

# BEYOND Project

To Inclusive Education and BEYOND



## Study on the role of service providers in the transition towards inclusive education





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#### INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 3

### **Study on the role of service providers in the transition towards inclusive education**

# Table of contents

Introduction .....	6		
<b>I. Factsheets of the partner countries</b> .....	8		
1. Belgium (Flanders) .....	8		
A. Organisation of the support model .....	9		
B. Job of a service provider .....	10		
C. Experiences with the support model .....	10		
2. Portugal .....	11		
A. Organisation of the support model .....	12		
B. Job of a service provider .....	13		
C. Experiences with the support model .....	13		
3. Austria .....	13		
A. Job of a service provider .....	15		
B. Experiences with the support model .....	15		
4. France .....	15		
A. Organisation of the support model .....	16		
B. Job of a service provider .....	17		
C. Experiences with the support model .....	17		
5. Finland .....	17		
A. Organisation of the support model .....	17		
B. Job of a service provider/ special needs assistant .....	18		
C. Experiences with the support model .....	19		
6. Similarities and differences .....	20		
A. Multidisciplinary teams .....	20		
B. Mainstream schools and special schools .....	20		
C. Early intervention .....	21		
D. Conclusion .....	21		
<b>II. What is a service provider?</b> .....	22		
1. The three dimensions of the index for inclusion .....	22		
2. Different models .....	24		
A. Eight roles for the service provider .....	25		
B. SWOT Interdisciplinary Inclusive Practice Design .....	27		
		3. Key features of service development .....	28
		A. What is a service trying to achieve? .....	28
		B. What are the competing agendas between the service, other services, the school and the LEA? How will these be resolved or negotiated? .....	28
		C. Who is actually doing the supporting and how are they doing it? .....	29
		D. Who has the expertise and how are these applied? .....	29
		E. What is the balance and focus of the main functions? .....	30
		F. How well are we evaluating what we do? .....	30
		G. Conclusion .....	31
		<b>III. Analysis of questionnaires</b> .....	33
		1. Information about the participants .....	34
		2. Vision .....	35
		3. Cooperation .....	35
		4. Mode of operation .....	36
		A. Voice of the child .....	36
		B. Assistant of the child .....	36
		C. Team teacher/classroom assistant .....	37
		D. "Widescreen" partner .....	37
		E. Connector .....	38
		F. Member of the school team .....	39
		G. Reflective practitioner .....	39
		5. Central tasks .....	40
		6. Impact evaluation .....	41
		<b>IV. Recommendations</b> .....	43
		References .....	44
		Appendix 1: Questionnaire .....	46
		1. Information about yourself .....	47
		2. Vision .....	47
		3. Cooperation .....	47
		4. Mode of operation .....	48
		5. Central tasks .....	50
		6. Impact evaluation .....	50

## Introduction

The following report falls within the framework of the Erasmus+ project 'To Inclusive Education and BEYOND' (BEYOND) 2018-2021. The BEYOND project is designed to facilitate the transition towards fully inclusive education systems.

This project is a result of previous collaboration between multiple European partners including: the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) in Belgium who is the leading partner, Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen (KathOndVla) in Belgium, University College Leuven-Limburg (UCLL) in Belgium, Chance B in Austria, the Service Foundation for People with Intellectual Disabilities (KVPS) in Finland, the Centre de la Gabrielle in France and Centro de Educação para o Cidadão com Deficiência (CECD) in Portugal. UCLL was responsible for this study on the basis of the results of the survey run by all partners.

Our modern European societies are characterised by different types of diversity: diversity of social background, of origin, of language, of potential. This diversity must be embraced and accommo-

dated if we are to create more inclusive, cohesive and stable societies that meets the needs of all their citizens. The recent refugee crisis had served to further highlight the need to accept diversity and develop more inclusive societies across Europe. This report was initiated with the aim of empowering special schools and service providers supporting children with special needs, to facilitate a successful and smooth transition toward inclusive education. This transition is one of the concrete articles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This report and the study upon which it was based, will provide tools for policy reform, to adapt or improve support services and their collaboration with other stakeholders, and ultimately facilitate the transition towards inclusive education.

By questioning service providers involved in inclusive education, this report will emphasise the role of the service provider in each country. Ser-



vice providers in the field of education offer long or short-term services, that empower pupils with fewer opportunities of support needs, or their families, to fully and successfully participate in the life of the local community in which they reside and the education environment. Service providers are normally external partners who are not under the leadership of a school. They support the transition of pupils into mainstream schools.

