional standards which are *“negotiated, implemented and monitored in collaboration with teachers and their representative organisations”*<sup>71</sup>. Beyond aiding in maintaining quality, these frameworks and standards can support policy coherence across all educator policies covering recruitment and retention. Tools for monitoring such as the UNESCO/Education International Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards, and UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Teacher Training Programmes (ISCED-T 2021) could support the EU and Member States to monitor the length, quality and relevance of teacher education as well as support the development of standards and improve status of other educators from other sectors. However, there are other elements related to working conditions which must be considered, since Germany, for example, has high-paid educators, and it still faces recruitment challenges<sup>72</sup>.

The other elements related to working conditions include work intensification due

to administrative tasks, higher teaching workload or number of students as well as insufficient resources for new demands. It is also crucial to safeguard the education staff's right to disconnect<sup>73</sup> and promote work-life balance, to decrease stress levels and turnout. Emphasis should be placed on tackling inequalities, such as gender disparities, as caring responsibilities impact women teachers' (approx. 70% of European education workforce<sup>74</sup>) work-life balance<sup>75</sup>. Policies addressing working conditions must reflect **decent salaries and a positive work environment**, including:

- stable contractual forms
- a safe and healthy workplace
- manageable teacher-to-student ratios
- state-of-the-art infrastructures that can support learning processes
- support structures for managing problematic student behaviour
- balanced workloads
- relevant, quality and accessible ITE/CPD
- equitable access to technology and resources
- adequate social protection and pensions
- flexible working-time arrangements that

64 [2024 Italian education and training strike](#); [2024 French education and training strike](#); [2023 Romanian education and training strike](#); [2023 German education and training strike](#); [2023 Czech education and training strike](#); [2022 Hungarian education and training strike](#). For more information on satisfaction with wages in the profession, please see OECD's [Teaching and Learning International Survey \(TALIS\)](#) in 2018. According to it, over 50% of educators under the age of 30 are displeased with their wages while 34% of educators above the age of 50 show the same response.

65 OECD (2023). [Education at a Glance 2023](#).

66 European Commission (2023). [Education and Training Monitor 2023](#).

67 OECD (2024). [Education at a Glance 2024](#).

68 Ibid.

69 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#)

70 OECD (2023). [Education at a Glance 2023](#).

71 OECD (2023). [Education at a Glance 2023](#).

72 OECD (2023). [Education Indicators in Focus](#). October 2023: 83.

73 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE.

74 Ibid.

75 Education International (2024). [Teacher and Education Support Personnel Well-being - Vital for Education. Policy Brief](#).



allow for work-life balance<sup>76</sup>.

**If educators are accountable to education and training systems, it is only fair that they require accountability from the system in return.**

## Good Practice

### **Professional Teaching Standards developed with practitioners - Education International and UNESCO**

The [Education International/UNESCO Global Framework for Professional Teaching Standards](#) is a useful global resource that can be used by policymakers, as well as teachers and their representatives as they seek to develop standards for the profession. This is in line with the spirit of the Education 2030 Framework for Action which calls for the full participation of teachers and their representative organisations in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education policy. It also is fully aligned with the Education 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

## The evidence of valuation: appraisal and career structure

 **LLL calls for a reviewed career structure based on professional standards, diverse career pathways and experience, forward-looking appraisal and continuous professional development.**

Careers in education and training in Europe are insufficiently researched, with data at EU level being available in the iterative [Eurydice study](#) on Teachers in Europe. Such large-scale research is not conducted at EU level on other professionals in the sector, especially on those outside of formal education. Having the compulsory education system as the reference system, it can be observed that there is a degree of rigidity in educators' careers which impacts the profession's attractiveness and retention. 14 education and training systems

in Europe (not only the EU) have a single-level career structure which implies changes to the salary scale based on years of activity, making it difficult for new educators to hope for advancement. Such models fail to remunerate and recognise different roles which an educator takes in an institution (mentorship, coordination of CDP, research, innovation, leading departments, being involved in EU projects, being responsible for a learner age group, etc). The multi-level career structure can prove to be more flexible but still depends on years of activity, or antiquated CPD and appraisal the problem is that the CPD and appraisal ought to be reformed to ensure that educators have actually developed new competences which make them entitled to advance in their careers<sup>77</sup>. If simple

<sup>76</sup> Education International (2024). [Teacher and Education Support Personnel Well-being - Vital for Education. Policy Brief.](#)

<sup>77</sup> Eurydice (2018). [Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support.](#)

attendance to CPD without assessment of how this improved the educator's work provides career advancement, then this will also not make innovative and engaged educators feel like the career progression is stimulating. The lack of alternative pathways in the sector and of qualifications and experiences from operating in other sectors further paints the educator's career structure as unattractive.

As CPD is considered for review, the opportunity that micro-credentials provide in this context must be better leveraged. In 2022, the [Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability](#) was published. The goal was to provide guidance on development, implementation and recognition of microcredentials, which are defined as short-term learning experiences. Educators could significantly benefit from the flexibility and targeted approach which microcredentials provide in order to ensure that they can be relevant and adaptable in the context of the rapidly evolving society. The micro-credentials

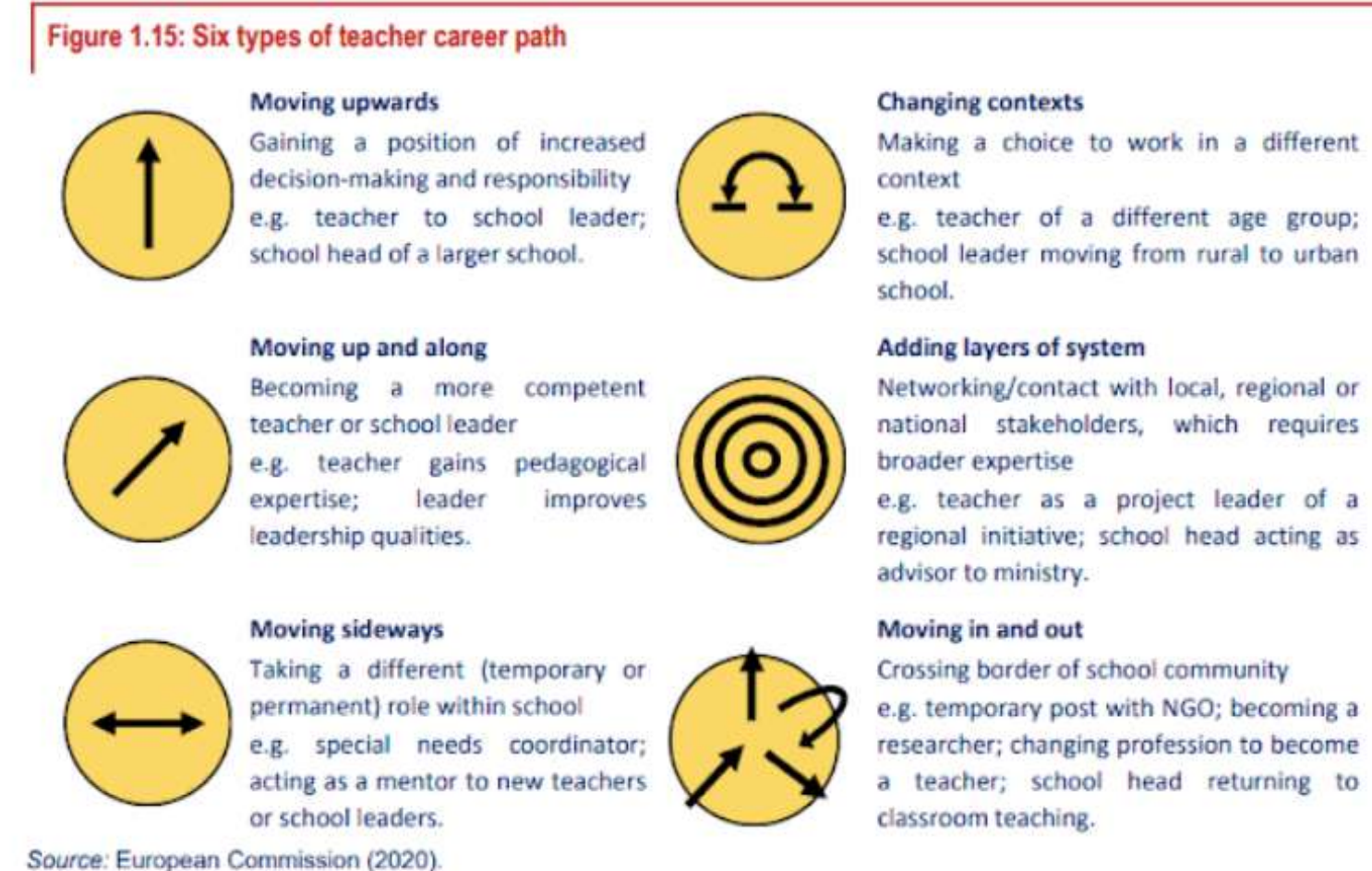
which are defined as short-term learning experiences. Educators could significantly benefit from the flexibility and targeted approach which microcredentials provide in order to ensure that they can be relevant and adaptable in the context of the rapidly evolving society. The micro-credentials could also compensate for a lack of attention to specific competences during ITE while it could also help catch-up for newcomers joining from other sectors of activity.

