Valuing knowledge exchange and professional learning for educational inclusion: understanding professional dilemmas in policy and practice contexts

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International policy documents have set out visionary and ambitious goals for educational provision globally to provide equitable, quality learning opportunities for all young people. This paper describes the PROMISE Erasmus+ Knowledge Exchange project which aimed to develop professional learning resources that would support European teachers in enactment of this goal. Use of Bronfenbrenner's theories (1979) allowed insight into the complexity of the education ecosystem and the resultant challenge of ensuring that the developed resources were relevant for teachers across Europe. At the micro and meso levels, ensuring the learning resources were relevant to current professional needs of teachers was addressed through gathering narratives of professional dilemmas currently being faced by teachers in each of the participating countries. Focusing on the macro level, the project team engaged in extended dialogue sharing their differing national education policy contexts, differences in teacher education provision and highlighted groups of young people within each country identified as not being effectively provided for within specific education systems. The paper demonstrates the complexity of the implementation of the aspirational goal of effectively implementing inclusion for all in multiple national policy contexts but also describes how the PROMISE project sought to address this challenge through the provision of learning resources that acknowledge the professional agency of individual European teachers to apply professional learning opportunities to their specific educational context.

Keywords: inclusion; professional learning; complexity; knowledge exchange

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Introduction

The World Conference on Special Needs Education was held in Cali, Columbia in 2019 highlighting it had been twenty-five years since the Salamanca Statement had endorsed the idea of inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994). Subsequent publications from UNESCO have broadened understanding of inclusion from educational provision for students with special needs to the recognition of the educational needs of students from a range of potentially marginalised communities. For example, UNESCO Policy Paper 43 highlights that students may be at risk of being denied the right to be educated with their peers on the basis of gender, remoteness, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, incarceration, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and religious and other beliefs and attitudes (https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/2020teachers). This trend towards the widening the definition of inclusion to include a wider range of potentially marginalised groups can be summarised by the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal 4 aim to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (https://en.unesco.org/sustainabledevelopmentgoals). Internationally, there is an acknowledgement that to achieve this goal of an inclusive and equitable education system for all, schools must be prepared and supported to educate all young people in their local communities (https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/2020teachers).

These visionary and ambitious international policies have been welcomed by the education community but concern has also been expressed about the challenges inherent within their implementation. Perhaps of most relevance for a transnational development project such as the one being reported in this paper, one of the greatest challenges for the implementation of education for all in classrooms lies in the diverse historical and cultural norms embedded within educational provision in different countries. As Ainscow (2019) notes, whilst there are encouraging developments around the world that can be used to exemplify how inclusion and equity might be enhanced within national and regional contexts, the key word to emphasise is 'context'. Ainscow (2019) cautions that promotion of inclusion and equity within educational provision cannot simply be a matter of importing or borrowing policy and practice from elsewhere. Instead, Ainscow (2019) advocates for the necessity of robust analysis of the barriers being experienced by students to effective participation in learning *within* each national

context to understand how inclusive and equitable educational provision might be enhanced if these aspirational international policy aims are to be achieved.

Teacher Education for Inclusion

It is widely acknowledged that high-quality teacher education remains key to an effective, inclusive and equitable educational provision that reduces the barriers that might be faced by students to participation and also encourages high achievement (Forlin & Chambers; 2011 Black-Hawkins et al. 2016; Florian 2019).

The Incheon Declaration is viewed by many as providing guidance to national governments as to how to achieve the objective of provision of inclusive and equitable educational provision noting the necessity of ensuring that 'teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems' (https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48 223/pf0 000 245 656). Within Europe, the European Agency for Special Needs has acknowledged the importance of teacher education for inclusion within their many initiatives (De Vroey et al., 2019a; Symeonidou et al., 2020b).

However despite these multiple international initiatives, there is evidence that both student and qualified teachers do not feel equipped to teach inclusively when their classes include students with disabilities or special educational needs (Avramidis & Norwich 2002; Cochran-Smith & Dudley-Marling 2012; Mintz et al., 2020) and in particular, both pre and in-service teachers did not feel equipped to include students with behavioural challenges in their mainstream classrooms (Hind et al., 2019).