There are as many types of support services for pupils with special needs as there are countries in Europe. In the first part of this report, fact sheets summarize information about the organisation of the support models, the job of a service provider and the experiences with the current support model of each country. Similarities and differences across countries are also analysed. In the second part, what service providers are is agreed upon (a definition of a service provider is made), how to create an inclusive environment by installing three important pillars is described and four models that relate to the role of a

service provider are presented. In the Interdisciplinary Inclusive Practice Design model, the eight roles of a service provider are also explained in detail. The key stages of development of a support service written by Blamires and Moore (2004) are also described. In the third part, the questionnaires taken in the partner countries are analysed and interpreted. Indeed, by surveying service providers involved in inclusive education, it will highlight the role of the service provider in each country based on the 8 roles of the IIPRAD model (Emmers et al., 2014-2015, 2016, 2019). The last step is to conclude some recommendations for policy makers, education providers and support services on how to improve the transition to inclusive education.



# Factsheets of the partner countries

**P**upils with special needs have a right to education and it is the responsibility of the education system to ensure the continuity of the individual school careers adapted to the pupil's abilities and needs. The aim is to give the pupil access to a regular school as close to home as possible, to closely involve parents in their child's school career and to give equal opportunities to children with special needs and other children by ensuring an adjustment of the examination conditions. In this section, we will take a closer look at how the partner countries are already working around this. Afterwards, we will discuss the similarities and differences between all partner countries.

## BELGIUM (FLANDERS)

Special education in Belgium has a long and complicated history, but the need to organise a special school system became obvious as a result of compulsory school acts. Although some special schools have been in existence for over 100 years, the community only became aware of its duty towards learners with disabilities when education was regarded as a necessity for all citizens. The Compulsory Education Act of 1914 stated that 'where the school population is sufficiently large, local authorities must provide classrooms for poorly gifted or abnormal children'. Between 1924 and 1970, several laws were extended and introduced to meet this requirement. In 1980 'integrated education' (GON) started. Learners with disabilities got the opportunity to attend mainstream education under the guidance of a special school. The learner receives support in the mainstream school from a teacher or therapist from a special school. In the past years, there has been a shift towards more inclusive education in Belgium. This is partly

due to the fact that Belgium has ratified various treaties, including the Salamanca Declaration, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Not only did this lead to the creation of the M-decree in primary and secondary education in 2014, this also led to the development of the Codex for Higher Education in 2013 and the Support model for primary and secondary education and the Support model for Higher Education in 2017 (European Agency, n.d.).

The M-decree in primary and secondary education came into force in 2014, from which the starting point is teaching as many children as possible in mainstream education (Onderwijs Vlaanderen, n.d.). It aims to change the mindset towards inclusive education. Furthermore, it is the right of pupils with disabilities to enrol in mainstream education and, when necessary, appropriate support must be provided, or an individual programme can be created. Only when these possibilities and support in regular education are insufficient, the possibility to enrol in special education remains.

In special education, pupils are divided into eight different types of special education according to their needs, starting from the age of 2,5y until 21y (Onderwijs Vlaanderen, n.d.):

- Type 'basic offer': initially these groups came together in type basic offer but now it is for pupils who are not able to follow the general curriculum and need an individual adapted curriculum.
- Type 2: for children with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities.
- Type 3: for children with severe emotional and/or behavioural problems (ADHD, OCD, etc.)
- Type 4: for children with physical disabilities.
- Type 5: for sick children who are hospitalised or stay in a prevention centre on medical grounds.
- Type 6: for visually impaired children.
- Type 7: for children with hearing impairments.
- Type 8: for children with autism spectrum disorder

An important condition here is that schools can demonstrate that they have always provided the maximum amount of care and support. In order to have access to special education, a report is required from the Centre for Pupil Counselling (CLB) after a multidisciplinary examination.

In secondary education, these eight types of special education are combined with four different educational forms:

- Form 1 prepares for day care.
- Form 2 prepares for sheltered employments.

- Form 3 prepares for a job in the regular labour market. Pupils can obtain a certificate for a regular job on an assistant level: e.g., building constructor, carpenter, hairdresser etc.
- Form 4 prepares for higher education or university. It can obtain the same diplomas as in mainstream education. But often the pupils attend part-time a regular class and part-time a special class.

The M-decree came together with a support model to provide additional support to pupils with SEN.

## Organisation of the support model

The M-decree states that it is every regular school's task to develop a care continuum. It is about a care policy in which the school goes through three phases in order to provide the best possible care for the pupils together with the CLB and the parents. There are no teacher's assistants and sometimes a personal assistant from social welfare or a volunteer, organized by the parents, comes into the classroom to help. Mainstream schools can also directly request support from different types of schools for special education under certain conditions, in consultation with the parents of the pupil that needs support (Onderwijs Vlaanderen, n.d.).

- Phase 0: broad basic care. Based on a vision on care, every regular school is obliged to work on its own continuum of care and provide general basic care to all pupils. The school stimulates the development of all pupils as much as possible, follows them up systematically and works actively on reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors.

