



European  
Commission



# Education and Training 2020 Highlights from the ET2020 Working Groups 2016-2017



## Foreword

We do best when we learn from each other and achieve more when we work together. The Working Groups which help implement the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), provide not only a forum for discussion and exchange of best practices between educational experts across Europe but also produce ideas that feed directly into European educational policies. In the simplest terms, it is innovation in education put into practice. From the first discussions on SELFIE, the self-reflection tool to help schools with their uptake of digital technologies, to the broad scope of the European Education Area and its commitment to offering high quality and inclusive education for all, the ET 2020 Working Groups go beyond reflection and dialogue: they shape policy, affect change and help build equitable education systems across Europe.

Throughout 2016-2017, the breadth of educational expertise, thematic diversity and deliverables produced was vast. Six Working Groups consisting of more than 400 experts from 28 EU Member States and other participating countries, stakeholders and international organisations came together to highlight both the opportunities and challenges faced by educational systems, educators and learners.

The current work cycle (July 2018 – June 2020) is the final one of the Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). When looking forward, it is often worth taking a moment to look back. The thematic nature of the Working Groups has evolved to better reflect today's societal challenges such as the digital transformation, polarising politics and the rise of extremism and the increasing importance of lifelong learning.

I invite you to take inspiration from the activities and good practices shared in 2016-2017 and trust that you will continue to take a strong interest in the ET 2020 Working Groups in the years to come.

Tibor Navracsics

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. Navracsics', written in a cursive style.

European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

January 2019

## Table of contents

WORKING GROUP ON SCHOOLS.....	5
WORKING GROUP ON THE MODERNISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION .....	8
WORKING GROUP ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET): TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN WORK-BASED LEARNING / APPRENTICESHIPS .....	11
WORKING GROUP ON ADULT LEARNING .....	13
WORKING GROUP ON DIGITAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCES .....	16
WORKING GROUP ON PROMOTING CITIZENSHIP AND THE COMMON VALUES OF FREEDOM, TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION THROUGH EDUCATION.....	19

The highlights presented in this document have been drafted by the Commission in cooperation with Working Group members. These messages do not necessarily reflect the Commission nor the Member States' positions, but are intended to summarise the main conclusions of the informal work undertaken in the Groups. This document provides more information on these outputs. It is targeted at policy-makers and at anyone interested in European cooperation in education and training.

More information on the Working Group outputs can be found here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-working-groups\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-working-groups_en)

The ET 2020 Working Groups (WGs), involving over 400 experts from Member States' administrations and other stakeholders, are one of the main instruments in the **tool box** of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (**ET 2020**). Through **mutual learning and the identification of good practices**, they provide **advice and expertise to the European Commission** in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives, and support Member States in addressing the key challenges of their education and training systems and common priorities agreed at European level. Between 2016 and 2017, there have been **six ET 2020 Working Groups**.

The **Working Group on Schools** addressed the larger theme of schools as learning organisations and part of an integrated learning system. The WG delivered a new package of guiding principles and contemporary policy examples examining the capacity for sustainable systemic change, particularly in the areas of: quality assurance; continuity and transitions in learner development; teachers and school leaders; and, networks in school education.

The **Working Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education** followed up on the priorities identified in the 2011 "[Modernisation Agenda](#)"<sup>1</sup> and the 2017 "[Renewed Agenda for Higher Education](#)"<sup>2</sup>. Much of the work focused on equity, quality and relevance of teaching and learning; regional development and innovation; and funding, governance and quality culture. Its two outputs include an online 'Compendium of higher education policies' and policy conclusions of its peer learning activities.

The **Working Group on Vocational Education and Training** produced twelve policy pointers addressing four themes: (i) Specifying the roles and responsibilities for teachers and trainers in VET systems; (ii) Strengthening the professional development of teachers and trainers; (iii) Equipping teachers and trainers for key challenges and; (iv) Fostering collaboration to support the work of teachers and trainers.

