

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR INCLUSION

Policy Mapping Grid: Switzerland



The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency) is an independent and self-governing organisation. The Agency is co-funded by the ministries of education in its member countries and by the European Commission via an operating grant within the European Union (EU) Erasmus+ education programme (2014–2020).



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The views expressed by any individual in this document do not necessarily represent the official views of the Agency, its member countries or the Commission.

Extracts from the document are permitted provided that a clear reference to the source is given. This document should be referenced as follows: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2020. *Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion – Policy Mapping Grid: Switzerland*. Odense, Denmark

The information in this document was current in February 2020.

Further information about the Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion (TPL4I) activities is available on the [TPL4I web area](#).

© European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2020

Secretariat
Østre Stationsvej 33
DK-5000 Odense C Denmark
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20
secretariat@european-agency.org

Brussels Office
Rue Montoyer, 21
BE-1000 Brussels Belgium
Tel: +32 2 213 62 80
brussels.office@european-agency.org

www.european-agency.org



CONTENTS

SECTION 1: WIDER POLICY CONTEXT	4
SECTION 2: VISION AND MAIN PRINCIPLES OF TPL4I POLICY	5
2.1 Policy vision	5
<i>Evaluative comments for 'Policy vision'</i>	6
2.2 Main principles	6
<i>Evaluative comments for 'Main principles'</i>	8
SECTION 3: GOALS AND CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT FOR TPL4I POLICY	9
3.1 Goals	9
<i>Evaluative comments for 'Goals'</i>	15
3.2 Continuum of support	15
<i>Evaluative comments for 'Continuum of support'</i>	16
SECTION 4: CAPACITY BUILDING, FUNDING AND MONITORING OF TPL4I POLICY	17
4.1 Capacity building	17
<i>Evaluative comments for 'Capacity building'</i>	19
4.2 Funding	20
<i>Evaluative comments for 'Funding'</i>	20
4.3 Monitoring	21
<i>Evaluative comments for 'Monitoring'</i>	23
Useful references for national policies	24



SECTION 1: WIDER POLICY CONTEXT

Wider policy context

[Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation of 18 April 1999](#) (Status as of 1 January 2020):

Art. 62:

¹ The Cantons are responsible for the system of school education.

³ The Cantons shall ensure that adequate special needs education is provided to all children and young people with disabilities up to the age of 20.

Art. 67:

¹ In fulfilling their duties, the Confederation and Cantons shall take account of the special need of children and young people to receive encouragement and protection.

[Federal Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against People with Disabilities](#)

(Disability Discrimination Act, DDA) (Status as of 1 January 2020):

Art. 20:

¹ The cantons shall ensure that children and young people with disabilities receive a basic education adapted to their special needs.

² Wherever possible and beneficial to the child or young person with a disability, the cantons shall provide suitable forms of schooling to encourage the integration of children and young people with disabilities in the regular school system.

³ In particular, they shall ensure that that children and young people with perceptual or articulation disorders and persons close to them can learn a communication technique appropriate for the disability.



SECTION 2: VISION AND MAIN PRINCIPLES OF TPL4I POLICY

2.1 Policy vision

Policy priorities	Findings
2.1.1 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers (i.e. student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers, teacher educators) can access career-long professional learning opportunities regarding the principles of inclusive education	2.1.1.1 The new 'Regulation on the recognition of teaching diplomas for teaching at primary level, lower secondary level and at Matura schools' (in German and French) which came into force on 1 January 2020 includes principles of inclusive education: <i>Art. 7. Training objectives</i> <i>3. Students who acquire a teaching diploma for compulsory schooling shall be enabled:</i> <i>b. to support and encourage students with special educational needs who attend a regular class in accordance with the principle of inclusive education in their learning and in their participation in school life.</i>
2.1.2 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers receive education regarding their role and collaboration in and contribution to inclusive education	2.1.2.1 <i>The integration of children and adolescents with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream school and the development of an inclusive education system is gaining importance in Switzerland. Most cantons, and frequently also communities, have developed concepts, regulations and guidelines and now offer corresponding provisions. On the federal level, the [Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against People with Disabilities (Disability Discrimination Act, DDA)] recommends that the cantons promote integration (European Agency, Country information for Switzerland, Systems of support and specialist provision).</i>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>2.1.2.2</p> <p>The Disability Discrimination Act does not refer to teachers and other professionals in education. It refers only to the cantons and the children or young people with disabilities (Art. 20).</p>
<p>2.1.3 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers receive education regarding their pedagogical responsibility to promote the interaction, learning, participation and collaboration of all learners</p>	<p>2.1.3.1</p> <p><i>The Inter-Cantonal Agreement on Co-operation in the Field of Special Needs Education (2007) transfers special education from social security (medical model) to the field of education ('education for all'). It describes the basic special needs measures – such as early intervention, speech therapy, psychomotor therapy and specialised education – to support children with special needs in mainstream classes and extended measures provided in special schools (European Agency, Country information for Switzerland, Legislation and policy).</i></p>

Evaluative comments for 'Policy vision'

The new regulation on the recognition of teaching diplomas introduces special educational needs into the curricula of mainstream teachers.