- Phase 1: increased care. The school takes additional measures to ensure that the pupil can continue to follow the common curriculum (such as remediation, differentiation, compensation and dispensation).
- Phase 2: expanded care. The CLB gets an active role and investigates what the pupil, teachers and parents can do and what they need. Afterwards, the CLB possibly draws up a reasoned report, in which it justifies the need for extending care. Then the school can call in support from the support network or a school for special education. When the phases 0 to 2 have been completed and if following the common curriculum with reasonable accommodations appears not to be feasible, the CLB can draw up a report for access to special education or for an individually adapted curriculum in mainstream education.
- Phase 3: individually adapted curriculum (IAC). The CLB prepares a report for access to special education or for an IAC in regular education. In special education a pupil gets an individual plan instead of an IAC. An IAC starts from the general curriculum, an individual plan starts from developmental goals.

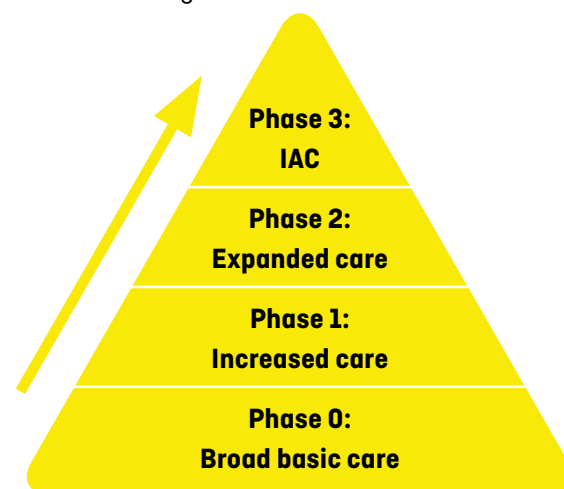


Figure 1: Care continuum Belgium

A pupil with a report can follow an IAC in a school for mainstream education or can enrol in a school for special education. This depends on the choice of the parents and the pupil and the reasonable accommodations that are possible in an ordinary school. The CLB investigates the possibilities, together with the parents, the pupil and the school. If the pupil follows an IAC in a school for regular education, the school can call in support from the support network or from a school for special education (European Agency, n.d.)

### Job of a service provider

Various professions such as (professional) teachers, speech therapists, physiotherapists, (ortho)-pedagogues, social workers, psychologists, occupational therapists, etc. can become a service provider. Their task consists of providing support to pupils with special needs, their teachers and the school team. Attending coaching-meetings and vocational training are also part of their tasks. They can either work full-time for the support network, partly in the special school and partly in the support network or combine a job as a service provider with a job as a private therapist. In order to specialise in teaching pupils with disabilities, an additional programme can be followed (bachelor after bachelor): ba-na-ba in special needs education or a ba-na-ba in broadening care and remedial learning. With this programme, participants opt for a specialisation as a teacher, coach or supporter of pupils with specific needs in special and regular education (European Agency, n.d.).

### Experiences with the support model

According to the model, the flexibility is perceived as positive, but sometimes difficult for parents to find a way in this. In addition, the new support model results in too many requests for support,

which means that there are not enough hours of support per child. This also makes it a challenge to provide support in a limited number of schools because one does not yet know whether general expertise or more specialized help is needed.

According to the mind shift, there is a need to move towards more inclusive education. Because of the two tracks that exist now, mainstream education and special education, it is not easy to move towards more inclusion. It also requires a change in mentality throughout society. Not only within education but also on the job market, in leisure time etc. There is still a way to go but a lot of progress has already been made (Jennes A., 2019).

The Support Model for Higher Education clearly states that it is the responsibility of the universities and colleges of higher education to ensure that pupils with disabilities can be included in higher education and that they can organise the necessary support for these pupils. The Codex for Higher Education mentions the importance of treating pupils with special needs, the same as pupils without special needs. However, in case they need additional support, they should be able to get this adequate support under the term of 'reasonable accommodations' in order to have the same educational opportunities as their peers. It is the responsibility of the pupil to take necessary steps and contact with pupil points of the higher education institution, in order to obtain the necessary support and possible reasonable accommodations (Codex Hoger Onderwijs, n.d.).

## PORTUGAL

From 1946 the first classes were created for pupils with physical or mental disabilities. After this also for pupils with learning difficulties and minor disabilities. In the 1960s, the first special

education centres were created, and then special schools were established for children with intellectual disabilities. The Education Law, Law No. 46/86, states that the underlying philosophy in special education is based on several international resolutions, such as the Salamanca Declaration and the Framework for Action on Special Education.

In the 1990s, the aim was to give pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) access to mainstream education. The goal was to transform special schools into Resource Centres for Inclusion (RCI) to provide specialized support through partnerships with mainstream schools. Since 2008, most special schools had to be closed and inclusion is mandatory. Many special schools have been converted as Resource Centres, supporting local public mainstream schools across the country. They provide specialized support through partnerships with mainstream schools and act as support structures for the inclusion of all pupils, especially those with special educational needs. The underlying vision is that schools should be there for all (schools for all) and therefore open to pupils with SEN. Special education is also seen as a specific type of education. It prohibits and punishes discrimination in terms of disabilities and serious health risks. The support provided by resource centres and special education teachers is intended to build capacity for classroom teachers and for the entire school. There are only a few special schools left (European Agency, n.d.).