When discussing career structure, one element which was mentioned was appraisal. There is an opportunity to review how the evaluation of educators' work is done, to ensure that remedial plans or rewards are tied to their performance. A reform of appraisal systems could make the profession more attractive, as appraisal could be used to reward educators innovating by means of pedagogies, management solutions, partnership with stakeholders and similar metrics. Though beneficial to look at the impact of appraisal, its reform must be thought of in a larger

scheme of interdependent reforms and would be best agreed via a national framework for career structures.

Though the EU put forward recommendations for such frameworks, Member States are lagging behind<sup>78</sup>. Career structures and appraisals<sup>79</sup> must be adapted simultaneously to allow for a feedback loop. Systematic, rigorous and formative performance assessments should be linked to strategies in education and training, consist of holistic criteria beyond learning performance metrics and require learners' feedback<sup>80</sup>. Formative assessments on

educators' performance should help them improve their practice and guide CPD needs. This format of appraisal can guide the career path that each educator has or the steps needed to achieve the desired career. The European Commission provided a perspective of different career paths for educators which, despite being limited to compulsory education, provides inspiration for other sectors<sup>81</sup>. It has to be acknowledged that the identified paths are already existing measures, but are in no way implemented systematically across all education and training sectors.



78 Official Journal of the EU (2020). [Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future](#).

79 Teacher appraisals (also referred to as performance management reviews) are a detailed yet supportive development process designed to ensure all teachers have the skills and support needed to fulfil their role successfully. It allows teachers to continue to improve their professional development and evolve as a teacher.

80 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#)

81 Eurydice (2018). [Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support](#)

# Guaranteeing education as a public good

 **LLLP calls on the EU and Member States to take decisive actions to invest in education since quality achieved without adequate public funding. The funding is relevant not only for wages and working conditions, but to ensure a diverse set of professionals and support staff, for updating the training requirements and for providing hard and soft infrastructure that match the needs of educators and their learners, and for supporting innovative teaching and research practices.**

The UN recommendation from the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession reiterates that funding

“should be guaranteed at a level of at least 6% of gross domestic product and 20% of total government expenditure” which was set out in the Education 2030 Framework for Action (adopted by 184 UNESCO Member States in 2015). The UN recommendations denote that public investment in education **“should be transparent and shielded from austerity measures”**<sup>82</sup>. One considered option to address such funding is **tax revenue**, considering that 1 trillion EUR are lost annually to tax avoidance/evasion<sup>83</sup> which prevents better funding of different areas including sustainable education financing.

The previously mentioned challenge of

temporary and short-term contracts requires allocating more funding to education and training since the professionalisation of educators cannot be advanced without admitting basic standards in terms of professional stability and in terms of avoiding creating unstable career paths. Linkages among education and policies in other areas such as employment policy, regional development policy, research and innovation policy should be strengthened especially when it comes to social policies which include suitable pensions, holidays, sick leave, maternity/paternity leave as well as to policies relevant to innovative learning practices linked to challenges faced by regions or nations.

A drastic increase in funding in education and training is unavoidable. The UNESCO Global Report on Teachers identifies US\$120 billion annually needed to cover all teaching posts required for universal enrolment<sup>84</sup>, only in formal education. Making investments more efficient, repurposing existing investments or making better use of resources are needed strategies. However, it must be underlined that the current spending on the sector, which is identified

as a high priority across most policy agendas and crucial for a multitude of other sectors, is insufficient. The current so-called skill crisis<sup>85</sup> makes it clear that years of underinvestment in the sector led to reduced innovation and adaptation which no longer serves learners' purposes and EU's ambitions. Many resources are wasted on attrition, forcing systems to be endlessly focused on recruitment and onboarding<sup>86</sup>, requiring a higher initial investment to set up a long-term approach to recruitment and retention. The additional funding is also essential for the recruitment of additional staff<sup>87</sup>, including counsellors, validation professionals, social workers linked to education and training, and support personnel (psychologists, nurses, technicians, librarians, administrators, and project managers). This is the case especially as many of them are hired on a project basis, leading to unsustainable employment policies in the long run and incapacity to retain such staff and ensure continuity.

In parallel with the development of reforms, policymakers, educators, and all stakeholders from the local and

82 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#)

83 Richard Murphy (2019). [The European Tax Gap - A report for the Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament](#).

84 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.](#)

85 CEDEFOP (2024). [Untangling labour shortages in Europe: unmet skill demand or bad jobs?](#)

86 Ibid.

87 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE.

international levels need to jointly reflect on **monitoring frameworks** to oversee budgets and ensure transparent financial oversight and mechanisms for accountability. In this way, the equitability, efficiency and effectiveness of funding can be safeguarded, especially considering that education and training institutions require adequate planning to ensure sustainability and the long-term impact of investments. The monitoring frameworks should lead to improvements and not punishment schemes that strip those most disadvantaged of resources. Failures in efficiency and efficacy

should not be used as justification for diverting public funds away from education and expecting the private sector to close gaps, but it should lead to providing adequate support to policy implementers and creating a culture of continuous policy improvement<sup>88</sup>. Macro-level monitoring is also essential to building evidence-informed policies as complementary to bridging research, policy and practice.

## Co-creating policies with educators

 **LLL calls Member States to transform policies that concern educators through co-creation and cross-sectoral processes guided by a whole-of-government approach and by establishing mechanisms that have embedded civil and social dialogue.**

Teacher status and dignity are directly related to their ability to influence policies regarding their work, including curricula and pedagogical practices<sup>89</sup>. It also supports policy acceptance and positive attitudes towards policy reforms and their implementation. However, to ensure their voice is considered in all areas, it is imperative to create, improve and

strengthen **civil and social dialogue**, an approach that has become even more urgent due to unilateral actions taken in many countries during COVID-19<sup>90</sup>. The coverage of collective bargaining has been on a decline across the EU and unionisation rates have been falling. This chapter captures social dialogue's importance at the national level, while further chapters discuss the importance of social dialogue at each level where decisions are taken<sup>91</sup>. The reforms foreseen above in terms of training, working conditions, curricular reform, and well-being require strong collective rights. Otherwise, implementation gaps are bound to occur as the expertise and experience of those impacted by reforms is not

88 LLLPlatform (2022). [Position Paper on: Investment in Education and Training: A public good for all.](#)

89 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#)

90 LLLPlatform (2022). [Position Paper on: Investment in Education and Training: A public good for all.](#)

91 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education.](#) ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE.

considered. Civil and social dialogue would bring forth the voices of those usually not included in decision-making<sup>92</sup>, such as educators from disadvantaged backgrounds or those being subjected to stereotypes. Wide-scale reforms to address such stereotypes require the participation of those groups impacted the most by them.

## Good Practice

### **Involvement in educators for large-scale reform design - the case of [Pacte pour un Enseignement d'excellence](#) reform in Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles**

From the period 2015 until 2022 governmental authorities in Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles involved a wide range of education and training stakeholders (parents, social partners, teachers, students, learning providers, school leaders, etc.) in a collaborative process of identifying the state-of-the-art of compulsory education in the French-speaking community of Belgium. From 2015 until 2017 the stakeholders prepared an opinion detailing all needs and steps for reform which then informed the preparation of the actual reforms by 2019, leading to an implementation that started as of 2022. The educators identified the process needed for evaluating the success of reform and remained involved at all steps in the process. Such co-creation limited the chance to challenge the outputs of the work which was validated by all and created a new mission in which all educators were involved.

<sup>92</sup> Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE.

Educators' motivation is linked to their ability to direct how policies and strategies are developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated<sup>93</sup>. However, the benefits of civil and social dialogue for the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders to combat policy blindspots and make policymaking co-creative can be reaped only if reforms in education and training are approached from a systemic perspective. For educators to know that their changes will have an impact, they must know that their proposals are meaningfully considered. To achieve a comprehensive transformation of education systems, policy reform is needed beyond education, looking at employment and other social, economic and environmental policies, effectively through a **whole-of-government approach**<sup>94</sup>. For this reason, the outcomes of civil and social dialogue in education and training must then be picked up by governments with a cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial approach in mind. Any civil or social dialogue proposal linked to, for example, curricular changes, strategies for recruitment or working conditions has to be considered across multiple departments of the government to ensure a comprehensive reform that connects education and training with challenges in other sectors.