One reason for teachers not feeling prepared for teaching diverse cohorts of students in their classrooms may lie in their preparation during initial teacher education. According to Guðjónsdóttir and Óskarsdóttir (2020), the preparation of student teachers still focuses on how to prepare student teachers to provide learning opportunities for pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) resulting in many teacher education providers offering only discrete modules on specific learning difficulties. Less focus in teacher preparation has been placed on professional learning opportunities that support teachers to develop the values, skills and knowledge required to support the diversity of learners in a mainstream setting. Indeed, Florian and Pantic (2017) and Symeonidou (2017) argue that a significant challenge remains in overcoming a legacy of preparing teachers for differ-

ent types of students which does not prepare them for the diversity in mainstream classrooms in Europe. Similarly, Cochran-Smith and Dudley-Marling (2012) note that professional learning programmes for experienced teachers also focus on development of specialised knowledge of specific learning difficulties, potentially marginalising issues of diversity.

In summary therefore, whilst the international aspiration for inclusive and equitable educational provision for all is laudable, its implementation remains complex. As Ainscow (2019) notes, one challenge is that historical and cultural norms within national and regional contexts differ. This can result in those being asked to implement inclusion as espoused by UNESCO and the European Agency for Special Educational Needs working within an established education system that may be resistant to or that they may not be able to change. Added to that challenge, many teachers within these systems may have experienced preparation courses which did not prepare them for the diversity of students currently facing them in mainstream classrooms.

The PROMISE project

The PROMISE project was an Erasmus+ Knowledge Exchange project involving seven organisations from six different European countries each with differing responsibility for educating and supporting teachers in a range of educational settings from early years provision to post compulsory vocational education. The main objective of the project was to develop professional development materials for teachers wishing to enhance their inclusive practice. A challenge facing the project team was to design learning materials that would meet the professional needs of teachers in a range of national policy contexts, educational sectors and at different career stages.

To gain a better understanding of the complexity of inclusion in education, we used the lens provided by Bronfenbrenner (1979). Bronfenbrenner highlighted the significance of a child's microsystem of their immediate environment (including family, friends and teachers), and the ways that individuals in the microsystem relate to one another to make up a mesosystem. Surrounding and influencing these critical relationships, although not directly involving the child is an ecosystem, such as decisions that are made by school leaders regarding policy enactment, or enactment of working practices between agencies (such as in social services and education) and the macrosystem which is the overarching culture in-

cluding national cultures and norms, and those that relate to ethnicity, religion, economic or social class. Each system layer influences the experience of the pupils in their educational settings (see figure 1). While the PROMISE project sought to focus on the two inner systems, these systems exist as part of the whole ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As such, the project team were acutely aware of the macro-, meso- and microsystems as identified by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and their influence on the implementation of effective inclusive practices in educational provision across Europe.