In 2018, there was a review of all educational systems to be more inclusive. There is a goal to move to a more inclusive education system to ensure mandatory 12-year education for ALL pupils and the right of ALL pupils to a final diploma with the certification or competences and learning skills developed. This is to culminate in a report by the UNCRPD Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Ob-

servatory, UN, April 18, 2016. Education for pupils with special needs is integrated into mainstream schools. Almost all pupils attend regular schools. For those who have more needs, there are several special schools throughout Portugal, such as schools for the blind/ visually impaired or schools for children with developmental disabilities (autism, etc.). Once enrolled in compulsory education, children with special needs receive an individual education plan, which includes the necessary changes and adaptations (Eurydice, n.d.).

Furthermore, early support is also offered. This assistance is provided by institutions in the fields of education, health and social security for children aged zero to six years, preferably from zero to three. There are also socio-educational centres, which function as semi-boarding schools with the aim of providing socio-educational evaluation and support. Another remark is that there are support centres for children and youth with special educational needs, from six to sixteen years of age (European Agency, n.d.).

The following measures are available for pupils with special needs within mainstream schools (Eurydice, n.d.):

- Support from a multidisciplinary team to support inclusive education. There are specialized professionals such as support teachers, counsellors, mobility professionals, sign language trainers and interpreters, therapists and psychologists.
- Use of specific equipment and tools (books in Braille, books with enlarged letters, optical and hearing aids, adapted software)
- Special conditions for assessment (type of test, type of learners, mode of expression, timetables, place and time of the test)

- Individualized curriculum (by replacing, introducing, deleting objectives, content, activities)
- If the adaptations are significant and do not fit within the national curriculum, an individual program must be developed.

### Organisation of the support model

There are no mentions of special education needs under 54/2018 and 55/2018 Decrees. The new vision of an all-integrated education system as a Multi-Level approach to accommodate individual needs. For all pupils are offered universal support measures that all teachers are incentivised to apply in the classroom. Universal measures are comprised of pedagogical differentiation, curricular accommodations, curricular enrichment, universal design for learning, pro social behaviour and intervention in small groups.

When there is evidence that universal measures are not enough to accommodate individual needs, selective measures are activated. Selective measures are comprised of different curricular paths, non-significant adaptations to the curriculum, pedagogical support anticipation, and learning reinforcement measures and tutorial support (Eurydice, n.d.).

Additional measures are added when selective measures do not produce the expected results. Additional measures can be more adaptable to the most significant needs of pupils. Disciplines can be replaced by another competence, significant curricular adaptations can be defined, different methodologies and strategies for structured learning and development of social and personal competence. An individual transition plan for a post school life is previewed under this measure since additional measures undermine the path to a higher education level. However,

none of these measures limits the access of lifelong learning and higher education enrolment (Eurydice, n.d.).

All measures should be negotiated with parents and with the pupils themselves that can benefit from these measures.

### Job of a service provider

Under Decree-Law 54/2018, the service provider should form a RCI. This centre can support local public mainstream schools by providing specialised professionals and the knowledge that the school lacks. Included in the RCI's team are therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists and social workers. The school forms a multidisciplinary team to support inclusive education with the school resources and local partners like early intervention and RCI. It is this multidisciplinary team that supports inclusive education and defines the measures that should be placed, and the accommodations of individual pupils needs. Special education teachers do not belong to the RCI but rather they are professionals placed by the Ministry of Education in school clusters. RCIs focus their work primarily into pupils with additional support measures.

### Experiences with the support model

Since parents cannot decide to enrol their child with a disability in a special school the only educational offer is under inclusive education. Since 2008 many special schools have transformed themselves into RCIs. Since the implementation of this new model the funding criteria to support schools is not clear and there are regional differences on funding inclusive education and the allocation of resources. It is a highly defunded system where schools count on the voluntary work of these organisations. Funding occurs

independently of the number of children with special education needs and even with the type of needs of pupils. Children with higher support needs tends to absorb most of the resources allocated to a school cluster, leaving no room to improve inclusive education in other education levels and to most of the pupils. The Portuguese government allocates a higher budget into clinical approaches of rehabilitation of children with disabilities rather than newer programmes like supporting inclusive education (de Sousa et al., 2014).

Portugal has achieved a high rate of children with disabilities in public mainstream schools but has not guaranteed a high-quality education to all since all the funding that was previously going to special schools was not re-routed to the resource centres for inclusion.