<sup>93</sup> UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#)

<sup>94</sup> LLLPlatform (2023). [Position Paper on: Key Competences for All: a lifelong learning approach](#).

## Good Practice

### **Diagnosing the needs of the profession at the global level**

The United Nations Secretary-General established a High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession as an outcome of the United Nations Transforming Education Summit in 2022. The panel included ministries of education and labour, as well as representatives of social partners, academics, civil society leaders, and actual teachers and students. The outcomes of the Panel's work are frequently cited in this Position Paper because the inclusive approach it took yielded widely recognised **recommendations** among the professionals.

# Collecting targeted data on educators

 **LLL calls for international and EU institutions, in collaboration with Member States, to continue and further boost its cooperation mechanisms especially with regards to data collection and usage. A common monitoring framework must be agreed upon, without prioritising any sole indicator, but rather identifying the right mix of indicators to monitor the educator situation across the world.**

EU data is collected on teacher shortages, but little on the wide diversity of educators based on the experience of the LLLPlatform members. This oversight makes Member States unprepared to assess the scope of the challenge for access to learning,

considering that only those educators responsible for pupils in formal education would receive attention. Moreover, even for teachers, each country has different metrics for measuring shortages<sup>95</sup>. The data comparability issue makes it impossible to consider EU-wide strategies or rely on Member States' collaboration for large-scale strategies. The international level can also play a role where further collaboration between international agencies and institutions (EU, ILO, UNESCO and UN) is needed regarding data sharing and use<sup>96</sup>.

Establishing a unique indicator would be difficult considering different recruitment paths or credentials systems across the Member States. Nevertheless, a selection

of indicators and the creation of a model of data collection based on this across the EU is needed for improving policies and strategies through peer learning. However, it must be acknowledged that data availability, collection and generation are quite

problematic in adult education, in VET, as well as in ECEC. Without available data, the problem cannot be fully comprehended and tackled in an efficient way that leverages oversupply and undersupply across Member States.

## Good Practice

### Institutional efforts to collect data

Though no final answer can be provided to the challenge of monitoring teacher shortages, the European Commission Joint Research Centre has provided an **analysis** of existing approaches and proposed a solution which considers working together with multiple indicators and proxies. To this end, there is a need to collect data on unfilled teaching positions at the start of the academic year and on an indicator that merges estimated enrollment, desired pupil-teacher ratio, and availability of qualified teachers. The latter is effectively a forecasted measure capable of identifying differences in the expected growth of teacher demand and teacher supply.

Such an approach can also be complemented by the system developed in Uganda. As of 2019, the country operates with a **Teacher Management System (TMIS)**. This tool is centralising, digitising and harmonising teacher certification. Such platforms can be honed to ensure real-time monitoring of the situation of the educator profession as well as provide the different education and training institutions an overview of which professionals can be recruited.

95 Giorgio di Pietro (2023). [Indicators for monitoring teacher shortage in the European Union](#). Joint Research Centre

96 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#)

84 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030](#).

85 CEDEFOP (2024). [Untangling labour shortages in Europe: unmet skill demand or bad jobs?](#)

86 Ibid.

87 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE.



# It takes a village: The role of organisations in supporting educators

## Contextualisation

The previous chapter discussed systemic reforms. Most reforms depend strongly on education and training institutions implementing them. This chapter looks at the organisational, namely at organisations in which educators operate. The paper acknowledges that each institution is different, considering the environment or sector in which it operates.

However, specific principles remain applicable to all to ensure a valued and well-recognised educator profession. The section will look at professionalisation, collegiality, distributed leadership, infrastructure, pedagogy, and innovation, which are mentioned as intrinsic to the profession's attractiveness.

---

34 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.](#)


35 LLLPlatform (2022). [Position Paper on: Investment in Education and Training: A public good for all.](#)

36 LLLPlatform 2023 [Position Paper on Key Competences for All: a lifelong learning approach.](#)

37 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession.](#)

# Professionalising educators

## Participation in training

 **LLLP calls on education and training institutions to implement coherent and consistent measures to boost the participation of educators in training while also ensuring a flexible, high-quality training offer or that training is not bypassed. This also includes the recognition of professional expertise and practical experiences gained outside of the education and training sector.**

Participation in training is problematic, as educators mention lack of time or the impact that it has on daily tasks<sup>97</sup>. Instead

of working to increase the time allocated to training or to provide paid training leave and replacement personnel to educators, most policies consider short-term/quicker measures such as faster certification tracks, lowering entry and qualification requirements, and introducing alternative pathways to teaching (with specific add-on training or without additional training)<sup>98</sup>. These approaches can be options as temporary measures, but not at the expense of the quality of training (and in the long-term the quality of teaching) which will always require a dedicated time that does not impact the work-life balance of educators. Such training should be a part of their contractual hours and not done outside contracted hours, voluntarily and unpaid<sup>99</sup>.

<sup>97</sup> Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE.

<sup>98</sup> UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession](#). International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

## Good Practice

### Inter-regional teacher training and the benefits of mobility - Erasmus+ [Teach<sup>33</sup>: 3 Countries, 3 levels of Organisation, 3 Languages Project](#)

This Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Project commenced in 2024 and will conclude in 2027. It will be led by Euregio Meuse-Rhin and will have multiple higher education institutions as partners in Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands. The objective is to get students in teacher training to engage in language teaching internships at schools from different regions/countries. Such a practice would widen the perspective of the educator, and provide them with future opportunities for mobility or for promoting mobility for their learners, while also making them familiar with the teaching process and practices in another EU country. Such cross-regional and cross-country training programmes for educators could strengthen the professionalism of the teachers while also providing options for their qualifications to be recognised across multiple EU Member States.

This project builds on the [EMRLingua project](#).

Reduced time for training can only lead to de-professionalising teaching and has been shown as a consequence of introducing New Public Management (NPM) practices in education and training<sup>100</sup>. As an approach to public policy that emerged in the 1980s, NPM brings business sector logic in public

policy that emerged in the 1980s, NPM brings business sector logic in public policy to supposedly improve its efficiency. In practice, it frequently has been shown to have worked inefficiently due to the increasingly complex web of outsourcing, the high human and financial costs imposed


<sup>100</sup> LLLPlatform (2022). [Position Paper on: Investment in Education and Training: A public good for all](#).



on the public system, the erasure of expertise from the sectors in which it made its way in as well as to do prioritising efficiency at the cost of quality<sup>101</sup>. New Public Management (NPM) and increasingly neoliberal policies contributed to dismantling professions through flexibilisation<sup>102</sup>: there will be no improvement in teachers' conditions and profession under aggressive neoliberal policies. The private sector approach of speeding and flexibilising training in education and training has similar impacts, while new routes of entry in the profession, dissolution of collective bargaining and unionisation rates have to be sceptically considered. Addressing time constraints should not come at the expense of the quality of training educators receive<sup>103</sup>. On the pedagogical side, such a speed training mentality has proven unbearably expensive, and ineffective; it places the burden of professional development on the teachers and fosters a culture of tokenism that is detrimental to the access to and attractiveness of the profession<sup>104</sup>. Participation can be improved with better conditions for educators, not with shortcuts to the training that should be provided.

A proper training offer and adequate time provided for training do not preclude the creation of flexible pathways in the profession by recognising competences developed in other sectors. Education and training stakeholders have been promoting the idea of stronger ecosystems in the sector, where education and training institutions, societal stakeholders, and industry partners would collaborate with each other to promote transdisciplinarity and cross-sectoral cooperation. LLLPlatform has previously advocated for this perspective<sup>105</sup>, but specifically for the educator profession, this can contribute to cross-sectoral mobility and bring new competences into the educating process. Therefore, there is a need for a **mechanism to recognise the professional expertise and practical experiences gained outside of education and training** which then people can leverage when joining the education and training sector as educators.

## Improving training provisions quality

 **LLLPlatform calls on education and training institutions to flexibilise their approach to their staff learning, embedding training in daily work, facilitating communities of practice, professional learning networks and communities, and developing problem-based learning which supports interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches.**

Initial teacher education (ITE), continuous professional development (CPD), and the qualifications of educators have been identified in the previous sections of this paper as boosting the profession's attractiveness, aiding with self-efficacy, and updating methodologies. Through training, educators engage in an intellectual pursuit, widening their professional understanding and finding joy through professional growth. This brings positive perceptions associated with work<sup>106</sup>. Linked to the above findings

on how training is perceived at a systemic level, we reflect here on the content of training provisions. The research reveals that the current initial training offer is insufficiently based on evidence, lacks sufficient subject knowledge, and fails to merge theory and practice<sup>107</sup>. OECD reports that teachers prefer training on curriculum knowledge and collaborative learning activities or research with other teachers. However, results showed that the 28 countries researched provided little training on these aspects and more on pedagogy<sup>108</sup>.