2.2 Main principles

Policy priorities	Findings
<p>2.2.1 Teachers' professional learning is defined in policy as a prerequisite for inclusive education</p>	<p>–</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
2.2.2 Policy states that the principles and practice of inclusive education should be part of initial teacher education	–
2.2.3 Policy states that beginning teachers should receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education	–
2.2.4 Policy ensures that experienced teachers receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education	–



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>2.2.5 Policy states that specialist teachers and other professionals (e.g. speech and language therapists, multilingual education teachers and other professionals who work in schools) receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education</p>	<p>2.2.5.1 Regulation of 12 June 2008 on the recognition of diplomas in the field of special needs education (early special education and special education) (in German and French).</p> <p>2.2.5.2 Regulations on the recognition of university diplomas in speech therapy and university diplomas in psychomotor therapy of 3 November 2000 (in German and French).</p>
<p>2.2.6 Policy states that teacher educators working in university education departments or pedagogical institutes should be trained and committed to the inclusive education agenda in their courses, as understood in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Disability Strategy</p>	<p>–</p>

Evaluative comments for ‘Main principles’

–



SECTION 3: GOALS AND CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT FOR TPL4I POLICY

3.1 Goals

Policy priorities	Findings
3.1.1 Policy states that all teachers should have qualifications that reflect an inclusive education agenda	<p>3.1.1.1</p> <p><i>In order to be accepted into an SNE [special needs education] programme, in the field of special education teaching, the following minimum qualifications set by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) must be met: a teacher's certificate for mainstream classroom work or a bachelor's degree in speech and language therapy or psychomotor therapy, or a bachelor's degree in a related field of studies. Students who have received a bachelor's degree through an integrated course of studies for a secondary I teacher's certificate may also be accepted for this programme. The different teacher education universities can include inclusive education skills in their curricula.</i></p> <p>(European Agency, Country information for Switzerland, Teacher education for inclusive education)</p> <p>3.1.1.2</p> <p>With the new 'Regulation on the recognition of teaching diplomas for teaching at primary level, lower secondary level and at Matura schools' (in French and German), the teacher education universities have to include inclusive skills in their curricula.</p> <p>3.1.1.3</p> <p>The degree programme for pre-school level and/or primary school level teachers covers:</p> <p><i>... the fields of educational sciences (including aspects of special needs education and intercultural education), didactics related to the specific level and subject, subject-related</i></p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p><i>training including interdisciplinary sections, teaching practice and references to research and development relating to the occupational field.</i></p> <p>(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Switzerland, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>3.1.1.4</p> <p>The degree programme for lower secondary level teachers comprises:</p> <p><i>... a subject-related scientific and didactic part (including aspects of special needs education and intercultural teaching) and an educational sciences and teaching practice part. The programme may be offered on a consecutive or integrated basis and combines theory and practice as well as teaching and research.</i></p> <p>(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Switzerland, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>3.1.1.5</p> <p>The degree programme for teachers in the field of special needs education covers:</p> <p><i>... the theory and practice of special needs education, development of the relevant contents of associated subject areas such as psychology, medicine, sociology and legal studies as well as methods and knowledge of current research in the field of special needs education.</i></p> <p><i>In line with the chosen specialisation (remedial education at school or remedial education in early childhood), specialist study focuses may be fixed in the promotion and support of children with delayed emotional, social, physical and motor, language and/or cognitive development and of children with sensory or physical disabilities, mental disabilities, multiple disabilities or behavioural problems, or for particularly gifted children.</i></p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Switzerland, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>3.1.1.6</p> <p>Regulation of 12 June 2008 on the recognition of diplomas in the field of special needs education (early special needs education and special needs education) (in German and French).</p> <p>3.1.1.7</p> <p><i>The special needs education (SNE) programme allows students to acquire the knowledge, abilities and competences to qualify in:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. the field of early childhood intervention for preventive and instructional support of children whose development is endangered, disrupted or hindered, as well as appropriate familial intervention;</i><i>2. the field of special education teaching, for instruction and educational work with pupils who have special educational needs.</i> <p>(European Agency, Country information for Switzerland, Teacher education for inclusive education)</p> <p>3.1.1.8</p> <p>Regulation of 12 June 2008 on the recognition of diplomas in the field of special needs education (early special needs education and special needs education) (in German and French).</p> <p>3.1.1.9</p> <p>The degree programme for speech therapy and psychomotor therapy covers:</p> <p><i>... specific speech therapy or psychomotor therapy course contents and relevant aspects from the following areas: educational sciences, remedial education, psychology, medicine, law,</i></p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p><i>scientific methodology and linguistics for the field of speech therapy or exercise science for the field of psychomotor therapy.</i></p> <p>(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Switzerland, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>3.1.1.10</p> <p>Regulations on the recognition of university diplomas in speech therapy and university diplomas in psychomotor therapy of 3 November 2000 (in German and French).</p>
3.1.2 Policy states competence areas for inclusive education for all teachers working at different levels of education (e.g. professional development of all teachers to facilitate their involvement in co-teaching, planning together, developing differentiated materials collaboratively, etc.)	–
3.1.3 Policy states that all teachers' professional learning opportunities consider teacher competences for inclusive education	–