The WG also developed an animated video and an infographic to promote their work.

The **Working Group on Adult Learning**, relying on peer learning activities, has elaborated key messages and policy recommendations with the aim of increasing adults' basic and medium skills. The WG also produced an inventory on national policies on adult learning in the workplace that gathers comparable country level information and identifies interesting country-specific policy approaches.

The **Working Group on Digital Skills and Competences** dedicated much of its work to digital pedagogies, a holistic approach towards digitalisation in education and teacher training for digital education and the digital competence of teachers. Its activities also fed into the ongoing work as relates to SELFIE, the Digital Education Action Plan and the 'Educate to Create: From Digital Consumers to Digital Creators' conference organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

---

<sup>1</sup> Modernising higher education in the EU – COM (2011)567

<sup>2</sup> Communication on a renewed EU agenda for higher education – COM (2017) 247

**The Working Group on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education** focused on the four themes of the 2015 Paris Declaration (i.e. critical thinking and media literacy, social and civic competences, education of disadvantaged learners and intercultural dialogue). It has contributed to producing an online compendium for good practices in education and training, elements for a policy framework and its expertise fed directly into the 2018 Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching.

## WORKING GROUP ON SCHOOLS

The objective of this Working Group (WG) is to assist countries in improving school education by advancing policy development through peer learning and the sharing of good practices.

Key themes covered by the WG include:

- The **governance of school education** and how systems can address the serious challenges of quality and equity in order to strive for better learning outcomes for all young people;
- Promoting the concept of ***schools as learning organisations within school education as an integrated learning system*** which is founded on the belief that policy-makers and other stakeholders have the capacity to work better together towards shared goals and make positive change happen based on evidence, reflection, shared practice and through ensuring a legacy for policy reform.

Major outputs of this WG are:

- A new package of guiding principles and contemporary policy examples, examining the capacity for sustainable systemic change, particularly in the areas of: **quality assurance; continuity and transitions in learner development; teachers and school leaders;** and **networks** in school education.

### In More Detail

#### Promoting higher quality through sustainable innovation and inclusion

In 2017, European education ministers highlighted the need for contemporary approaches to teaching, learning and the governance of school education systems in order to help schools respond to the changing educational demands of learners, society and the labour market. The ET2020 Working Group on Schools (2016-18) was given the mandate to develop ideas and share policy and practices from EU countries that help them tackle challenges in school education by promoting higher quality through sustainable innovation and inclusion.

The WG aims to support Member States in increasing the capacity of school education for systemic and sustainable change. It sets out a vision for school education systems that can help define shared values within a European Education Area. The peer learning process that underpinned this work makes it relevant to all countries and adaptable by all education systems, whilst recognising their diversity and high complexity.

The work focused on four key areas of governance (as described in the thematic reports on the following page) setting out guiding principles for policy development within a

context of recent research and changing environments for school education. These are further illustrated with specific examples from countries, in order to critically reflect on how different approaches have been put into practice, and with what results.

The main ideas are summarised in a final report, **European ideas for better learning: the governance of school education systems**, which describes a broad approach to governance that school education systems should strive for. It also elaborates on the concept of *schools as learning organisations* within *school education as an integrated learning system*. This understanding of governance and its challenges and opportunities are expressed in the following points that policy-makers are invited to consider.

### Key policy messages

- A **clear vision for quality** in education with **shared values** concerning school, teacher and learner development;
- A learner-centred approach to decision-making in order to create **meaningful learning experiences** and **environments** that contribute to the development of the whole child;
- **Collaborative** decision-making processes, involving the trust and supported dialogue of a range of stakeholders at all levels of the system, and fostering a **sense of ownership, responsibility and accountability**;
- Developing schools as **learning organisations** that support effective decision-making and become contexts for a process of inquiry and **continuous development** at local level;
- Policies that support highly **competent and trusted professional communities**, recognising teachers and school leaders as key change agents, promoting shared leadership, collaboration and innovation, and investing in capacity-building that will motivate their continued development to ensure high **quality teaching and learning**;
- Generating and using different **types of data** in different parts of the system, which can help to better identify strengths and areas for improvements;
- Making **well-timed** policies, meaning that they directly respond to evolving needs across the system, with focused implementation processes of an adequate duration, and a coherence with other current policies, for sustained and renewed change.