Recent studies on training delivery confirmed the increased role played by institutions in which educators operate. In some countries, education and training institutions have an active role in training provision due to decentralisation policies. For example, when it comes to initial teacher training, in 11 learning systems the education and training institutions regulate the length of training while in half of Europe's systems, the education and training institutions are responsible for in-school placement. When it comes to continuous professional development (CPD), the majority of Europe's education and

101 Mariana Mazzucato and Rosie Collington (2023). *The Big Con: How the Consulting Industry Weakens our Businesses, Infantilizes our Governments, and Warps our Economies*. Penguin Press: New York.

102 The example of platform work can be considered in this context: ETUC (2022). [Joint letter for an effective Directive on improving conditions in platform work](#).

103 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE.

104 Ibid.

105 LLLPlatform (2019). [Position Paper on: 21st Century Learning Environments](#).

106 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE; UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030](#).

107 Fabian Barrera-Pedemonte (2019). [Classification framework for trained and qualified teachers](#). UNESCO

108 OECD (2017). [How can professional development enhance teachers' classroom practices?](#)


training systems mandate education and training institutions to develop a CPD plan and then work in partnership with a governmental agency for its delivery. In the case of delivery, education and training institutions have some flexibility but many choose to fall on the classic option of nationally organised conferences which operate on a knowledge-transmission model<sup>109</sup>.

The need for greater competences of education and training institutions in improving learning opportunities for teachers depends also on them fostering such networks and liaising across other institutions at local, regional, national, and European levels<sup>110</sup>. Indeed, communities of practice, professional learning networks and communities are methods which are proven to be successful both for boosting the professional competences of networks and for increasing academic achievement. Such alternatives to continuous professional development allow for an uninterrupted flow of competence development, additional professionalisation and more motivation for educators to be engaged<sup>111</sup>.

As education and training institutions gain more capacity for organising training, they need to adapt the training offer since it can no longer just be a continuous lecture, imposed on educators from the outside; it needs active learning, collective assignments and to be spread out over longer time periods, with points for drop-in<sup>112</sup>.

Improving training provisions is also to be connected to quality assurance aspects which are in some cases defined at the national level (school education) and others, more at the organisational level (e.g. adult education centres). Peer learning and review are also fundamental, particularly in sectors which are not regulated at the national level eg youth sector, and adult education. Such networks where one can learn from each other, their peers, are essential so that each individual education and training institution does not create its own QA from scratch without building on the experience of others. Without addressing this aspect the fragmentation in education systems is not addressed and this continuously leads to inefficiencies in resource management (waste of resources).

## Valuing everyone

 **LLLP calls on education and training institutions to provide equal consideration and recognition to all staff members, ensuring that educators directly engaged in pedagogy and andragogy are fully supported by relevant staff.**

The hierarchy created by dichotomies such as academic against non-academic or teaching against non-teaching lacks nuance on different staff types, and on how support personnel should aid those engaged in pedagogy and andragogy<sup>113</sup>. Most research focuses on academic and teaching staff, with the recent European Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education focusing solely on academic staff. This elitist approach disregards youth workers, adult educators, volunteering organisations, early childhood education and care practitioners (including professional nannies/childminders<sup>114</sup>),

librarians, career counsellors, and other stakeholders. This narrative does not allow exploring how learners, in an extended meaning that encompasses all learning environments, should be at the centre of learning.

Providing better (quality) training provisions for teachers is also interlinked with the issue of appraisal (as mentioned before). Teachers who, sometimes, learn by their own initiative need to be recognised/their learning needs to be valued and rewarded by financial and non-financial means. This would encourage further learning and learning uptake within the profession. Education managers and leaders play a key role in providing such appraisal within organisations. At the community level, experiences from the city of Leuven show the importance also of local authorities in providing better teacher recognition, and opportunities for community gatherings.

109 Eurydice (2018). [Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support](#).

110 Jesús Ribosa, Ingrid Noguera, Meritxell Monguillot, David Duran (2024). [Teachers' closeness of professional relationship and its role in learning perception after reciprocal peer observation](#). *Teaching and Teacher Education* (140).

111 Ibid.

112 OECD (2017). [How can professional development enhance teachers' classroom practices?](#); Fabian Barrera-Pedemonte (2019). [Classification framework for trained and qualified teachers](#). UNESCO

113 Joanne Caldwell (2024). [Nomenclature in higher education: "non-academic" as a construct](#). *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, vol. 46 (5).

114 Theodora Papatheodorou and Paulette Luff (2023). [Characteristics and qualities of home-based childcare: exploring the views of trained childminders and nannies](#). *Norland Educare Research Journal*. Vol. 1 (1)

# Good Practice

## Community engagement to boost the attractiveness of the profession - [School 2030 initiative in the city of Leuven, Belgium](#)

The School 2030 initiative is implemented by the local authorities in Leuven to help schools plan and implement concrete actions related to climate change. The coordinator of the initiative, Ellen Vandembroucke, explains [in this presentation](#) the various intervention measures used in 75 early childhood education and care and compulsory education institutions. Please be advised, the hyperlinked resource must be downloaded and opened with Microsoft PowerPoint for full functionality, due to its embedded video and audio.

## Improving learning environments: infrastructural and HR management

 **LLLP calls on education and training institutions to transform learning spaces ensuring that basic requirements for wellbeing for both educators and learners are met, and that the learning space's structure is adapted towards innovative, collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching.**

Teachers and educators are increasingly called upon to personalise their teaching methods to learners' needs. At the organisational level, structural aspects such as class size do matter for the ability of educators to deliver on those objectives. Simultaneously, increasing practices of "teams of educators" can further support meeting those needs. This means having a teacher and assistant in class. Teachers are no longer the only professional reference point for students but are granted support from support service professionals for the teaching itself and beyond teaching (e.g. social and psychological support, career guidance, etc).

Choices made by an education and training institution on how educators are assigned to specific groups of learners affect how learning can be personalised, and the attention that each learner receives. Recently, teams of educators have been tried and tested by education and training institutions to focus simultaneously and

competences, technical competences, or ensuring adequate attention to each learner. Multidisciplinary teams also protect individual educators from feeling isolated, safeguarding their well-being, since they are not the only ones responsible for solving all challenges<sup>115</sup>.

# Good Practice

## Inspiring Learning Space - an example of an infrastructure choice impacting innovation in teaching

The Inspiring Learning Space (ILS) can be an example aimed at fostering innovation in pedagogy and training formats with the caveat that it depends strongly on the confidence and competence of educators and on learners' engagement. At the moment there is still insufficient evidence on its impact and if not applied correctly it can be a complex and disorienting environment for those in-service. Its implementation in a Scottish school, however, can offer a glimpse into the type of support that the institution had to provide for its implementation: additional staff member monitoring the ILS' integration and coordinating CPD for staff, face-to-face professional learning opportunities during lunch hours and after school, online learning resources available to all and sessions for understanding how a curricular subject could use the space. The study confirmed educators felt emboldened to try new pedagogies in such an environment, but their lack of experience and competence led to using it in antiquated ways, without engaging in interdisciplinary collaboration and promoting a static learning experience<sup>116</sup>. This shows the complex efforts that institutions must make to socialise new practices.

115 Commissie van Wijzen (2023). [Priority for Professionalism. Contemporary personnel policy with competent teachers, powerful schools and strong school boards](#)

116 Louise Campbell (2020). [Teaching in an Inspiring Learning Space](#). Research Papers in Education, vol. 35(2). pp. 185-204.


Architecture is supposed to evolve with times and needs<sup>117</sup>. However, 75% of educational buildings in the EU were built before 1980, lacking updated conditions for appropriate lighting, air quality, temperature, acoustics, ventilation, hygiene, running water and accessibility conditions<sup>118</sup>. The stress that this situation brings to those who work daily in such environments is affecting their well-being. Traditional learning spaces are not suited for innovative approaches such as ensuring flexibility in a learning space, embedding digital technology, creating learner-centred spatial arrangements, providing areas for outdoor learning, and ensuring access to specialised labs. These and similar options must be better-tested<sup>119</sup> but show that the educators' work environment is miles behind other sectors' innovative work environments. Besides the example provided above on ILS, basic resources are crucial. Their importance was sharply brought to the fore as educators could not provide learning during the pandemic when lacking digital tools, associated skills and time for adaptation<sup>120</sup>. The reason why innovation is inferred across this section to be crucial for educators is the fact that

it makes the profession more intellectually stimulating. Such pedagogies can also bring them in contact with stakeholders outside of the education and training institution and connect them to real-life challenges, making their profession more applied and the educators more likely to feel that they contribute to addressing societal challenges.