## AUSTRIA

Over the last 30 years, the Austrian school system has developed towards an inclusive school system, starting with the first Austrian integration class that was installed as a school experiment in 1984 and the formal endorsement of school inclusion by the Austrian school law in 1993 (Schwab, Hessels, Obendrauf, Polanig, & Wölflingseder, 2015). Since 1993, a two-track system exists in Austria. Pupils officially identified as having special educational needs (SEN) either attend special schools or inclusive settings in mainstream schools. Parents have the right to choose which type of education they prefer for their child (Section 8 of the Compulsory Education Act - Schulpflichtgesetz). By ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) in 2008, Austria committed to ensuring, promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities. To implement the UN



CRPD, Austria developed a strategy called the 'National Action Plan for Disabilities 2012–2020' (Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2012). In order to increase inclusive education and the quality of the educational system, three model regions were implemented in three Austrian states – Styria, Carinthia and Tirol. Not only do these model regions outline a path towards the implementation of the UN CRPD in the educational system, but they also put strategies of inclusive schooling into practice and evaluate them (Gasteiger-Klicpera & Wohlhart, 2015).

In Austria, integration classes (i.e., classes in which children with SEN are included and support by a special needs teacher is available for a limited number of hours) have been in place in the school system for over twenty years. The change towards inclusive education is more recent and is essentially characterized by classes taught by both a general and a special needs teacher. Special education comprises of nine school years. The final year is the preparatory vocational year. With the consent of the school administration and with the agreement of the body managing the school, the special school may be attended for up to 12 years. Special education in Austria consists of ten types of education. Specially trained special education teachers and individual teaching methods are used to provide pupils with a general basic education that should enable the pupil to manage with their further vocational training or to attend a more advanced type of school. The aim is to enable pupils to cope with the next stage of vocational education or additional forms of education from the age of 6 to 15 (Feyerer et al., 2018).

We can distinguish the following types of special schools, depending on the form of curriculum offered (European Agency, n.d.):

- Special schools with their own curriculum: general special schools (for pupils with learning difficulties), special schools for

pupils who are blind, special schools for children who are deaf, special schools for severely disabled children, special schools for difficult-to-educate children (special educational school).

- Special schools whose provision is in accordance with the curriculum offered in the primary school, middle school, pre-vocational school or in accordance with the curriculum of a different type of special school: special schools for children who are physically disabled, have speech disorders, are visually impaired or partially deaf; places of treatment schools.

In mainstream schools, disabled and non-disabled pupils are taught together in so-called integrative/inclusive regular classes. Inclusive education includes various pedagogical measures such as cooperative forms of work (team teaching), differentiation/individualization (taking into account specific needs), learner-centred work, open learning forms, project-oriented and interdisciplinary learning. In general, classes have an additional full-time or part-time teacher - depending on the number of pupils with SEN and their disabilities. In integrative/inclusive classes, teachers from the compulsory school and teachers with special pedagogical training teach "team-teaching" (European Agency, n.d.).

An application for the confirmation of special educational needs must be submitted as soon as it is foreseeable that the child, due to an impairment, cannot follow the lessons in the primary level or secondary level without special support. This happens either before the child starts school or later, when it becomes clear during the school years that the child needs special support. In this context, it should be noted that first, all educational possibilities of the general school system must be fully exhausted. The application can be submitted by the parents or guardians,

by the headmaster or headmistress or by official channels and must be addressed to the Education Directorate. The Education Directorate must determine in a procedure whether the child actually needs special educational support and which steps of support are necessary. Before a written decision is issued to the parent/guardian, the Education Directorate obtains the necessary reports and also accepts reports submitted by parents/guardians (European Agency, n.d.).

### Job of a service provider

The following information focusses on SEN teaching assistants / learning support assistants (LSAs) (German: "Schulassistent"). In compulsory schools, people provide various forms of educational support. But this too has become a scarce resource. There are currently many different professional groups providing assistance, with the most diverse job descriptions and very different role perceptions within a team of teachers. Assistants usually have several people to whom they are accountable. They are employed by a legal entity, are subordinate to the school administration, and are hierarchically placed below the teachers (European Agency, n.d.).

To properly manage this situation, time is needed for an exchange between assistants and teachers, to which the participants contribute from their respective roles and functions. Both teachers and assistants must be willing to do this. Moreover, this takes place under precarious working conditions, since they are usually not paid, or only paid for a minimal part of the time they spend on this coordination (Eurydice, n.d.).

Especially in inclusive classrooms (but also in schools for children with special needs and increasingly in elementary school), several people are present in the classroom at the same time and are part of a heterogeneous teaching group.

In addition to professionally trained classroom teachers and special education teachers, assistants, as a professionally undefined group, are also included in this group (Bildungssystem Austria, n.d.).

### Experiences with the support model

In Austria, LSAs are responsible for supporting a specific child for a certain amount of state-approved hours. But these hours do not include time for exchanging information and joint planning of lessons with teachers (Meyer, 2017). If LSAs participate in meetings with teachers, for example, these are not considered as working time to be compensated for (Henn et al., 2019). Compounding this problem, LSAs are employed by external social service providers and are therefore not part of the school community. This could induce restricted collaboration and involvement of LSAs in school activities. Another factor that can obstruct successful collaboration is the perception that LSAs, due to the absence of qualification requirements in Austria, are unskilled workers (Lübeck, 2017).