The final report also brings together four thematic reports on:

1. **Quality assurance for school development:** ways of improving interplay between mechanisms (i.e. tools and processes) that are both external and internal to schools
2. **Continuity and transitions in learner development:** ways to ensure learning pathways are sufficiently flexible and the conditions for providing appropriate guidance and support
3. **Teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations:** policies that promote and support teacher collaboration, autonomy, and distributed leadership within professional learning communities

**4. Networks for learning and development across school education systems:** a deeper understanding of the purpose and nature of networks for innovation and implementation, and participation of multi-level stakeholders

**If you want to learn more**

The full output package, including a short video is available at –

<https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/governance-of-school-edu.htm>

## WORKING GROUP ON THE MODERNISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The objective of this Working Group (WG) is to follow up on and review the priorities identified in the 2011 '[Modernisation Agenda](#)'<sup>3</sup> and the '[2017 Renewed Agenda for Higher Education](#).'<sup>4</sup> The topics addressed by the Working Group are in line with its initial mandate. The Communication on the renewed EU agenda for higher education and the [Council Recommendation on tracking graduates](#)<sup>5</sup> reflect the results of the activities in the WG and its predecessors since 2012.

### Key themes covered by this WG include:

- Equity, quality and relevance of teaching and learning (T&L)
- Regional development and innovation
- Funding, governance and quality culture

### Major outputs of this WG are:

- An online 'Compendium of higher education policies' highlighting the progress in national higher education systems
- Policy conclusions of peer learning activities

## In More Detail

### Equity, quality and relevance of learning and teaching

In the context of rapid changes in the society and the world of work, the WG focused on the equity, quality and relevance of higher education, including the learning and teaching and the skills sets that students need. Building on its previous work on access and completion, the WG explored a range of aspects in T&L.

The WG emphasized that higher education systems need to adapt to the new realities and encourage countries and their Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to prepare people for changing labour markets and active citizenship in more diverse, mobile, digital and global societies, where graduates with a "T-shaped" skills profile are in high demand, mastering in-depth field specific understanding and transversal skills.

### Key policy messages

- Higher Education systems need to ensure that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education reflects the diversity and social mix of the overall population, including newly arrived migrants. This underlines the need for collaboration across the education system as well as with external stakeholders.
- Admission policies need to facilitate opportunities for learners from diverse backgrounds. Authorities can help HEIs mainstream the equity of access (pathways, alternative access routes and local partnerships) by developing strategies, incentives, monitoring the progress and assessing the impacts.

---

<sup>3</sup> Modernising higher education in the EU – COM (2011)567

<sup>4</sup> Communication on a renewed EU agenda for higher education – COM (2017) 247

<sup>5</sup> Council Recommendation on tracking graduates – COM (2017) 249

- Academic, social and financial support, coupled with monitoring student progress and supportive early intervention are key to enhancing higher education completion.
- Successful strategies focus on student-centred learning and enhancement of student experience and learning outcomes, by linking higher education to the outside world, preparing engaged citizens.
- Enabling teachers to develop their pedagogical skills throughout their career and improving the parity of esteem between research and teaching are key ways to improve learning and teaching. Acknowledging and rewarding quality teaching requires reforms in workload and time allocation, reward systems and the formal acknowledgment of the importance of teaching.