Hard infrastructure (buildings, materials, etc.), a prerogative and responsibility of the systemic level, must be complemented by investment in soft infrastructure<sup>121</sup>. This accounts for the training needs discussed above, but it also refers to educators being allowed to make changes to their work tasks and conditions, and relationships at work - different from working conditions negotiations. Implementing such a change has been referred to as job crafting, and research has shown that it has a positive impact on educators' well-being. Job crafting implies the capacity of educators to increase the fit between their personal preferences and the characteristics of their work environments and accounts for task crafting (shaping the boundaries and processes of job tasks), relational crafting (shaping the qualities and quantities of

relationships in the job context), and cognitive crafting (shaping the personal attitudes towards the job). Based on a study in Germany, educators who benefitted from job crafting reported higher levels of well-being and appreciation of the climate in their institutions<sup>122</sup>. Job crafting requires an institutionalised culture of peer-based feedback, spaces to acquire new competences, as well as spaces for innovative classroom projects. However, the most important remains the control that educators have over workload. The institution must have mechanisms where educators safeguard their work-life balance and wellbeing and a positive environment can have direct and positive implications on the attractiveness of the profession.

## Collegiality and distributed leadership

 **LLLP calls on education and training organisations to institute distributed leadership models in which leaders and educators are equipped with competences needed for such a complex architecture of decision-making. The collegiality of educators should be leveraged by means of more cross-disciplinary and cross-thematic approaches to tasks and responsibilities.**

Educators collaborated amongst themselves, relying on professional experience dynamics, before New Public Management (NPM) brought in concepts like managerial and distributed leadership, teamwork, or flexibility. The new modes of appraisal and running of education and training institutions were brought by NPM in learning without building on existing collegiality. This is not to say that collegiality under NPM or prior to NPM functioned better, but rather highlight that much of the structures of collegiality prior to NPM have

117 European Commission (2022). [Investing in our future: Quality investment in education and training](#).

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid.

120 Leonidas Chalkiadakis and Ingrid Noguera (2024). [K-12 Teacher's Appropriation of Digital Technologies and Innovative Instruction Across EU: A Scoping Review](#). International Journal of Instruction, vol. 17(1).

121 Soft infrastructure represents human capital and institutions necessary to maintain an economy that delivers certain services, including education.

122 Benjamin Dreer (2022). [Teacher well-being: Investigating the contributions of school climate and job crafting](#). Cogent Education, vol. 9.

not been relied upon when new methods of collaboration were brought in. This made it difficult for educators to adapt, and it weakened unionisation rates and collective bargaining<sup>123</sup>. On the one hand, the way distributed leadership might have been introduced through New Public Management (NPM) might have disrupted how educators collaborated previously. On the other hand, it currently serves as a great process to organise the business logic brought into education and training institutions which is explained in the paragraph below.

Distributed leadership helps understand how complex decision-making is. For example, in many higher education institutions, the organisational support is now delivered through the registrar's staff, while the internationalisation of institutions brought new staff for student services and recruitment, facilities management, financial engineering, etc. For instance, at the school level, educators have special roles when running a committee/project, or are responsible for an age group or subject. Moreover, new responsibilities emerged from devolved budgets at the

institutional/departmental level, from external partners running parts of student recruitment, and from dividing internal and external tasks among staff<sup>124</sup>. All this highlights increased complexity in decision-making at the institutional level. While distributed leadership helps to make sense of this complexity, it also boosts academic achievement<sup>125</sup>, and improves teachers' autonomy and professionalism, as they shape the environment where they work, increasing job satisfaction, motivation, and retention. It is opposed to a top-down, centralised, managerial approach that keeps educators away from influencing curricular decisions or policies impacting them, eroding trust and also affecting their well-being. Collaborative workspaces tend to improve the well-being of educators<sup>126</sup>. The autonomy and socialisation to influence decision-making were referred to in the subsection about civil and social dialogue for the macro-level but also apply to the meso-level and they contribute to increasing self-efficacy, improving job satisfaction, making participation in decision-making and training organically integrated into daily activities<sup>127</sup>.

Distributed leadership<sup>128</sup> hinges on strong leadership and collegiality. Creating shared responsibility, oversight and coordination is a complex task for leaders of institutions (school heads, directors, rectors, etc)<sup>129</sup>, and their efforts must be recognised. Moreover, to create a conducive environment, and encourage educators to boost competences for collaboration, leaders require training and support. Much falls on their shoulders because they are the first to implement the paradigmatic shift of having complex networks of social relationships where different stakeholders exert similar levels of influence<sup>130</sup>. Educators rely on leaders to develop the new culture and handle conflicts with colleagues<sup>131</sup>. Collegiality is solidarity built in a social relation over time, with work colleagues developing reciprocal obligations, related to common work situations or professional identities. Newcomers may find it hard to join experienced colleagues who already have strong bonds, while the way New Public Management (NPM) advances the logic of task-specific and flexible teams cannot create long-lasting bonds, being focused

on task delivery. Professional experience is differently valued in contexts where collegiality is embedded in an organisation compared to how it is regarded in environments with ever-changing flexible team structures<sup>132</sup>. The erosion of collegiality is consistent with findings on educators' professional experience not being valued anymore<sup>133</sup>. The time needed to build collegiality is inconsistent with current retention rates and precarious contracts, or with the fact that educators have to work in multiple institutions to cover hours quotas.

To strengthen collegiality, research has shown that reciprocal peer observation is a low-cost intervention with impressive results. It supports professional development, student learning and school effectiveness, and creates trust-based relationships<sup>134</sup>. When educators feel isolated from peers or feel that they do not belong in a community, their well-being may decline<sup>135</sup>; Continuous poor working conditions can also lead to individual and collective conflict within organisations

123 Jonathan Gosling, Richard Bolden and Georgy Petrov (2012). [Distributed leadership in higher education: what does it accomplish?](#). Leadership, vol. 5(3), pp. 299-310; Kirsten Marie Bovbjerg (2006). [Teams and Collegiality in Educational Culture](#). European Educational Research Journal, Vol. 5(3-4).

124 Jonathan Gosling, Richard Bolden and Georgy Petrov (2012). [Distributed leadership in higher education: what does it accomplish?](#). Leadership, vol. 5(3), pp. 299-310

125 Daniel Jambo and Lei Hongde (2019). [The Effect of Principal's Distributed Leadership Practice on Students' Academic Achievement: A Systematic Review of the Literature](#). International Journal of Higher Education, vol. 9(1).

126 Benjamin Dreer (2022). [Teacher well-being: Investigating the contributions of school climate and job crafting](#). Cogent Education, vol. 9.

127 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030](#).

128 Daniel Jambo and Lei Hongde (2019). [The Effect of Principal's Distributed Leadership Practice on Students' Academic Achievement: A Systematic Review of the Literature](#). International Journal of Higher Education, vol. 9(1).

129 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030](#).

130 Brittany S. Hewett and Karen M. La Paro (2019). [Organizational Climate: Collegiality and Supervisor Support in Early Childhood Education Programs](#). Early Childhood Education Journal.

131 Daniel Jambo and Lei Hongde (2019). [The Effect of Principal's Distributed Leadership Practice on Students' Academic Achievement: A Systematic Review of the Literature](#). International Journal of Higher Education, vol. 9(1).

132 Kirsten Marie Bovbjerg (2006). [Teams and Collegiality in Educational Culture](#). European Educational Research Journal, Vol. 5(3-4)

133 Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU (2024). [Non-paper on Evidence Informed Education](#)

134 Jesús Ribosa, Ingrid Noguera, Meritxell Monguillot, David Duran (2024). [Teachers' closeness of professional relationship and its role in learning perception after reciprocal peer observation](#). Teaching and Teacher Education, vol. 140

135 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030](#).

which leads to high turnovers and affects educators' morale<sup>136</sup>. Therefore, peer-to-peer collaboration can be an effective tool to increase job satisfaction<sup>137</sup>. Research shows teachers value collaboration and receiving constructive feedback from their peers<sup>138</sup>, and cooperation with support staff can also improve the distribution of responsibilities and increase the quality of education.

