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Strategy for implementation of

ETUCE Action Plan on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

1. Introduction

In Europe's increasingly diverse societies, it is vital to ensure equality and inclusion in education. The need to embrace diversity in education is getting ever more political attention at European level. However, ETUCE [research](#) shows that teachers and other education personnel do not feel prepared and supported to teach students from diverse socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Despite the overall progress in addressing inequalities in 21st century society, the lack of public funding for inclusive education persists and many equality issues and challenges still remain to be addressed in the national and European social dialogue agendas in the education sector. Furthermore, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the linked to it move to online teaching inflicted severe consequences especially towards those who are already disadvantaged and have difficulties accessing education, including people with special needs, migrants, minority groups and others.

To address these issues and to support its member organisations in ensuring and promoting inclusive education, ETUCE has adopted an [Action Plan for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#), **a comprehensive and sustainable policy for equality, inclusion and non-discrimination in education and society** that can be implemented by all ETUCE member organisations and is based on concrete actions. With the view to facilitate the implementation of this Action Plan and support its transfer and adaptation to the national and local contexts, **a concrete and practical Strategy for Implementation** has been developed in the framework of ETUCE project '[Education Trade Unions and Inclusive Schools: Embracing Diversity in Education](#)' (2019-2021).

2. ETUCE Action Plan on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Action Plan is built on previous ETUCE policies regarding equality and non-discrimination (e.g. [ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality](#)), recommendations and guidelines of the ETUCE equality structures, and relevant projects' outcomes. It also takes into account the work done on these topics by Education International and the European Trade Union Confederation.

The Action Plan on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion covers **seven key priorities**:



1. Celebrating diversity among children, students, teachers, academics, school leaders and other education personnel.
2. Teaching for democratic citizenship and the transmission of fundamental values through education.
3. Inclusion of migrants and refugees in the education system, in the labour market and in society as a whole.
4. Inclusion of ethnic minorities and indigenous people in the education system, the labour market and in society as a whole.
5. Ensuring gender equality in education, the teaching profession and society as a whole.
6. Achieving equality for LGBTI students and education personnel with the view to creating safe, secure and inclusive learning and working environments for all.
7. Inclusion of students and education personnel with disabilities and special needs in the education system, the labour market and society as a whole.

3. Aim

Following the results of the [online survey](#) among ETUCE member organisations and the discussion at the project's [training seminar](#) and [closing conference](#), the Strategy for Implementation of ETUCE Action Plan on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion proposes concrete solutions to how put the Action Plan into practice in every country in the European region and adapt its ideas to the national and local contexts. It aims to support education trade unions in preparing their affiliates to address the socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and other types of diversity in the classroom and in the society and to support them in implementing inclusive learning environments enabling for every student and teacher to achieve their full potential.

4. Strategy for implementation

In order to implement all seven key priorities of the ETUCE Action Plan on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, it is important that education trade unions:

- Work towards strengthening the social dialogue and ensure that inclusive education and the Action Plan priorities are permanently present in the social dialogue on European, national, regional and institutional level.
- Lobby national governments and educational authorities for providing sustainable and adequate public funding for inclusive education and additional funds for its various dimensions, ensuring equality and equity in the education sector and among other issues, addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. in the framework of the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#)).
- Work towards improving initial training and continuous professional development for teachers to implement inclusion and develop capacity and cultural sensitivity to work in multicultural environments. It is crucial to ensure that teacher training is provided by public funding and designed in the dialogue with education trade unions. In particular, teachers need to be given more opportunity to increase their pedagogical skills on how to address the needs of migrant students and students with disabilities and special needs. In addition, more

training is needed on how to manage difficult situations in classrooms and how to maintain safe and healthy working environment.

- Demand from education authorities to provide teachers and other education personnel with professional support and relevant and up-to-date teaching materials, methods and practices on inclusive education which can be tailored to their needs and allow for professional autonomy.
- Promote a more diverse teaching profession that reflects the diversity of the students and society both in the profession and in trade union membership. Education trade unions should raise awareness on the recruitment of a more diverse teaching workforce, including migrants, ethnic minorities, LGBTI people, and persons with disabilities.
- Elaborate a shared clear definition of the terms 'diversity, equality' and 'inclusion' among education trade unions at European level to develop a common understanding of these concepts.
- Promote creating a school environment that fosters professional dialogue and cooperation among teachers and value any actor within the educational institution, with particular attention to the role of young teachers.
- Create more spaces for reflection within education trade unions and build a culture of interpersonal relations in order to share challenges, experiences and good practices on inclusive education.
- Enhance cooperation with all the stakeholders in education on equality and inclusion, including school leaders, families, as well as civil society actors and the local community. Involve different education stakeholders in work on inclusion and diversity as agents to foster diversity in societies.
- Improve cooperation between trade unions as key to exchange views and good practices, support with each other and work together to strengthen social dialogue on inclusive education.
- Advocate for changing the mindset of governments and the entire community and developing a common cultural sensitivity toward diversity and inclusion.
- Undertake actions to address the issue of implementation gap of legal frameworks on inclusive education.

Furthermore, in order to promote the ETUCE Action Plan on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion on national, regional and local level, education trade unions could:

- Disseminate actively and apply/make use of the Action Plan and project's research at various levels of trade union work where relevant (including cross-sectoral dimension) while adapting it to the local needs and respective conditions.
- Enhance the [Online Database of Good Practices](#) with relevant initiatives and events organised by their affiliates.
- Organise joint trainings and training programmes through the cross-border cooperation among national education trade unions.
- Organise regular webinars and roundtables on the priorities of the Action Plan relevant to respective national and local contexts of education trade unions and discuss key issues raised through the plan of work. Possible discussion topics can be the use of language and terminology, dialogue with underrepresented communities, intersectional approaches, etc.)
- Celebrate virtually and physically various equality dates.

- Work towards building a network of community groups among their affiliates willing to work on the cross-border implementation of the Action Plan.
- Regularly inform ETUCE Secretariat about the implementation of the Action Plan and activities carried out where the Action Plan is being used for the negotiations with education employers.
- Translate the Action Plan and the [Catalogue of Good Practices on Inclusive Schools](#) into the national and local languages.