### **Regional Development and Innovation (RDI)**

In the context of growing expectations on HEIs to drive socio-economic development, and to demonstrate their overall value, contribution and benefit to the economy and society, the WG explored how institutions can play their development and innovation role on different levels and ways depending on the local or national context, policy frameworks and institutional capacity and leadership. By capitalising on smart specialisation and other relevant strategies and funding sources, authorities can encourage HEIs and stakeholders to identify and work towards shared priorities by alignment of RDI and education provision to address the needs and opportunities of their regions.

### **Key policy messages**

- For HEIs and their regions to be globally competitive, there is a need to support local and regional innovation through cooperation among HEIs, public authorities, local businesses and civic society.
- Authorities can enhance long term commitment and ownership among HEIs for regional engagement, by encouraging HEIs' contribution to the design and implementation of regional and urban strategies, using diverse tools such as performance agreements.
- For a systemic approach, developing an overarching vision and a strategy for HEIs' role in regional development and innovation can ensure consistency across national government strands (education, RDI, industry, regional development) by coordinating priorities, resources and strategies in regional development and innovation.
- Mobility between HEIs and employers (public, private, civil society) is an efficient tool to exchange knowledge and innovation with industry and other organisations and can involve people at all levels. Industry associations and chambers of commerce can help articulate the needs of the small and medium-sized enterprises that dominate most regional economies.
- Using the city/region as a laboratory for students' community engagement and work-based learning can help develop citizenship and other 21st century skills, integrate students into the local community, address authentic community problems and help the institution to identify and acknowledge students' community engagement.

### **Sustainable investment in higher education and governance and quality culture in higher education**

In line with the renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education, the WG explored the progress in quality culture in higher education and acknowledged that there is a need to close four gaps: the gap and mismatch between the supply and demand of skills, the opportunity gap in higher education access and completion, the innovation and development gaps between regions, and the gaps in funding and governance of HEIs. The WG concluded

that higher education authorities and institutions need to enhance quality culture beyond the formalised quality assurance measures, and assess the effectiveness of policies at national and institutional level including incentives, funding, regulation and other policies.

### **Key policy messages**

- While quality enhancement and a quality culture are the responsibility of the higher education institution and of the higher education community, authorities can enhance quality culture by using instruments such as performance agreements and performance-based funding. Lean well-designed quality assurance measures can play a role in higher education reforms as important enabling factors, along with funding and governance.
- Authorities can encourage institutions to take a strategic approach to quality culture through sponsoring a national forum for ongoing dialogue between government, higher education institutions and stakeholders.
- Experience across institutions highlights the need to strike a balance between accountability and institutional autonomy, by keeping reporting duties to the necessary minimum, using reporting arrangements which take account of the evolving needs of institutions, and avoiding monitoring solely against indicators which are retrospective by nature and measure past performance rather than the potential of the institution.

### **If you want to learn more**

[The renewed higher education area](#)

[Council Recommendation on Tracking Graduates](#)

## **WORKING GROUP ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET): TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN WORK-BASED LEARNING / APPRENTICESHIPS**

The objective of this Working Group (WG) is to provide policy guidance to help policy-makers and stakeholders design policies and practices enabling teachers and trainers to reach their full potential and to contribute to improving apprenticeships and work-based learning.

### **Key themes covered by this WG include:**

- Specifying the roles and responsibilities for teachers and trainers in VET systems
- Strengthening the professional development of teachers and trainers
- Equipping teachers and trainers for key challenges
- Fostering collaboration to support the work of teachers and trainers

### **Major outputs of this WG are:**

- An online document presenting twelve policy pointers grouped in four clusters focusing on how to support teachers and trainers in work-based learning (printed and e-version)
- An animation video promoting the work done by the WG on VET
- An infographic translated into all languages (printed and e-version)

## **In More Detail**

### **Work-based learning and continuous professional development**

The context as relates to the importance of work-based learning and continuous professional development was agreed by European education ministers in the 2015 "Riga Conclusions" on Vocational Education and Training VET. The Conclusions also include "Medium Term Deliverables" (i.e. for the period of 2015-2020) and of which two are particularly pertinent to the focus of this WG:

“With a view to developing high quality and labour market-relevant vocational skills and qualifications, based on the learning outcomes approach:

1. Promote work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention on apprenticeships, by involving social partners, companies, chambers and VET providers, as well as by stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship.

