



EDUCATION  
TRADE UNIONS  
AND INCLUSIVE  
SCHOOLS

EMBRACING  
DIVERSITY  
IN EDUCATION

## WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

Diversity describes the range of human differences and variations, whether they are inherent (by birth) or acquired. Increasingly complex and diverse societies require more and targeted efforts to tackle all kinds of discrimination to improve equality and to use diversity as an asset. These efforts are especially important in education as it is a fundamental human right, i.e. every person has the right and the entitlement to education.



# THE MANY FACETS OF DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

## HOW DIVERSE IS OUR EDUCATION?

### STUDENTS

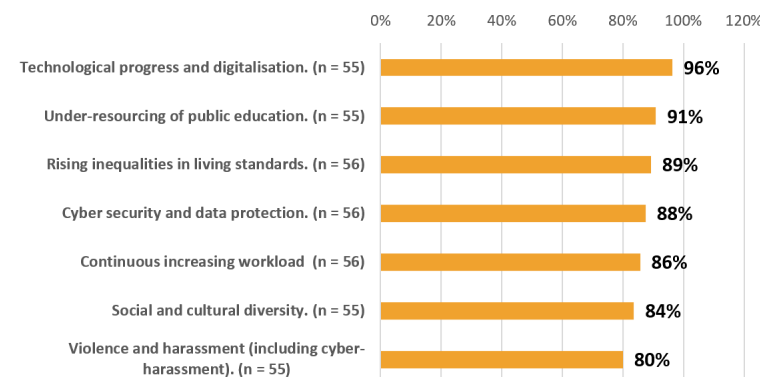
- **34%** of teachers in the EU work in schools with at least **10%** of special needs students;
- **25%** of teachers in the EU work in schools with at least **10%** non-native-speaking students;
- **32%** of teachers in the EU work in schools with at least **1%** refugee students;
- **19%** of teachers in the EU work in schools where more than **30%** of students come from a socio-economically disadvantaged background.

### EDUCATION PERSONNEL

- Low level of diversity of the teaching workforce in relation to migrant and/or minority background;
- Education personnel with disabilities experiencing difficulties in working conditions and access in workplaces;
- Women account for **68%** of the teacher workforce, while only **47%** of principals are women;
- Across OECD countries less than **15%** of teachers are aged below 30 years, at all levels from primary to upper secondary.



## CHALLENGES AFFECTING INCLUSION IN EDUCATION



# ADDRESSING DIVERSITY THROUGH EDUCATION

## SHIFTS OF APPROACHES

- From homogeneity to heterogeneity and diversity;
- From 'special needs education' to 'inclusive of everyone's potential', or 'education for all';
- Diversity from a deficit angle to an assets perspective;
- Intersectionality of the identity characteristics and experiences of learners is increasingly a topic of consideration.

## WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

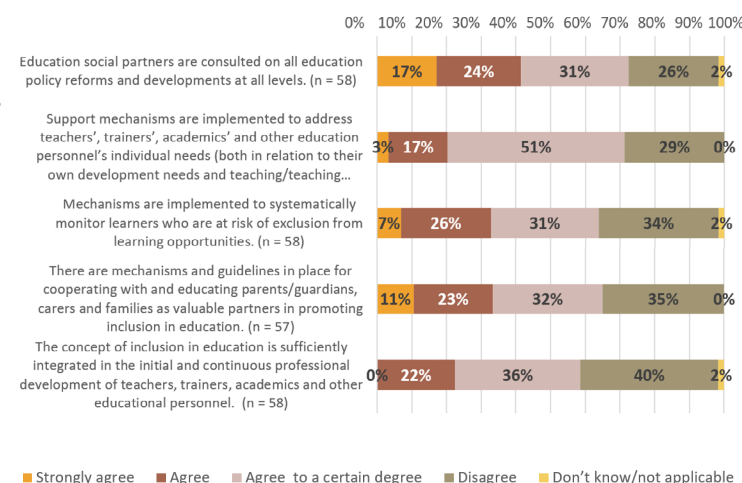
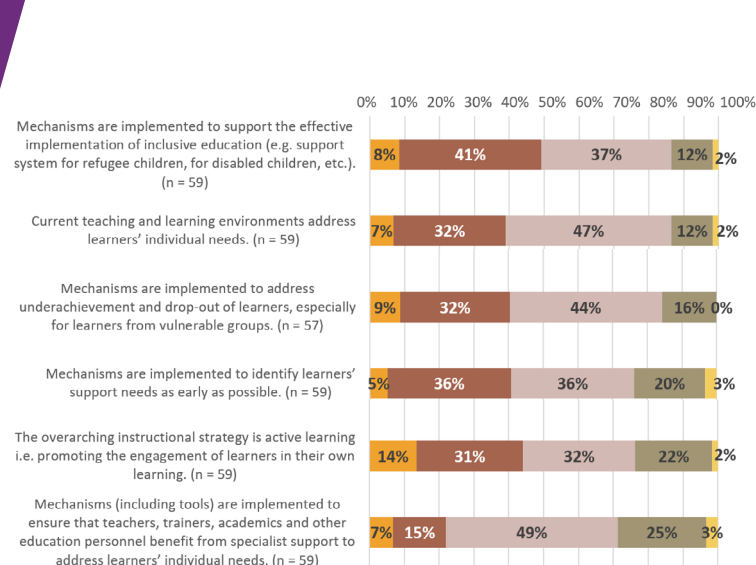
Inclusive education aims to allow all learners to achieve their full potential by providing good quality education to all in mainstream settings with special attention to learners at risk of exclusion and underachievement by actively seeking out to support them and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners, including through individualised approaches, targeted support and cooperation with the families and local communities' (EC Training 2020 Working Group on Promoting Citizenship)



with support from the European Commission

## IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN REGION

To what extent can you agree with the following statements that describe teaching and learning environments in your country/region with regard to inclusive education?



### Homogeneity

- Differences are not acknowledged.
- Learners grouped in an educational institution/setting are perceived to be similar and therefore receive the same approach and support.

### Heterogeneity

- Differences are seen as challenges to be dealt with.
- Learners are perceived to be different. Adjustments are made to come to terms with their different needs.

### Diversity

- Differences are seen as an asset and opportunity.
- Learners are perceived to be different. Their difference serves as a resource for individual and mutual learning and development.

This fact sheet is based on the project research report 'Embracing diversity in education', 2021