## Pedagogy and andragogy experimentation

 **LLL calls on education and training institutions to allow for innovation in teaching by preventing overloaded curricula, avoiding teaching-to-the-test approaches and giving space to educators to engage in action-research, addressing (global) challenges in innovative ways.**

The education and training system has been branded as slow-moving due to the long cycles required for learners to develop specific competences, and the length

required for longitudinal studies to determine which intervention was actually successful<sup>139</sup>. With educators being highly skilled professionals, with advanced training; seeing innovation and developments in other fields might make it more enticing for them to pursue alternative careers. Below we will present several ways in which innovative practices can be welcomed, so that educators can find a deeper appreciation of their daily tasks.

It was argued that COVID-19 placed educators in a situation where they tested innovative tools and methods, developing new competences<sup>140</sup>. LLLP contended that this applied to privileged contexts, as in many places educators lacked resources for engaging in experimentation and were simply overwhelmed by being confronted with an emergency situation without adequate support<sup>141</sup>. **Using a global pandemic as an example of creating an innovative environment in education and training institutions points to a damning problem.** Though COVID-19 shone a light on collegiality as educators worked together to create shared lesson plans and precise schedules for students' and

and families' convenience<sup>142</sup>, education and training institutions must take a more systematic and strategic approach to designing spaces that allow for innovation. This includes addressing curricular overload (subject knowledge and amount of subjects) as this blocks innovation. Though it is welcome for educators to deliver the curricular objectives, if there are unreasonably many, it is difficult for them to deliver on them without sacrificing the

time that should be used for trialling new methods. In addition, educators are not empowered, engaged or challenged by being forced to use a teach-for-the-test logic when designing learning experiences. There is no space for innovation if all educators are made to care about is whether their learners pass tests linked to a specific curricular set-up and to show positive results in specific national or international rankings.

## Good Practice

### Trialing innovative green and digital pedagogies in ECEC - Erasmus+ Pathways Project

This Key Action 2 E+ project was launched in 2022 and concluded in 2024, reuniting partners from Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia and Portugal for the purpose of promoting the holistic wellbeing of early-age learners. The project recognises the crucial role that professionals in ECEC have to ensure said wellbeing, therefore, dedicating a large part of the project to professional development and training in innovative pedagogies. A Training Curriculum and Compendium gathering 30 learning activities have been developed and piloted in the aforementioned countries. The **Compendium** shows the importance of outside-of-classroom teaching, with a multitude of environments used to the advantage of the educator and learner in terms of their strengths and weaknesses.

136 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.](#)

137 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession.](#)

138 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.](#)

139 Pierre Gouédard and Beatriz Pont (2020). [Curriculum Reform: A Literature Review to Support Effective Implementation.](#) OECD Education Working Papers Series, 27.

140 Andreas Schleicher (2022). [Building on COVID-19's Innovation Momentum for Digital, Inclusive Education. International Summit on the Teaching Profession.](#) OECD Publishing: Paris.

141 LLLPlatform (2020). [Statement: COVID-19: Mental health and wellbeing of all learners come first.](#)

142 Leonidas Chalkiadakis and Ingrid Noguera (2024). [K-12 Teacher's Appropriation of Digital Technologies and Innovative Instruction Across EU: A Scoping Review.](#) International Journal of Instruction, vol. 17(1).

Improving educators' financial conditions is insufficient to counteract negative attrition and retention rates if the profession is not made more intellectually rewarding. Institutions require autonomy to engage educators in cross-country research and testing of methodologies. The institutions must partner with the research community and ensure that practitioner-based research and action-research opportunities are available for educators, which would foster innovation, and provide professional development and joy. The educator profession needs to be supported to engage with global challenges. Educators are not only implementers but actually co-creators of solutions to global challenges through their pedagogical and andragogical expertise. The two case studies below will reveal how such methods can be implemented. However, it must be insisted that these activities must not come on top of current tasks that educators have. Rather, there needs to be a rethinking over how administrative workload and other tasks are divided within an institution, how and which staff needs to be recruited and which partnerships in the communities need to be built.

## Good Practice

### **Schools as hubs for research - [Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\)](#)**

EEF has established a [Research Schools Network](#) in the UK, which trains regional schools in incorporating action research in their work as well as in developing cooperation with research professionals. Direct school improvement support is offered in this context, and the goal is to ensure that the regional school can then aid all the schools in its surroundings by researching pedagogies/approaches/initiatives and testing their feasibility. Since 2016, almost half of all schools in England have relied on a regional research school for support. The initiative is widely successful and has contributed to the establishment of a set of reforms in various institutions which have since then been deemed as highly successful. The collaboration of educators with researchers and the new roles that educators have had in this context has also contributed to boosting the attractiveness of the profession while also providing space for practitioners to be directly involved in educational reforms.

## Good Practice

### **Bridging practice with research - [Education, Learning, Research \(ULF\)](#) - Sweden**

The Swedish government commissioned a pilot project on sustainable collaboration models between schools and higher education institutions for the purpose of implementing research results in school policy. ULF is specifically creating spaces in which schools would identify their needs and develop proposals for research, which are then implemented in partnership with research practitioners. 27 such groupings of HEIs and schools have been created through ULF, and clustered in 5 regional groups which are then led through a National Board. Their process operates on 4 interconnected pillars: research design, theory building, problem formulation and problem-solving. This led, between 2017 and 2024, to 400 projects, 400 publications and 200 conferences. The goal is to continue the project until 2034, contributing to changing the role that educators have in policies, as they are deeply engaged in research and network-building.

136 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.](#)

137 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession.](#)

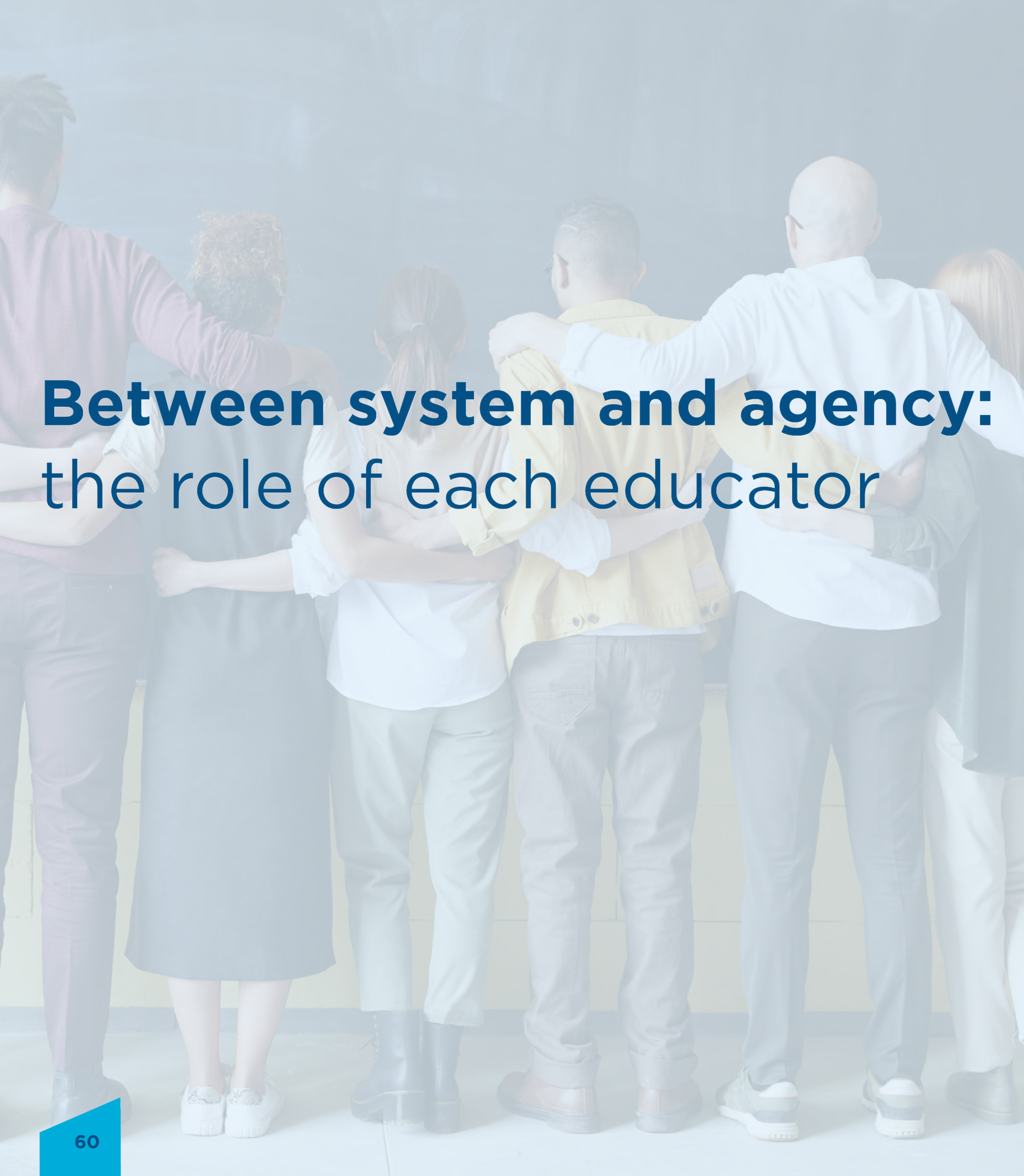
138 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.](#)

139 Pierre Gouédard and Beatriz Pont (2020). [Curriculum Reform: A Literature Review to Support Effective Implementation.](#) OECD Education Working Papers Series, 27.