In support of successful implementation of reforms and to raise the overall quality and efficiency of VET:

2. Introduce systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors in both school- and work-based settings.”

The overall aim is to ensure that these teachers and trainers can help equip learners with the skills and attitudes needed for employment, in line with the modernisation efforts included in the New Skills Agenda for Europe.

The output document of the WG in 2016-2018 builds on the work of the previous ET 2020 Working Group on VET (2014-2016), which identified 20 guiding principles for high-

performance apprenticeships and work-based learning. The Group has taken those guiding principles and examined them from the perspective of teachers and trainers.

### **Key policy messages**

- **Specifying the roles and responsibilities** of teachers and trainers in VET systems and the need for clarity regarding the roles of teachers and trainers, and how their roles should be incorporated into regulatory frameworks.
- **Strengthening the professional development** of teachers and trainers and highlighting the importance of creating incentives to ensure investment in their professional development, taking into account the differing needs of each role.
- **Equipping teachers and trainers** for key challenges and reflecting on how to help them fulfil the multiple roles they hold beyond teaching and training (i.e. in relation to curricula, the assessment of learning outcomes, innovation, digitalisation, the support of disadvantaged learners and in helping to signpost apprentices to further opportunities).
- **Fostering collaboration** to support the work of teachers and trainers which should reflect the fact that collaboration takes place across all levels within VET systems through drawing on the available expertise and resources.

### **If you want to learn more**

["Teachers and Trainers Matter. How to support them in high-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning"](#).

## WORKING GROUP ON ADULT LEARNING

The objective of this Working Group (WG) is to develop policy guidance on adult learning policies to promote higher and more relevant skills for all.

### Key themes cover by this WG include:

- **Adults with low basic skills** - This may include workers who are highly skilled in their occupation, but lack a solid foundation in literacy, numeracy and digital skills, which limits their opportunities to take part in learning offered in the workplace and elsewhere;
- **Adults with medium skills** - This covers adults who are in need of up-skilling to meet the demands of changing job profiles in modern working life, and may include those with low digital or organisational skills, that prevent their chances of progressing in employment and achieving a higher income.

### Major outputs of this WG are:

- **Inventory on national policies on adult learning in the workplace** that gathers comparable country level information on adult learning in the workplace and also identifies interesting country-specific policy approaches. It describes the policy context in terms of availability of information; policy frameworks; institutional frameworks and descriptions of policies and programmes;
- **Reports covering three peer learning activities**, which aimed at comparing and contrasting policies from a number of countries as relate to the acquisition of basic skills (literacy, numeracy, digital skills) in the workplace; policies related to the acquisition of medium skills by adults in the workplace; and policies for ensuring that workplace learning provides the skills needed by employers and employees;
- **Final report of the Working Group**, which brought together good policy practice from across Europe, in view of inspiring stakeholders to play their part in supporting career-long learning in the workplace.

## In More Detail

### The future of work and the right skills

“As the types of skills needed in the labour market change rapidly, individual workers will have to engage in lifelong learning if they are to achieve fulfilling and rewarding careers.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> World Economic Forum ‘Insight Report: Towards a Reskilling Revolution. A Future of Jobs for All’, 2018.

In today's fast-changing world, every country needs to be sure that its **workforce has the right skills for the labour market**; every employer needs to be sure that its employees have the right skills-set to remain competitive; and every adult needs to keep updating and extending his or her skills in order to remain employable and to play a full part in society.