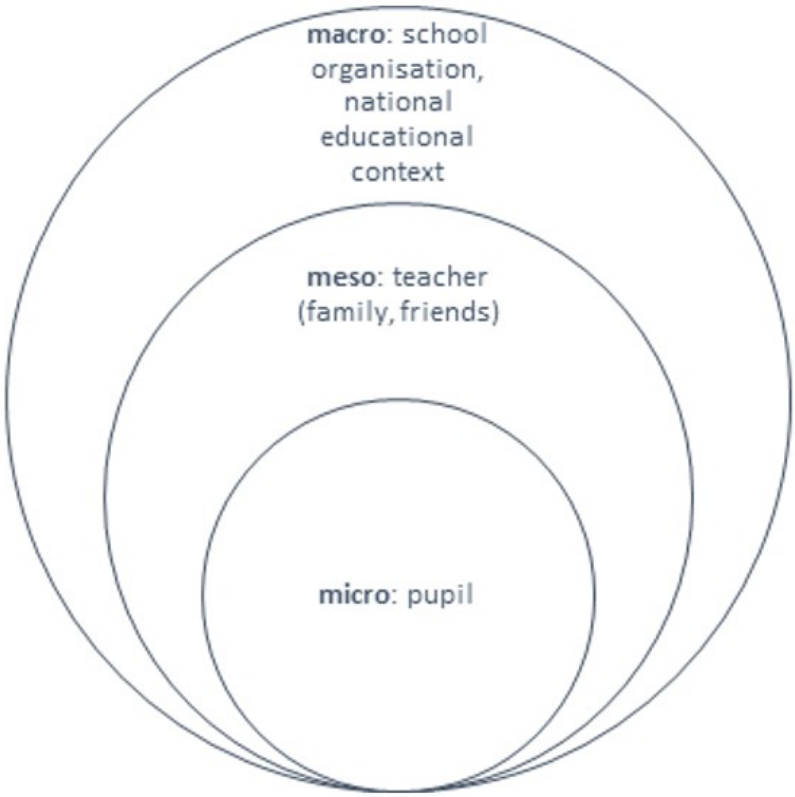

Figure 1: Schematic representation of the Bronfenbrenner lens

The challenge of ensuring relevance of learning resources for teachers across multiple policy and practice contexts was addressed by the project team in two ways. At the micro/meso-level, to understand the professional dilemmas being faced by teachers in each of the national contexts represented by partners in the project, teachers were invited to write narratives describing a professional di-

lemma they had faced and how they had sought to address these challenges. These narratives were collected from educators across a range of career stages and educational sectors within each of the national policy contexts represented by each of the project partners. A detailed description of this process is provided in the paper by Kools in this edition of the journal (Kools, 2021).

Analysis of the professional challenges articulated by teachers in their narratives reveal seven themes in which teachers feel challenged, namely behaviour, inclusion, didactics or pedagogy, classroom management, interprofessional working, digital learning and psychological problems (Beaton *et al.,* 2021). The narratives provided the project team with an insight of the challenges teachers face on the meso level as described by Bronfenbrenner.

However, the PROMISE project team were also mindful of Ainscow's (2019) caution that the promotion of policy and practice aimed at enhancing inclusive practice within classrooms, must take account of the national, historical and cultural differences between national contexts. As such, the PROMISE project team wished to take account of the macro level, as this might help us to understand and relate the narratives of the teachers in a broader sense. The PROMISE team therefore engaged in extended dialogue during their transnational project meetings examining the differences in each national policy represented within the team – historical and current, how teacher education is organised to align with this national policy in each context and identified specific groups of young people who it was considered were not served well within specific national education policy contexts.

To illustrate the nature of the dialogue undertaken within the transnational project team meetings which informed and underpinned the development of the learning resources, we now present three **illustrative examples of national educational contexts,** based on policy documents, national literature and insight from partners who work within these national education practice contexts. These exemplars illustrate some of the commonalities and differences between the different national contexts prior to presenting the findings of the project in relation to meeting the professional learning needs of teachers to be prepared and supported to provide an inclusive and equitable education for all learners.

The Netherlands

The Dutch Education system is directed towards realisation of four goals (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2020). These goals are: 1) allocation: preparing students for future jobs; 2) socialisation: improving social development; 3) selection and equal opportunities: making sure each child is able to perform to its talents in a suitable learning environment and 4) qualification: obtaining knowledge and skills. In this section, we will focus on the third goal.

Pupils in the Netherlands start their education in primary education, at the age of 5. After 8 years in primary school, they continue their education in secondary education. There are different levels in secondary education. To select which level suits them, all pupils do a test in the final year of primary education, next to that they receive a teacher track recommendation of their teacher in primary school. Their teachers' track recommendation is the most important document when they register for secondary education. The levels in secondary education are 'lower secondary education' (which lasts 4 years) and 'upper secondary education' (which lasts 5-6 years). After completing lower secondary education, students can continue their studies in secondary vocational education. After completing upper secondary education, students can continue their studies in higher vocational education (universities of applied sciences) or in university.

The selection process after primary education is a hot topic in the public debate in the Netherlands, as concerns have been raised that the selection process may lead to social injustice. Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds more often are found in the lower levels of secondary education (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2020). Since teacher expectations are an important criterion for the students' placements in secondary education tracks, their role has been subject of research. Teachers have different expectations of their students, which leads to a bias based on gender and socio-ethnic background (Timmermans, Kuyper & van der Werf, 2015). Next to the bias in teacher advice, some argue that the selection should not take place at the end of primary education, when pupils are only 12-13 years old, but this should be postponed to a later stage. Children from low social-economic backgrounds and children with a migration background might are thought in particular to require additional time at school to develop their skills as they often enter education with an arrear in language- or other skills.

All Dutch children must attend school up to 18 years until they attain a basic qualification (level 2 certificate). According to the Appropriate Education Act from 2014, schools have the obligation to provide students who require extra support with the most appropriate schooling. School authorities must offer tailor-made educational solutions and can do this via regional school alliances, in which all kinds of educational support are combined. For children with special needs (visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically and/or intellectually impaired and children with mental or behavioural disorders) and for children with milder forms of disability, there are special needs schools (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2016). Teachers who work in these special needs schools do have their teacher qualification, often combined with a Masters Degree in Special Needs.