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>3.1.4 There is a formal strategy for promoting dialogue between ministries, regional/local authorities/municipalities and teacher educators to agree on the requirements of teachers' professional development opportunities for inclusion</p>	<p>3.1.4.1</p> <p>Within the framework of inter-cantonal co-operation for special education, the Swiss Institute for Special Needs Education (SZH) developed a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP, in German and French).</p> <p><i>It is used if the locally available special education resources are not adequate and additional resources need to be made available for a child's education. It serves the cantons primarily as a decision-making basis for arranging enhanced special needs measures.</i></p> <p>(European Agency, Country information for Switzerland, Assessment within inclusive education systems)</p> <p>3.1.4.2</p> <p>The local resources used in teacher training and professional development are oriented towards inclusive education.</p> <p>3.1.4.3</p> <p>In the French speaking cantons, common training on the SAP is available. In the German/Italian speaking cantons, special training may be offered by the teacher education universities.</p> <p>3.1.4.4</p> <p>Mainly the school psychology services work with the SAP.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>3.1.5 There is a mechanism to ensure that all professional learning opportunities available to teachers are aligned with national- and local-level policy goals for an understanding of inclusive education</p>	<p>3.1.5.1 A distinctive situation is the canton of Ticino (Italian-speaking part of Switzerland). Ticino followed the Italian model of inclusion to some extent with <i>Sostegno pedagogico</i>, a model of teacher and pupil support in mainstream school. As a result, there is no segregation for learners with mild to moderate special needs. It is accessible for children from the age of three. (European Agency, Country information for Switzerland, Systems of support and specialist provision)</p> <p>3.1.5.2 A national teacher exchange programme exists between the different cantons.</p>
<p>3.1.6 There are strategies to ensure that local-level professional opportunities for teachers are flexible/adaptable to local school contexts and school development plans for inclusive education</p>	<p>3.1.6.1 Every canton has its own concept of special needs education (in German and French).</p>
<p>3.1.7 There is a medium- and long-term review strategy for teachers' professional learning opportunities to ensure they meet system requirements for an inclusive education system</p>	<p>–</p>



Evaluative comments for 'Goals'

–

3.2 Continuum of support

Policy priorities	Findings
3.2.1 There is a strategy to ensure a continuum of diverse professional learning opportunities for inclusive education – for pre-service, beginning and experienced teachers, as well as teacher educators and support teachers – across all levels where teachers work	3.2.1.1 <i>The EDK's [Cantonal Ministers of Education] recommendations on teacher CPD define CPD as a part of the teachers' professional mission. The cantonal education acts and regulations provide an obligation for teachers to undertake CPD and often set out an entitlement to CPD; the content of CPD is often not laid down.</i> (European Agency, Country information for Switzerland, Teacher education for inclusive education)
3.2.2 There are strategies for developing leadership competences (e.g. school leadership or learning support leadership roles) for inclusive education in all relevant professional learning opportunities	–



Policy priorities	Findings
3.2.3 There are mechanisms to support schools/higher education institutions to develop strategic plans for teachers' professional learning in inclusive education	–
3.2.4 There are strategies to support effective collaboration and joint work between schools and higher education institutions/universities	–

Evaluative comments for 'Continuum of support'

–



SECTION 4: CAPACITY BUILDING, FUNDING AND MONITORING OF TPL4I POLICY

4.1 Capacity building

Policy priorities	Findings
4.1.1 There are strategies to increase the capacity of all schools/higher education institutions to support all teachers to engage in professional learning activities on inclusive education	–
4.1.2 There is a mechanism to facilitate dialogue between all teachers/leaders/other stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of inclusive education as an approach that ensures high-quality learning opportunities for all	4.1.2.1 Each canton has its own concept of special needs education (in German and French). Nevertheless, qualitative and quantitative differences between the cantons exist.
4.1.3 There is guidance on how teachers working in mainstream school settings/higher education institutions can understand and enact inclusive education	–