**Adult learning in the workplace can make a significant contribution** because it:

1. is an accessible and attractive way for adults to maintain and update the knowledge and skills they need for life, at work and at home;
2. is an efficient and effective way for employers to keep their employees' skills sets up to date, motivate their workforce and improve staff retention, as well as to improve competitiveness;
3. is an economical and targeted way for Member States to increase their productivity, innovation and modernisation, maintain their competitiveness and employment rates and raise overall skills levels;
4. supports social and economic (re-)integration of vulnerable groups, inclusion, social cohesion and equality;
5. meets individuals', employers' and society's needs for greater adaptability to better prepare for future skills needs, mitigating projected skills shortages;
6. improves adults' lifelong employability.

### **How to promote adult learning in the workplace?**

For all adults, learning in the workplace could be **an alternative route to obtaining higher level, or more relevant, skills to equip them better** to confront the emerging challenges associated with mega-trends such as automation, digitalisation and globalisation. As adults spend a large share of their time in the workplace, the workplace is an important learning environment; it is the place to develop not only job-related skills but also basic and transversal competences that make people more resilient to changes in their career and life.

There is no one-size-fits-all prescription for promoting and developing adult learning in the workplace. It is covered by different types of policies with different objectives. Every national context is different: how responsibilities are distributed between education providers, employers and employees, or who funds adult learning in the workplace. Furthermore, countries have different needs: Is there a need for upskilling (non-formal) learning, or learning leading to a formal qualification? Are there specific target groups with specific skills needs? Or is there a need for a generally accessible provision of learning at the workplace?

Given these differences, there are different routes to increasing skills through learning as this can be through employers, training providers, or through the employees (learners) directly or through indirect access points (e.g. social services, guidance services etc.). Each route requires a unique mix of policy instruments which may involve both 'sticks' (such as obligations deriving from legislation) and 'carrots' (such as subsidies). Other policy instruments can lie in soft measures such as communication strategies and marketing, or in more directive specific measures such as the quality assurance mechanisms of training providers. The policy mix is very much dependent on the national context, the way responsibilities are divided between the main stakeholders and the role of the government in relation to this policy area.

### **Key policy messages**

**Adult learning in the workplace that responds to individuals', employers' and societal demands,** needs to become a policy priority. This requires:

- a serious long-term commitment from all stakeholders;
- equitable co-funding systems that are sustainable in the long term;
- effective coordination between stakeholders;
- effective systems to tailor provision to changing labour market needs ...
- ... and to the needs of adult learners;
- appropriate quality assurance mechanisms; and,
- clear governance arrangements including regular monitoring and evaluation.

### **If you want to learn more**

[Promoting adult learning in the workplace - Final report of the ET 2020 Working Group 2016-2018 on Adult Learning](#)

## WORKING GROUP ON DIGITAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

The objective of this Working Group (WG) is to look at the development of digital skills and competences at all levels and stages of learning focusing on the potential and challenges of digital technology use in education.

### Key themes covered by this WG include:

- Digital pedagogies
- Holistic approach towards digitalisation in education
- Teacher training for digital education and digital competence of teachers

### Major outputs of this WG are:

- **Key messages** produced after each peer-learning activity focusing on a particular topic
- First discussions on the concept of **SELFIE** (the self-reflection tool for digitally capable schools, piloted in 2017 and to be launched in all member states in autumn 2018)
- Input into the **Digital Education Action Plan** which the European Commission launched in January 2018
- The WG provided major input to the **Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu)** identifying what it means for educators to be digitally competent
- The **'Educate to Create: From Digital Consumers to Digital Creators'** conference organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (held in Sofia in April 2018) was inspired by the work of the WG

## In More Detail

### Encouraging the use of digital pedagogies

In the context of increasing digitalisation and integration of digital tools in education, it is of significant importance to encourage **digital pedagogies**, rather than the plain use of digital tools in the classroom. The successful strategies go beyond the layer of digital equipment and **focus on enhancing educational experience and learning outcomes**. It is the learning goals and priorities that should be a leading factor when choosing the digital technologies and tools. In particular, successful strategies point towards a meaningful use of digital technologies that are seen as a means for innovation and for enhancing quality education.