## FRANCE

France wants to transform a system of special education into an inclusive system of education. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), which France ratified in 2010, will speed up the process of transformation from a model of integration to a model of inclusive education (CPRA – France Country Report, p. 3). An aim is to accommodate children with special needs in mainstream schools. When this is not possible, there are special schools or learning from a distance.

Public service has detailed information about



education for children with special needs. It is the responsibility of the Maison Départementale des Personnes Handicapées (MDPH) to evaluate a child's special needs and to transmit the result to the Commission des Droits et de l'Autonomie des Personnes Handicapées (CDAPH). A personalized program for the child is established that determines the assistance required. Services d'Éducation Spéciale et de Soins à Domicile (SESSAD) deals with pupils with mental, motor, and sensory disabilities and provides early education and family support (counseling and treatment supervision) until the end of compulsory education (and in cases until university). SESSAD bridges the gap between traditional education and out-of-school treatments and rehabilitation (Eurydice, n.d.).

Classe d'Intégration Scolaire (CLIS) is for children with disabilities too severe to be taught in regular classes, but do not require special accommodations. CLIS is a special class within a regular primary or secondary school. The teaching is adapted to the needs of the pupils, but the curriculum taught is essentially the same as that of regular classes. CLIS guide pupils with special needs towards better employability. There are 4 categories of CLIS (European Agency, n.d.):

- CLIS 1: children with cognitive learning disorders.
- CLIS 2: pupils with hearing impairments.
- CLIS 3: pupils with visual impairments.
- CLIS 4: children with physical disability.

Since 2015, the schemes aimed at the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in schools are all called 'Local Units for Educational Inclusion' (ULIS). They strengthen the inclusion of pupils with special needs in mainstream classes, ensure continuity of school careers and guide pupils with special needs to better employability. ULIS for elementary schools are distinguished from

ULIS for collèges and lycées (secondary school) and can be based on seven types of disorders (European Agency, n.d.):

- TFC: cognitive or intellectual function disorders.
- TSLA: specific language and learning disorders.
- TSA: autism spectrum disorders.
- TFM: motor function disorders (including dyspraxia).
- TFA: hearing disorders.
- TFV: visual disorders.
- TMA: multiple associated disorders (multiple disability or invalidating disease).

In secondary schools, three situations can occur:

- ULIS in college, all pupils have a booklet of individual skills (LPC) related to the common basis of knowledge and skills (SCCC). Pupils can also take their tests for the general education certificate and participate in the introductory course for professions and training, with adaptations.
- ULIS in lycée and vocational schools. Here pupils are supported to prepare their entry into higher education. At the right time, learners are put in touch with the reference person for higher education "with disabilities".
- ULIS in vocational schools: pupils have access to vocational training.

Upon leaving the ULIS, a certificate of competence is given to each pupil.

### Organisation of the support model

The organisation of the educational system in France is done in such a way as to best tend

towards an inclusive environment. The 2005 law for equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship for people with disabilities lays down the principle of inclusive education. This approach was then adopted by the law to re-design schools in 2013. Today, there are three ways of schooling for pupils with disabilities: in a mainstream environment, in a medical-social institution or at a distance. Within each system, the idea is to respond as best as possible to the specific needs of the pupil. There is therefore a continuum of care. In order to promote schooling and meet the special educational needs of pupils with disabilities, every effort is made to build a personalized schooling project (PPS) that is as operational as possible once the family has contacted the departmental home for the disabled (MDPH), a unique place designed to facilitate the procedures for people with disabilities. The analysis of the needs and the evaluation of the skills of the pupil with a disability are determining factors in order to provide the best conditions for the pupil to attend school. Thus, the school, the family and the referring teacher must act in partnership (European Agency, n.d.).

### Job of a service provider

The job of special needs assistants is to help children with special needs with their schooling. They perform a range of tasks, such as helping in the classroom (e.g., installing equipment, encouraging communication between the special needs pupil and his/her context, etc.), attending school outings, performing routine tasks that do not require specific medical qualifications such as toilet visits. Special needs assistants are not there to take the place of teaching or caring staff. They are charged with providing "general" support only in the school and extracurricular context, and their duties do not extend to helping the pupil in his or her home environment (EACEA, n.d.).

### Experiences with the support model

Generally speaking, even if there is a willingness to move towards an inclusive model, there are difficulties in terms of training and communication between actors.

## FINLAND

Special education in Finland was established during the 1840s to 1921. Schools were established for people with hearing impairments, visual impairments, and motor disabilities. Since 1990, the number of special schools has been reduced and special classes are offered in regular schools. Finnish primary education is based on the philosophy of inclusion, but there are still special schools or special classes. Since 2006 there has been a focus on early identification, support and prevention. This begins long before children enter school with a network of child health clinics that regularly assess the social, physical and mental development of infants and toddlers. This requires ongoing assessment of children's growth and learning, and the provision of support must be started at a sufficiently early stage. This prevents problems from worsening and having long-term effects. Providing the right supports at the right time and level is key to ensuring growth and learning (Eurydice, n.d.).