Policy priorities	Findings
4.1.4 There are guidelines that support all teachers to collaborate to support all learners	–
4.1.5 There are guidelines on how methods of quality assessment, school evaluation, inspections and other accountability measures contribute to planning/identifying priority areas of professional learning activities for inclusive education	–
4.1.6 There are strategies to support schools/higher education institutions to build strong leadership teams that are aware of the inclusive education agenda	–
4.1.7 There are incentives stated in policy for all teachers to engage in professional learning activities for inclusive education	–



Policy priorities	Findings
4.1.8 There are strategies stated in policy to develop the role of specialist teachers as a resource for mainstream schools	–
4.1.9 There are strategies to promote professional learning for inclusion in teachers' common competence areas (e.g. experienced teachers and specialist teachers are expected to engage in professional learning activities that promote inclusive education pedagogies, such as co-teaching)	4.1.9.1 <i>Children and young people with special needs who are integrated into mainstream schooling may be supervised by a support teacher who is involved in the class for a certain number of hours, depending on a pupil's needs. At kindergarten, in certain cantons, children may continue to benefit from early intervention measures. In such cases, they are supervised by an early intervention specialist, who is mainly involved in the child's family environment but also makes occasional visits to the kindergarten. Collaboration between the class teacher and the support staff takes different forms, such as team teaching, regular meetings and shared educational plans. Integration into mainstream schooling is governed first and foremost by the legal provisions in force in a particular canton.</i> (European Agency, Country information for Switzerland, Systems of support and specialist provision)
4.1.10 There are competences for professional learning in inclusive education for all teachers	–

Evaluative comments for 'Capacity building'

–



4.2 Funding

Policy priorities	Findings
4.2.1 There are financial incentives to encourage all schools/higher education institutions to develop policy and action plans for teachers' professional learning for inclusion	–
4.2.2 There are mechanisms for systematic data collection on expenditure on teachers' professional learning that informs cost-effectiveness issues	4.2.2.1 Depends on the cantons. There are no national statistics.
4.2.3 There are flexible resourcing mechanisms that foster teachers' professional learning at school level	4.2.3.1 There are flexible resourcing mechanisms at school/community and cantonal levels.

Evaluative comments for 'Funding'

–



4.3 Monitoring

Policy priorities	Findings
<p>4.3.1 There is a comprehensive accountability framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of teachers' professional learning for inclusion activities</p>	<p>4.3.1.1</p> <p><i>Three bodies provide information on the quality of teachers' professional learning for inclusion activities. The Swiss Coordination Centre for Research in Education (SKBF) collates information about educational research throughout Switzerland. It is mandated to monitor the development of education provision. The Swiss Institute for Special Needs Education (SZH) carries out tasks in the field of SNE, such as collating documentation and information concerning SNE programmes and advising the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education and the cantons on all questions relating to specialised pedagogy. The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) collects a wide range of data on the Swiss education system.</i></p> <p>(European Agency, Country information for Switzerland, Systems of support and specialist provision)</p> <p>4.3.1.2</p> <p>The data is used in the development of the diploma recognition regulations.</p> <p>4.3.1.3</p> <p>Professional development is taken into consideration in these evaluative and monitoring institutions (See Swiss education report).</p> <p>4.3.1.4</p> <p>They collaborate with the Chamber of Universities of Teacher Education (at Swiss universities).</p> <p>4.3.1.5</p> <p>They collaborate with the different regional and cantonal conferences/commissions on education and special needs education.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
4.3.2 Monitoring mechanisms ensure that inequalities in access to professional learning opportunities at regional or organisational levels are addressed	–
4.3.3 There are mechanisms to support schools/teacher education departments/higher education institutions to have ownership of review and improvement processes in relation to teachers' professional learning	–
4.3.4 There are mechanisms to share and analyse data to inform improvement processes in relation to teachers' professional learning at national and local level	–
4.3.5 There is data available on whether teachers are engaged in professional learning that is relevant to the level of education they teach	–



Policy priorities	Findings
4.3.6 There are mechanisms to ensure that teachers' professional learning contributes to improving inclusive education practice at school level/the level of a teacher education department or higher education institution	–

Evaluative comments for 'Monitoring'

–



Useful references for national policies

Inter-cantonal:

- Systematic collection of inter-cantonal law in the field of education (in [German](#) and [French](#))
- Special Needs Education (in [German](#) and [French](#))
- Uniform terminology for the field of special needs education (in [German](#) and [French](#))
- Cantonal quality standards for the recognition of service providers in the field of special needs education (in [German](#) and [French](#))