### Key policy messages

- The use of digital devices should support **collaborative learning, peer-learning and peer feedback and strengthen inter-personal and online social skills.**

- Progress needs to be **made in monitoring the impact of digitalisation** on student experience or learning outcomes, for instance via student surveys.
- Digital assessment should not be seen only as a cost saving and time effective tool of formulating and marking an assessment, but as a way of transitioning from a knowledge-focused to a **competence-focused curriculum**. It provides good opportunity for personalisation and flexibility of the assessment and provides wide scope for formative assessment.
- Effective digital resources and e-textbooks go beyond the format of traditional textbooks by providing interactive and personalised learning, allowing **individualisation and differentiation** of teaching. Open Education Resources and free of charge resources provide easy access to materials for students from all socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Learning analytics** has a great potential for improving the quality of teaching and learning.

#### Promoting the **holistic and multi-stakeholder** approach

In the course of the meetings of the Working group, the **holistic and multi-stakeholder** approach has been identified as a key driver for the development of digital education. The **close cooperation between all parties involved** is important on an institutional level by having the school leaders, teachers and students participating in creating a digitally capable institution. It is also of great importance on a structural level, where the cooperation between policy-makers, local and regional authorities, private sector and NGOs bring benefits for the whole society. Multi-stakeholder partnerships have the potential to be highly successful as different partners can bring their own skills, experience and knowledge providing an ecosystem of partnerships.

#### Key policy messages

- On an institutional level, it is crucial to have a holistic and **whole-institutional approach** to the use of digital technology and the development of digital skills and competences. There is a great need for the support and dedication of school leaders, teachers, students, so that each institution can respond to digital transformation and become truly digital in a meaningful way.
- The best practices of integrating digital devices in the education often result from a combination of a **top-down** and **bottom-up** approach, where the whole community - education authorities, teachers, school leaders, parents, students - is involved early on.
- Cooperation between **formal and non-formal** education is crucial and encouraging closer links brings benefits for both. The boundaries between the two are blurring. A clear example is coding and computational thinking classes which are often taking place in the liminal space between formal and non-formal organisations, thus addressing the needs and interest of students and pupils in schools and in out of schools activities.
- Closing the digital skills gap and boosting digital competences benefits the whole society. This requires an **ecosystem of partnerships** between formal and non-formal education, governments, industry, civil society and local community groups.
- **Working with the industry** incorporates both opportunities and challenges. Indeed, industry provides materials and content, but business-driven practices such as brand promotion are not applicable to education and should not be overlooked. Working with industry can happen also through mentoring and work placements for example.

- However, involving all stakeholders still appears to be a **challenge** and more work is needed in this direction.

### The importance of teacher training

In the context of digital skills and competences, **teacher training** has been an integral topic of relevance for the group. Teachers are a key trigger of pedagogical change and the natural element to focus on when looking at teaching with technology. Teachers need support and training on the opportunities and challenges that the meaningful integration of digital technologies for teaching and learning bring. Teacher training is needed both on digital pedagogy and on specific digital competences.

### Key policy messages

- Teachers should be supported in developing digital competences in **initial training** and **continuous professional development**.
- **Digital tools** and **new pedagogies** need to be an integral part of teacher training. Innovative practices should be spread and encouraged, where MOOCs, online learning and blended learning models are a good opportunity to ensure continuous professional development.
- Authorities and institutions need to prioritise **flexible approaches** to teacher training that allow context and discipline specific responses rather than one-size-fits-all solutions.
- Even though the majority of the teachers are open to learning and refining their skills, the introduction of top down training can face resistance. This is why **peer-learning, sharing good practices** and **creating networks** are effective tools to promote easily accessible training and upskilling as well as empowerment.