### Organisation of the support model

Since 2011, support is organized in three phases: general support, intensified support and special support. The same triangle is used in both kindergartens and elementary school (European Agency, n.d.):

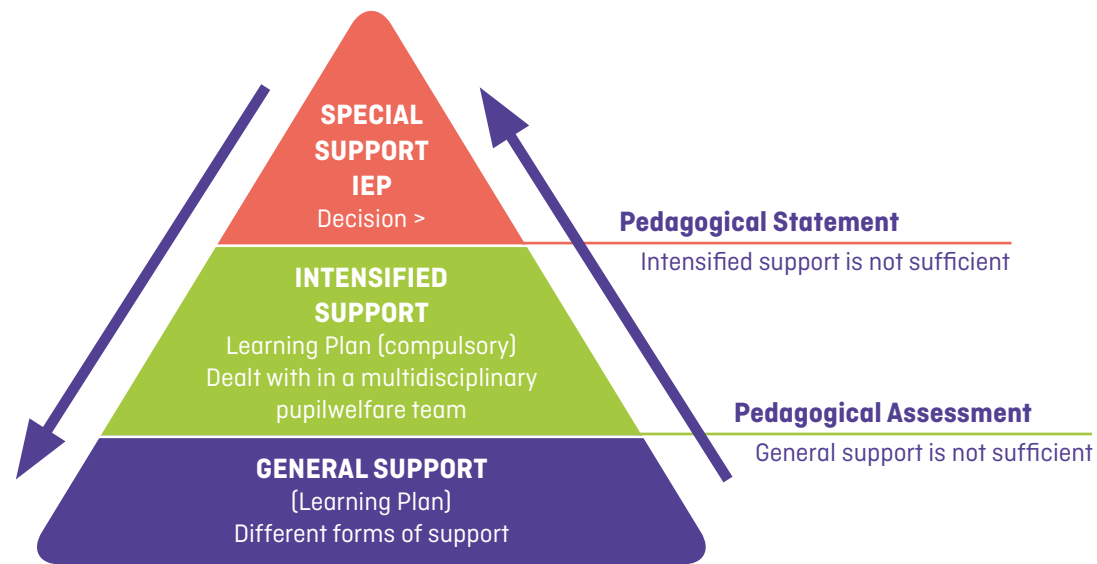


Figure 2: Organisation of the support model

- General support: in everyday teaching, all pupils are entitled to this. The class teacher provides general support which may include differentiated instruction.
- Intensive support: when general support is not enough, more intensive support is provided. This is based on careful assessment by multidisciplinary teams where an individual learning plan is created for the pupil. Possible additional support measures are remedial support by the class teacher, co-teaching with the special education teacher and individual or group learning with a part-time special education teacher. The aim here is to prevent the accumulation of problems.
- Special support: where the intensification of support is insufficient, further evaluations are conducted. Special support is intended to provide pupils with comprehensive and systematic help before deciding on special support, the education provider must make an educational statement about the pupil. The provider bases this assessment on a statement from the child's

teacher about his or her learning progress and a statement about the intensified support he or she has received. The purpose of special support is that pupils can still complete their compulsory education with the help of extra support and possibly start further studies afterwards. The self-esteem and study motivation of pupils are also strengthened.

It is important to note that during a period of more intensive support, each pupil's learning and school attendance are regularly monitored and assessed. If a pupil's situation changes, the curriculum is revised to meet his support needs. In addition, there is compulsory education for all children with intellectual disabilities. A holistic view is taken.

### Job of a service provider/ special needs assistant

Teachers attend regular teacher training programs and may have either bachelor's degrees or university degrees. Teachers in the first six forms of primary education are usually general-

ists (classroom teachers). They have a master's degree in education. Teachers in the last three forms and at the upper secondary level are subject specialists (subject teachers). They have a master's degree in the subject they teach and pedagogical studies.

Special needs teachers provide part-time special needs education in compulsory and upper secondary education, while special needs pupils are taught in special needs classes. Vocational needs teachers work in both regular vocational institutions and special vocational education institutions.

In addition to special needs teachers, educational services also employ a multidisciplinary team of assistants, educational supervisors, educational counsellors, psychologists, physicians, pupil and pupil counsellors, and various therapists. State-owned special schools and vocational education institutions also have social workers, nursing and housing staff, and other personnel, such as for school transportation (Eurydice, n.d.).

### Experiences with the support model

In Finland, the municipalities have a legal obligation to organize education and care. A child with a disability has the same right to receive a basic education as a fundamental and human right as all other children. According to the Basic Education Act, a child with a disability receives the support they need in order to partake in basic education, such as assistive equipment, special needs education, and interpretation and assistant services. The three levels of support for learning and school attendance are general, intensified and special support. Support must be given as soon as the need for it is detected. Support for learning and school-going aims at strengthening pupil's basic skills and preventing difficulties. Taking care of the pupil's growth

and wellbeing is an essential part of the support (Finnish National Agency for Education, n.d.).