Recapitulating, the Dutch system on a macro-level, each child needs to attend school and schools need to provide suitable programs for their pupils. There would seem to be increased attention on the diversity between pupils and students. Pupils differ with each pupil being unique. The Dutch Education Council (2017) states that teachers need to adjust their teaching to these differences, in order to offer each pupil a challenging and optimal setting for education. But how does this work in the classroom? How can teachers provide educational opportunities for all? In primary education, differences between pupils are often met by offering tasks and support on different levels. In secondary education, this is less often the case, since the current idea is that pupils are already selected in suitable levels, so further differentiation within a level is not necessary. Only recently, increasingly teachers are aware that there are differences in learning needs between pupils within levels, and this is becoming more of an issue.

Schools with innovative educational concepts to meet learners' needs

Throughout the Netherlands, schools for secondary education are searching for ways to educate their students with more emphasis on students' talents and learning needs (Kools, 2019; Volman et al., 2018). Sometimes these schools choose an educational concept like Kunskapsskolan (a Swedish concept for personalised student learning, see www.kunskapsskolan.com) or Agora-education, sometimes, they develop their own didactical principles. Common features in these schools are student-centred learning, student responsibility for learning and strong emphasis on social and personal development of students (for example, creativity, collaboration skills, critical thinking). A change in educational concept towards

student-centred learning has consequences for the roles and tasks of teachers (Kools, 2019). Teachers less often 'teach' and their role shifts towards coaching student learning. They also often design learning activities and materials that suit their student's needs. Next to that, teachers often work in teams in which they have a collective responsibility for the learning processes of a group of students. To support student learning and student responsibility for own learning, formative evaluation plays an important role. Changes in educational concepts often also imply changes in the organisation of the school, for example in the way student groups are structured and in the time schedule for a day in school. Although there is no evidence yet from research, the different approach of students in student-centred learning might also solve classroom management issues related to behaviour and motivation. Research does show evidence that schools with these new concepts have equal results in qualification of students (Karssen et al., 2018).

Teacher education preparing student teachers

In the Dutch teacher education institutes, there is a rising awareness that teachers' roles are changing and that teachers need to focus on student learning (Kools, 2019). This is, however, a new perspective that needs further development. Teacher education still is mostly directed towards teaching in a teacher-centred setting, with a focus on subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills. Preparing teachers for new roles like team teaching, coaching of students, designing learning activities and materials is needed. Kelchtermans (2018) stresses that student teachers need to develop a critical analytical and inquiry stance, as this will help them throughout their teaching career to adapt to changing needs and demands in education.

Not only student teachers, but also experienced teachers feel the need to focus on student learning. Throughout the Netherlands, teachers are engaging in professional development activities such as lesson study or 'leerateliers' (Koopman et al., 2019) in which they (collaboratively) focus on their students' learning needs. There seems to be a tendency that 'special' needs now are reframed into 'learner needs', which leads to a more inclusive pedagogy.

England

The policy context

School provision in England has diversified significantly since 2010 under the Conservative and Liberal Democratic coalition and subsequent Conservative governments. Most significantly, from 2010 all schools have been eligible to become Academies, and to create or join Multi-Academy Trusts. Academies are state schools which receive their funding directly from, and are accountable to, the government Department for Education (DfE), and are therefore no longer controlled by the Local Authorities (LA). Academies have been offered new freedoms by the DfE which include not having to follow the national curriculum and having more flexibility in their pupil admission policies than LA schools. These differences can be critical in decisions made by senior leaders and trustees regarding inclusion, although the effect is not uniform. This is demonstrated by Liu et al (2020) who conclude that the effect of academisation on inclusion is influenced by the schools' previous performance (which determines the nature of the academisation process) and socio-economic composition of the students.

Another key policy driver for all state schools (including academies) in England are the performance measures. The schools' inspectorate grades schools according to inspection criteria (Ofsted, 2019), and the media publish local and national league tables based on examination and test results of pupils at age 11, 16 and 18. Teachers are also subject to performance management and performance related pay. These have sustained the culture of performativity, defined by Ball (2003), over more than two decades. There is some evidence that these performance drivers can work against inclusion, especially when combined with academisation (Norwich, 2014).