### If you want to learn more

Digital Competences for Educators <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcompedu>

Digital Education Action Plan: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2018:22:FIN>

## **Working Group on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education**

The objective of this Working Group (WG) is to promote mutual learning and facilitate the exchange of best practices as relates to the four themes falling under the scope of the Paris Declaration:

1. Enhancing **critical thinking and media literacy** to develop resistance to all forms of discrimination and indoctrination;
2. Ensuring that children and young people acquire **social and civic competences**;
3. **Fostering the education of disadvantaged children** and young people and combatting discrimination;
4. **Promoting intercultural dialogue through all forms of learning.**

### **Key themes covered by this WG include:**

- Strengthening media literacy and critical thinking to prevent violent radicalisation;
- Policies to promote social and civic competences;
- Inclusive education as the most effective means for preventing social exclusion in today's diverse society;
- Fighting and preventing discrimination and segregation in education;
- Intercultural dialogue as a tool to address migration, refugees and asylum seekers in educational contexts.

### **Major outputs of the WG are:**

**-The online compendium for good practices in education and training** provides policymakers, practitioners and other education stakeholders with an overview of innovative, inspiring and successful practices from across Europe within the themes of the Paris Declaration.

**-The elements for a policy framework** provide concrete and operational recommendations to support policy-makers and practitioners in reviewing education and training systems in view of fostering equity and inclusiveness by addressing the needs of all learners, promoting understanding and ownership of common European values, and enhancing the acquisition of social and civic competences. It is divided into six policy fields, and includes a glossary in the annex.

**-The Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching<sup>7</sup>** was inspired by the work and outputs of this WG. The Recommendation indicates ways in which education can help young people understand and adhere to the common values set out in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union. It aims at promoting quality education for all pupils, and the European dimension of teaching, making children aware of the unity

---

<sup>7</sup> Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching – COM (2018/C 195/01)

and diversity, social, cultural and historical, of the Union and of its Member States.

## In More Detail

### Working toward inclusive education

Over the past few years, many European countries have experienced a rise in nationalism, populism and xenophobia. In this context it is an increasing and complex challenge to ensure that all children and young people become responsible, open-minded and active members of a diverse society. Over more than two years, the WG has been identifying and sharing good practices for a more inclusive education environment through exploring themes such as: How do we prepare the teachers to act as facilitators of open and sometimes controversial discussions in the classroom? How do we involve the parents and engage with civil society to create a whole school approach? How do we improve media literacy and critical thinking in order to fight misinformation and help intercultural understanding?

### Key policy messages

- In order to **help learners become responsible and active citizens**, learning objectives and content should include an emphasis on the acquisition of social, civic and intercultural competences<sup>8</sup>, as well as developing understanding and ownership of the common European values.
- **It is necessary to support the development of key competences for teachers** including: the awareness of the importance of common values and how to transmit them; applying inclusive pedagogical approaches; recognising and avoiding stereotyping and discrimination; raising cultural awareness; addressing controversial issues; teaching the language of instruction as a foreign language; using new media to support inclusion; developing social and civic competences; effectively integrating newly arrived migrants/refugees; and, supporting learners with special educational needs.
- It is essential to **develop a culture of inclusiveness in schools** that values diversity, fosters the talents of all learners and reinforces the sense of belonging to the school community based on democratic values and trust.
- **Learning institutions should become an integral part of the local community** and help foster closer cooperation with civil society, youth organisations, local authorities and the business sector. This requires a clear strategy with an appropriate implementation mechanism developed at local level, paying particular attention to the engagement with families from all communities.
- **Funding mechanisms should include compensation and incentive mechanisms to foster equity** and reward pedagogical added value. The effective use of funding is equally important as the level of funding.

### If you want to learn more

[Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching](#)

---

<sup>8</sup> As set out in the Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/recommendation-key-competences-lifelong-learning.pdf>