140 Andreas Schleicher (2022). [Building on COVID-19's Innovation Momentum for Digital, Inclusive Education. International Summit on the Teaching Profession.](#) OECD Publishing: Paris.

141 LLLPlatform (2020). [Statement: COVID-19: Mental health and wellbeing of all learners come first.](#)

142 Leonidas Chalkiadakis and Ingrid Noguera (2024). [K-12 Teacher's Appropriation of Digital Technologies and Innovative Instruction Across EU: A Scoping Review.](#) International Journal of Instruction, vol. 17(1).



## Between system and agency: the role of each educator

## Contextualisation and defining the ideal educator profile

The previous chapter discussed organisational reforms. However, achieving the EEA goals is impossible without competent and motivated (individual) educators<sup>143</sup>. After examining the macro and meso-levels, this chapter explores the reforms at the individual level. The chapter will start with a reflection on an ideal educator profile. It will then consider the improvements to working conditions, participation in decision-making and innovation in teaching which are needed for the ideal educator to thrive. Though educators have diverse needs, there are (common) components that would allow them to thrive, improving the quality of teaching and learning. Although this chapter

focuses on an individual level, it cannot be forgotten that systemic and organisational levels deeply affect individuals and without the key reforms mentioned above, educators cannot solve current challenges.

Defining an ideal educator profile is no easy task, as educating is a highly complex and contextual process. Such a profile is not meant to exclude different approaches or to shame educators, but rather it is a reflection of how educators could thrive if the appropriate conditions would be created around them. An ideal educator builds on their already existing expertise and practical knowledge to create a positive and supportive learning environment. They

---

<sup>143</sup> European Parliament (2024). [Teachers: Key to achieving the European education area](#).



nurture relationships with both internal and external stakeholders, such as other colleagues, families and community representatives, or colleagues from other organisations, by being part of networks or undergoing learning mobility experiences. These experiences make educators attentive to the changes and current developments in our societies, which they thoughtfully integrate and translate (when possible) into the learning environment. Educators dedicate time to CPD and are unafraid to try new and innovative pedagogical approaches, considering learners' needs and involvement. **By recognising their role in self-directed learning and in conveying competences for life, educators do not hesitate to become self-directed learners themselves.** Therefore, they need to be heard, and their experience and knowledge should be considered at the organisational level, by being involved in decision-making processes and at the national or regional level through social and civil dialogue. The ideal educator profile does not exist in a vacuum, requiring a conducive environment freeing them of unsustainable workloads, ensuring a better work-life balance, and providing lifelong learning opportunities.

This inspiring educator profile is not widely respected since only 17.7% of teachers across EU countries report their profession is valued, with only 6.6% in France or 4.5% in Slovakia<sup>144</sup>. Respect and social recognition are essential to the profession<sup>145</sup>, with a clear impact on their wellbeing.

144 European Commission (2023). [Education and Training Monitor 2023](#).

145 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#).

146 Greg Thompson (2021). [The Global Report on the Status of Teachers 2021](#). Education International.

## Educators' missing resource: Time



**LLLP encourages dedicating specific time so that educators can engage in collaboration with stakeholders**

**beyond their specific education and training institutions, fostering collaboration among the formal, non-formal and informal learning environments and all stakeholders contributing to the learning process. Such an approach can contribute to limiting the effort on tasks unrelated to pedagogy or andragogy, while spreading accountability and responsibility in a way that relieves pressure from educators.**

Educators have expressed wanting more time to dedicate to core activities<sup>146</sup> and have often mentioned high workload as an issue, due to a rise in administrative tasks linked to policies that hold educators accountable for student performance.

Unpaid overtime, tasks related to administrative, managerial, relation with families, counselling and care duties<sup>147</sup> have been reported as increasing, without additional support in terms of resources, skills development, or salary adjustments. Education support personnel are crucial to provide support to teachers, while enjoying similar working conditions, to allow them to focus on their core duties and spend less time on other tasks which can be performed by dedicated professionals<sup>148</sup>. In addition, educators should also spend more time on professional development to enhance their autonomy in how they do their work and operationalise the methodologies mentioned previously, which requires CPD's provision in various formats and delivery methods as well as access to high-quality resources and tools<sup>149</sup>. Time is required in

147 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#).

148 Ibid.

149 Greg Thompson (2021). [The Global Report on the Status of Teachers 2021](#). Education International.

the context of actively transforming the system around educators, as they require a support system inside and outside their organisation<sup>150</sup> to enact changes.

Educators should possess the tools and resources (including time) to identify potential stakeholders and create connections with their communities. One element in which this is crucial is to ensure that implemented curricula are anchored and stay relevant to specific local contexts. Cultural and business representatives, local civil servants or other community actors can help contextualise the learning process. Business representatives can work with education organisations at the local or regional level through joint forums, revealing local community needs and existing solutions and practices. However, these interactions must be leveraged to fulfil a number of important roles for society<sup>151</sup> beyond boosting employability for a specific sector. Culture is a crucial part of the community around the education organisation. Projects like 'Engaging Youth for an Inclusive and Sustainable Europe' support schools to map intangible cultural heritage existing in the community<sup>152</sup>. To

integrate these into the curricula and to contextualise them for learners, educators can work with cultural representatives from local cultural institutions or artisans<sup>153</sup>. Parents/guardians also need lifelong learning competences to engage in this process<sup>154</sup>. Only a clear strategy involving and capacitating internal and external stakeholders can sustain this support system.

Educators have expressed in UNESCO's Global Report on Teachers a need to engage with peers from other contexts or areas of expertise to improve their wellbeing and motivation but also update their competences<sup>155</sup>. Networks, communities of practice or direct partnerships between organisations to share practices and resources, as referred to in previous sections, can be helpful in boosting professional competences, strengthening inter-educator sharing of knowledge and even improving learning outcomes, but require educators to actively engage in such structures<sup>156</sup>. Moreover, exchange programmes of different geographical scopes create opportunities for learning and can help educators improve their practice.

Another way of supporting educators is also by taking advantage of digital tools either to create/share open resources or to create digital environments to connect educators between them or other professions<sup>157</sup>.

## Trial and error: innovative pedagogies and self-regulated learners

 **LLL calls on educators to work in partnership with education and training institutions to innovate in the teaching offer and avoid simply meeting quantitative targets which do not boost the key competences of learners.**

The recommendations from the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession, which are relevant for both educators and other educational staff, focus on promoting

learning through experience, enquiry and curiosity and fostering ability, enthusiasm, and discipline for problem-solving<sup>158</sup>. Achieving these goals requires educators prepared to engage with topics relevant to ongoing societal debates as well as with an environment in which learning is explored with curiosity together with learners, rather than where information is passed on in rigid formats. The LLLPlatform had presented in its previous Position Papers a multitude of innovative pedagogies linked to citizenship

150 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#).

151 European Economic and Social Committee (2013). [The role of business in relation to education in the EU. Opinion](#).

152 European Commission (2024). [Cultural heritage and education](#).

153 European Commission (2024). [Cultural heritage and education](#).

154 LLLPlatform (2023). [Position Paper on: Key Competences for All: a lifelong learning approach](#).

155 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030](#).

156 Jesús Ribosa, Ingrid Noguera, Meritxell Monguillot, David Duran (2024). [Teachers' closeness of professional relationship and its role in learning perception after reciprocal peer observation](#). Teaching and Teacher Education, vol. 140

157 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#).

158 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#).

education, sustainability<sup>159</sup> and digitalisation<sup>160</sup> which aim to address societal challenges and connect the learning process with the immediate reality of both learners and educators. Such topics must become key topics in the curricula<sup>161</sup>, to ensure that the innovative pedagogies already developed across formal, non-formal and informal learning can be mainstreamed across all learning systems. These topics and the pedagogies and andragogies associated with them have to be integrated with an interdisciplinary perspective in mind. Research has shown the importance of interdisciplinary learning, as students can engage more meaningfully, viewing challenges from a multidimensional perspective<sup>162</sup>.