Educational outcomes for looked after children as an illustration of the inclusion dilemma

To illustrate the impact of the school system described above on inclusion, an example now follows. One group of children who are persistently impacted by the drivers against inclusion are 'looked after children'. By focusing on looked after children we see the impact of the macrosystem (educational policy and school organisation) on the microsystem (the child). Looked after children are legally in the care of the Local Authorities (LAs) rather than their families. This care status is typically a result of bereavement, family breakdown, neglect or abuse. It can

also include children and young people who arrive as unaccompanied refugees. In 2020 the number of looked after children in England was 80,080 which is 67 per 10,000 children. The numbers of looked after children typically rise in areas of greatest deprivation.

The DfE recognises that 'looked-after and previously looked-after children start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences and, often, have special educational needs' (Department for Education, 2018a. p.5). Indicators of poor educational inclusion include rates of exclusion from school and attainment. DfE data showed that 11.44% of looked-after children had at least one fixed period exclusion in 2016, compared with 2.11% of all children. A fixed period exclusion is used for disciplinary reasons and means that a child cannot attend school for a set number of days. In 2019/10 the average Attainment 8 score (an examination metric for 16-year-olds) was 46.7 for all pupils, but only 18.7 for pupils who had been continuously looked after for at least 12 months. Even gaining a school place can be difficult in the current schools landscape, with a recent freedom of information investigation proving that children in care are increasingly being turned away by academies despite guidance which requires children in care to be given top priority in schools' admissions (Wearmouth, 2020).

To better meet the needs of looked after children LAs employ virtual school heads (VSHs) who are required to promote the educational achievement of children placed in 'in care' by their local authority (Department for Education, 2018b). In addition, despite the loss of academies from the control of LAs the LAs still retain responsibility for the education, health and care plans (EHCP) which identify educational, health and social needs for all children and young people whose needs are not routinely met and set out the additional support to meet those needs. Meeting the specific needs of looked after children, a higher proportion of whom have special educational needs, and EHCPs, than the general school population, and many of whom are vulnerable due to the trauma of childhood abuse, neglect, attachment problems or bereavement seems essential for teachers working towards inclusion.

The limitations of initial teacher education and continuing professional development

Recent policy changes in England for initial early career teacher training and continuing professional development (CPD) can be argued to be well attuned to teacher preparation with the performative school cultures, but less well designed

to meet the needs of vulnerable children, including those currently in care or who are care experienced. Initial teacher training (ITT) providers in England include universities, school alliances running School Centred Teacher Training (SCITTs) and Teach First (a charity). Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is awarded on demonstration by the trainee teacher that they have met the Teachers' Standards (TS) published by the government (Department for Education, 2011), which are the same standards that all teachers are expected to meet throughout their career. To gain QTS teachers are expected to 'adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils', by differentiating appropriately, understanding and knowing how to address a range of factors which inhibit pupils' ability to learn, being aware of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and having a clear understanding of how to meet needs of all pupils.

Since 2020 further DfE requirements for initial teacher training and ongoing professional development in the first two years of teaching have been published. The ITT Core Content Framework (CCF) (Department for Education, 2019b) and Early Career Framework (ECF) ((Department for Education, 2019a) build on the TS. The word 'inclusion' does not appear in the TS, CCF or ECF, although a guidance statement for the CCF states that it is 'deliberately designed to emphasise the importance of high-quality teaching, which is particularly important for disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs'. In addition, there is no requirement to gain an understanding of trauma-informed or attachment aware practices in the ITT or ECF requirements. This is replicated in a new National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for Leading Behaviour and Culture Framework (Department for Education, 2020) which again makes no reference to inclusion, trauma or attachment despite stating that teachers undertaking the programme should learn how to 'Support pupils who need more intensive support with their behaviour by [...] actively seeking and applying knowledge of policies and regulations relating to SEND (including reasonable adjustments), looked after children, children who have a social worker, safeguarding and exclusions' (p16).

Therefore, the extent to which teachers are educated to understand, recognise or enact an inclusive stance towards looked after children (as an example of a cohort of children for whom inclusion remains elusive) will depend on the nature of their school placements during their initial training or the additional, discretionary, content of their academic qualification in education e.g., a Postgraduate Certificate in Education or an Education bachelor's degree. Beyond the growing num-

ber of national frameworks in England for initial teacher education and CPD illustrated above, the post-qualification CPD market for teachers is largely unregulated. There are a number of organisations (including charities, such as 'After Adoption' and not for profit organisations such as 'Foster Support') who are working to support teacher training and development to meet the needs of looked after or adopted children, and those who remain with families but have experienced trauma, but access to these is not universal. However, school leaders and individual teachers make discretionary decisions about what training to undertake personally or to provide for colleagues, with significant constraints including budgets and time. This has created very differentiated approaches in schools and levels of teacher expertise. Thus, the educational inclusion for individual students remains inconsistent.

Hungary

Integration is a priority in the strategic documents of Hungarian education policy: with it being viewed as of paramount importance to reduce the rate of early school leaving and to address differences between the performance of schools (National Public Education Strategy 2021-2030, 2019). However, the implementation of strategic goals is contradictory. A number of government developments and programs are being implemented to improve school inclusion, but limited information is available on their effectiveness (Fehérvári & Szemerszki, 2019). Also, structural features of the system work against inclusion, most notably the strong fragmentation of school types. The Hungarian primary school starts at the age of 6, and students can leave this type of school at several points. After 4th, 6th and 8th grade, students can go to vocational education or to selective secondary schools (gimnázium) after an entrance exam based on their academic skills.

Although integration has been a key priority in Hungarian education policy for decades, the main problems remain. This can be traced back to the historical and cultural traditions of schooling. Hungarian educational culture is traditionally characterized by strong selection and the separation of students on the basis of academic performance. In addition, declining birth rates are leading to increased competition between schools, to which a significant number of institutions are responding with selection. (Gurzó & Horn, 2015) Recent problems can be summarized as follows: (1) big regional disparities, (2) differences between schools are more significant than inequalities within schools, (3) educational se-

gregation of the Roma minority is constantly strengthening. (Hermann et al., 2019)

As the proportion of children with a migrant background is relatively low in Hungary, there is a little emphasis on integration of this group of children (European Commission, 2019). Although they have few opportunities to obtain a degree in the Hungarian system, this topic is seldom discussed.

In contrast, a key focus within the theme of integration is the integrated education of students with Roma family background. In Hungary, due to historical reasons, the proportion of the Roma population is relatively high, among whom low-income families appear in a high proportion (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2012). Due to its distinctiveness and low socio-economic status, the Roma minority is one of the main targets of prejudice and racism in Hungary and this is reflected in the world of schools. Quite extreme cases also appear here, such as the open ethnic-based spatial segregation of students, but a much deeper problem is the hidden, pervasive prejudice against the Roma that characterizes a significant part of society, including teachers. Although the goal of education policy has been to address or even eliminate this problem for decades, there has been little success in achieving these goals (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018).

Pupils with disabilities are taught integrated in public education, or in Special Schools. Special Schools for students with disabilities were developed relatively early in Hungary, and it is also supplemented by high-quality teacher education. The success of this system contributed to the fact that inclusive educational approaches did not appear in the education system until the 1980s. Currently, a Committee of Experts decides whether a student can participate in inclusive education or continue their studies in a special school. Inclusive education can take place in schools whose pedagogical program includes an inclusive education profile. In this case, the school must also employ a Teacher for Special Needs. However, in many cases, there is a lack of suitable teachers locally, so students do not receive adequate *care* (Varga, 2015).

Innovation and inclusion

There are a number of national projects to address inclusion problems, such as "Springboard Class" to reduce early school leaving (Eurydice, 2020), or the Complex Instruction Program, which focuses on methodological renewal and attitude change among educators (K. Nagy, 2015). In addition to top-down innovations, many schools develop their specific innovation programmes based on local needs.

These school-level innovations aim at the inclusive education of different target groups, and schools usually also have a teacher training program to spread their views. In addition to innovations within schools, also non-school based initiatives play an important role, for example after school mentoring programmes (Tanoda) for children with low-income family backgrounds (Németh, 2008).

Teacher education, teachers' CPD and inclusion

Inclusion as an area appears both in the learning outcomes of teacher education programs and in the competence indicators used to evaluate teachers externally (Kopp & Kálmán, in press). The question, however, is whether these programs are able to encourage the change in attitudes needed for inclusion.