Implementing innovative pedagogies involves an experimental period, which requires time. Educators need time to adjust to new approaches, observe learners' responses, fine-tune approaches and measure impact on learning outcomes<sup>163</sup>. Adopting innovative pedagogies is not a mere checklist of current trends, especially when considering Artificial intelligence or other similar digital tools, which have been

recently given as examples of innovation and indiscriminately implemented in education and training with counterproductive consequences on both learners and educators<sup>164</sup>. Innovation should be used with purpose, be adequate, and enhance the quality of education. This entails educators having autonomy and agency over their profession, including over curricula. To address learners' individual needs, create a more inclusive and tailored education, and embed local contexts, it is crucial to promote professional autonomy<sup>165</sup>, allowing educators to make suitable decisions regarding pedagogical practices to implement and educational goals to set<sup>166</sup>. Keeping in mind that realising professional autonomy implies knowledge and a specific mindset which requires adequate teacher training and support<sup>167</sup>. This is inextricably linked with education and training institutions' responsibility to strengthen job crafting, as discussed previously.

Educators are not just sources of information, but also producers of knowledge, facilitators and guides in the comprehension of complex realities<sup>168</sup>.

They take pride in the way their learners showcase their developed competences, and much of the appreciation of their profession is derived from the interaction with the learners. To this end, the capacity of learners to be active participants in the learning process is crucial for educators to feel empowered. For this reason, it is advised to promote learner-centred education where learners' needs are considered and positive interdependence, accountability, and collaborative skills are nurtured<sup>169</sup>. While maintaining a positive learning environment, educators should promote learners' self-regulation as a transversal skill helping learners develop skills of control over cognition, behaviour, emotions, and motivation through personal strategies<sup>170</sup>. Nevertheless, educators need to retain the ability to decide when and how learners are to develop their self-regulation competences, considering that such an interaction is not appropriate across all formats and levels of learning. The respect for the educators' professional expertise must be retained as they welcome a more active role for learners<sup>171</sup>.

The latest PISA report<sup>172</sup> shows the importance of equipping students for self-directed learning and educators' key role in this process. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in systems where students felt their teachers were available, they were more likely to believe they could learn independently and remotely if schools were to close again. This example showcases the educators' fundamental role in strengthening learners' belief in their capacity for self-directed learning. Highlighting self-regulated learning does not devalue the importance of an educator, but rather proves their crucial role in transforming learners' lives. Educators should, therefore, be equipped with skills that empower them to guide learners' learning and social development process rather than impose knowledge transmission models. Educators themselves need to become autonomous learners to learn and implement other types of practices. Research showed teachers held favourable beliefs about self-regulated learning, but strategies are not implemented adequately and there is potential for improvement<sup>173</sup>.

159 LLLPlatform (2020). [Position Paper on Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Societies](#).

160 LLLPlatform (2017). [Position Paper on Reimagining Education for the Digital Age](#)

161 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#).

162 OECD (2024). [PISA 2022 Results: Creative Minds, Creative Schools](#).

163 Alejandro Panigua and David Istance (2018). [Teachers as Designers of Learning Environments: The Importance of Innovative Pedagogies](#). OECD.

164 Mark West (2023). [An ed-tech tragedy? Educational technologies and school closures in the time of COVID-19](#). UNESCO.

165 Howard Stevenson and Alison Milner (2023). [Towards a Framework of Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession through Effective Social Dialogue in Education](#). ETUCE, University of Nottingham, Aalborg University, EFEE

166 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#).

167 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030](#).

168 UN (2024). [Recommendations and summary of deliberations from United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#).

169 LLLPlatform 2023 [Position Paper on Key Competences for All: a lifelong learning approach](#).


170 Ibid.

171 [Presentation of academic research on professionalisation](#) delivered by Dr Dirk van Damme during the Lifelong Learning Lab, 17 June 2024.

172 OECD (2023). [PISA 2022 Results \(Volume I\)](#).

173 Yves Karlen, Silke Hertel and Carmen Nadja Hirt (2020). [Teachers' Professional Competences in Self-Regulated Learning: An Approach to Integrate Teachers' Competences as Self-Regulated Learners and as Agents of Self-Regulated Learning in a Holistic Manner](#). Front. Educ. vol. 5:159.

# Participation in decision-making mechanisms

 **LLL previously made calls on educators to actively engage in distributive leadership practices. To this end, it requires them to acquire competences related to collaboration, communication, negotiation and teamwork. A change of mindset might be essential for educators to be open to new ways of working and for them to seek active participation in various responsibilities across their institution when it comes to decision-making and transversal initiatives.**

Previous chapters called for educator involvement in distributive leadership, empowering educators to take initiative and assume responsibility<sup>174</sup>, boosting ownership,

diversity of thought, and shared commitment to progress<sup>175</sup>. As shown before, participation in decision-making makes educators likelier to use innovative practices<sup>176</sup> and it improves academic achievement. If such forms of leadership are provided, educators must exhibit openness to the process, willingness to participate and agreement to compromise on key areas<sup>177</sup>. Though the Finnish educational system is a successful case for distributed leadership and its benefits are captured by research<sup>178</sup>, **overworked, poorly compensated and unmotivated educational staff are not willing to participate fully in additional tasks with unclear outcomes or limited potential for meaningful change.** Working conditions and attitudes must change to ensure educators are included and

174 LLLPlatform (2023). [Position Paper on: Key Competences for All: a lifelong learning approach.](#)

175 Muhammad Nadeem (2024). [Distributed leadership in educational contexts: A catalyst for school improvement.](#) Social Sciences & Humanities Open, vol.9.

176 Cailean O'Shea (2021). [Distributed leadership and innovative teaching practices.](#) International Journal of Educational Research Open, vol. 2.

177 UNESCO (2024). [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession.](#) International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030

178 Muhammad Nadeem (2024). [Distributed leadership in educational contexts: A catalyst for school improvement.](#) Social Sciences & Humanities Open, vol.9.

incentivised to participate in meaningfully shaping their environment. Systemic policy stakeholders need to safeguard these spaces for participation, the individual

motivation level is crucial since educators must be able to use the opportunities provided by systemic reforms for their engagement in social and civil dialogue.

# Involvement in social and civil dialogue

 **LLL calls on educators to actively engage in social and civil dialogue, participating in associative life at all levels and ensuring that their voices are heard by means of collective actions.**

Social and civil dialogue from a systemic perspective have been laid out in the previous sections, with the focus in this chapter being dedicated to educators' roles. To be represented, educators need to engage with collective mechanisms, such as trade unions and professional associations. These mechanisms are vehicles for effective

change but require active participation from members. An example from the Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Union, '100% Teacher' initiative, shows that, while media campaigns are important, actively connecting with members is key. They privileged personal contact, by developing their regional organisations for closer contact to potential members and forming relationships with in-training educators<sup>179</sup>. **Educators are likelier to join a trade union when the contact comes from regional or local structures** that understand their context, or through other educators and

179 Howard Stevenson, Bob Carter, Alison Milner, Maria Antonieta Vega Castillo (2020). [YOUR TURN! Teachers for Trade Union Renewal.](#) ETUCE, University of Nottingham.

peers who are trade union representatives. Starting their participation early in their careers and being incentivised to do so during training increases their likelihood of staying and influencing others. There is a growing concern that negotiated collective agreements were unilaterally modified or cancelled in the last three years<sup>180</sup>, so more than ever educators should empower their representatives to fight for social dialogue to improve their working conditions, career prospects and ensure sustainability in education<sup>181</sup>.

Following on the ideal profile discussed earlier, these educators must remain aware of the existing associations in their regions, of the mechanisms and processes to participate in them and exhibit a set of competences linked to collaboration, negotiation, compromise-making, relationship building, resilience and similar competences needed in stakeholder negotiations. Educators need training that boosts socio-emotional competences and the capacity to collaborate with stakeholders beyond education and training institutions. In addition, educators with this profile show commitment to fighting

for their independence and profession, involving themselves in decision-making processes that impact them. While the systemic policy stakeholders need to safeguard these spaces for participation, the individual motivation level is crucial since educators must be able to use the opportunities provided by systemic reforms for their engagement in social and civil dialogue.

---

180 Greg Thompson (2021). [The Global Report on the Status of Teachers 2021](#). Education International.

181 ETUCE (2024). [Make Teaching Attractive Campaign](#).



The Lifelong Learning Platform is an umbrella that gathers 43 European organisations active in the field of education, training and youth.

Currently these networks represent more than 60 000 educational institutions and associations covering all sectors of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Their members reach out to several millions of beneficiaries.

**Rue de l'industrie, 10 - 1000 Brussels, Belgium**  
**info@llplatform.eu - +32 2 89 32 515**  
**www.llplatform.eu**



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**