The strong segregation that has already been mentioned in connection with the school system is also reflected in teacher education. Teacher education programs are also separated, with few links between them. The segregation is further reinforced by the strong subject focus of secondary school teacher education. These factors contribute to the underdevelopment of the skills of teaching students in the field of interdisciplinary collaboration. Yet this would be much needed for them to address the complex problems of inclusion in their later professional work.

Discussion

This paper began with a consideration of international and European policy trends advocating for the definition of inclusion to align with the notion of 'education for all'. Alongside this consideration, the paper considered the necessity of acknowledging individual, national contexts which may impact on the implementation of this aspiration (Ainscow, 2019). The lens provided by Bronfenbrenner (1979) was used to grasp the complexity of inclusion throughout the educational system. We explored the macro level that Bronfenbrenner identified, to gain insight into different national educational settings represented by the project teams which in their turn shed light on teachers challenges at the meso level.

The three national context exemplars included in this paper demonstrate that although policymakers within each of the three national contexts had committed to adopting international recommendations to promote inclusive practice within schools, each country was faced with the challenge of 'translating' this aspiration

into their existing educational system. Across all three national contexts, it was demonstrated that teachers are the ones who must fulfil national policy expectations of 'education for all' within their micro level education contexts, often despite a lack of teacher education to prepare or support them in this endeavour.

The illustrative examples from Hungary, The Netherlands and England demonstrate the relationships between policy, educational systems and institutions, teacher education and the children's experiences of inclusion. Aspirational European inclusion policies are mediated through national contexts and educational infrastructures, which shape the educational practices through which teachers meet pupils' needs. As the project team read and discussed the narratives provided by the teachers, Bronfenbrenner's theoretical lens proved helpful as the professional development materials were being designed. In our surfacing of the professional dilemmas faced by teachers, the project once again demonstrated that a key element of the teachers' professional remit is to engage with the professional dilemmas this poses and seek ways to address them (Tomlinson et al., 2003; Van Casteren et al., 2017). The paper also therefore considered the necessity of pre- and in-service teacher education to prepare and support teachers to work effectively in inclusive school systems (Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2020).

Project findings demonstrated that the professional challenges being faced by the teachers were not singular issues but complex and multi-faceted in nature (Beaton, Thomson, Cornelius, Lofthouse, Kools & Huber, 2021). As such, there is a requirement for high quality, career long professional development opportunities as these are critical to prepare student teachers and support experienced teachers in the implementation and enhancement of inclusive practice in schools and colleges (Florian, 2019).

Findings from the recent PROMISE project indicate that a number of key elements are necessary for this professional development to be effective and meet the needs of teachers. Any professional development programme for teachers must acknowledge the complexity of the professional dilemmas being faced by teachers (Beaton et al., 2021). Pre-service teacher education should not be viewed as sufficient to prepare a teacher for their career but professional learning opportunities must be available throughout their career.

Additionally, teachers must be supported to understand how the macro-level aspects of education such as policy production and national cultural understandings of how education is organised may have an impact on their enactment of in-

clusion within their specific context. As society changes around schools, professional development opportunities must reflect the needs of teachers to address these changes in a way that is solution rather than deficit focused. This lifelong professional learning will be most effective if it acknowledges the professional agency, knowledge and understanding and skills that the teachers bring to the profession and should encourage and support teachers to work in collaborative ways that may include boundary crossing with other professionals to meet the needs of the young people in their care (Thompson et al., 2021).

One example of the type of professional learning opportunity that is advocated by this paper was developed by the PROMISE project team (https://promise-eu-.net/). Professional learning materials are organised around real-life professional challenges or dilemmas gathered from teachers across Europe on this website. Teachers are able to access descriptions of these professional dilemmas in the form of short narratives or vignettes in ways that allow them agency as to which of the vignettes resonate with their own professional experience and then follow the learning path through the website to explore a range of potential ways they might address their own professional dilemmas situated within their own specific national education context.

Conclusion

In recent years, international and national policy trends have moved towards the idea that educational provision across the globe should be available in inclusive and equitable ways for all young people. This paper highlights that implementation of the visionary goal can be challenging for teachers as it must be implemented within cultural and historical contexts. To achieve the objective of providing inclusive education for all in their classrooms, teachers must be prepared and supported in ways that acknowledge the complexity of the task, value the professional expertise they possess and allow them agency to address these professional challenges collaboratively with other stakeholders. Only through this form of professional learning will teachers succeed in achieving the visionary goals of international and national policy that promotes education for all.

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