In autumn 2019, there was 564,100 pupils in comprehensive schools in Finland. Intensified support was received by 65,200 (11.6 %) of comprehensive school pupils and special support by 48,200, (8.5 %) of comprehensive school pupils. 0,3 % of them were individuals with profound and multiple learning disabilities. Among the recipients of intensified support, 66 % were boys and 37 % girls. Among the recipients of special support, 71 % were boys and 29 % girls (Official Statistics of Finland, n.d.).

Even though, each pupil is entitled to sufficient support for one's growth and learning, families and children are still in an unequal position depending on where they live. Resources to organize services differ between municipalities. The number of skilled teachers and assistants varies. Differences can also be found in guidance counselling, remedial teaching and part-time special education, pupil welfare services, interpretation and assistant services. Moreover, the ability and strength of families to seek help for their children varies. Especially families who receive care from different health and social professionals and in multiple settings get tired and this may put them at greater risk of receiving fragmented or poor-quality care. Moreover, professionals' lack of knowledge and training on families with multiple needs has been demonstrated (KVPS, 2018).

In the future, attention should be paid to the equality between families and municipalities. There is also a need for training concerning fundamental concepts of inclusive education and the practices that result in its realization in the Finnish context.



## SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

In this section, the information given in the fact sheets of each country is compared.

### The development of inclusive education

In all partner countries such as Belgium, Portugal, Austria, France, Finland etc. one can find a long history of moving towards more inclusive education. First, special schools were established to meet the increasing demand from children with special needs. Then the aim is to teach children as much as possible in mainstream schools with appropriate guidance if necessary, to create equal opportunities for each child. This is important for the self-esteem of children and to be able to participate later in life and on the job market. Thus, in all countries who ratified the convention, people with special needs have the right to enrol in a mainstream school. Schools must be accessible for everyone and discrimination based on disability is prohibited. This corresponds to the principle of 'schools for all'. Yet there are big differences across countries. In countries such as Belgium, Austria, France and Finland there are still a reasonable number of special schools left, while in Portugal there are very few special schools left. In Finland, however, special classes are taught in regular schools.

In a number of countries like Belgium, France and Finland the care policy in a school runs through several phases based on a care continuum. There are three phases (broad basic care, increased care and extended care) in which one tries to give the most accessible help first in mainstream schools. An individual learning plan is drawn up each time depending on the needs of the pupil.

### Multidisciplinary teams

To be able to teach as much as possible in mainstream schools, multidisciplinary teams are appointed. Here a team of different professionals, such as therapists, social workers, doctors, teachers or pedagogues, psychologists, etc. work together on the development of one child. They examine and support the child and provide personalized care. This is done in the partner countries such as Belgium, Portugal, Austria, France and Finland. If necessary, an individual program is set up in different countries so that appropriate support can be offered as in Belgium, Portugal, Austria, France and Finland.

### Mainstream schools and special schools

Only when the possibilities and support in mainstream education are insufficient, the possibility remains to enrol in special education. In Belgium, pupils are divided into eight different types of special education, depending on their needs such as children with a mild/moderate/serious mental disability, a physical disability, visual disability, hearing disability etc. In addition, there are four different types of education described in the fact sheets of Belgium above. In Portugal there are also different types of special schools throughout the country such as schools for the blind/partially sighted children or schools for children with developmental disabilities (autism etc.). Also, in Austria there are different types of special schools depending on the curriculum offered. Again, all children are not just put together but there are ten different types of special schools for children who are, for example, deaf, blind, have learning difficulties, or are viewed as difficult to teach etc. In addition, there are also several special schools in France as you can read in the fact sheets. We can conclude from this



that all countries have different types of special schools, some countries have more types than others. And this is always filled in a different way.

### Early intervention

Almost all partner countries focus on early intervention but the way this is achieved differs from country to country. In Portugal, there is already support for children from zero to six years old, preferably from zero to three years old, and there are several support centres. Also, in Finland there is support and prevention that begins even before children start school with a network of child health clinics that regularly assess the social, physical and mental development of babies and toddlers. And there are several support teams comprised of professionals from health education and social services that form a transdisciplinary team under a third-generation intervention for children and their parents.

### Conclusion

What becomes clear is that there is a need for more inclusive education in every partner country. They are all already trying to do this in different ways. They want to treat pupils with special needs the same and give them the same opportunities as other pupils. If they do need extra support, this is possible and individual adjustments are made. In Belgium, the responsibility for asking for individual adjustments lies mainly with the pupil (and the parents). Nevertheless, there are still many pupils in special schools. In Portugal, parents cannot choose to enrol their child in a Special School. The focus is largely on inclusive education. In Finland, there is still an unequal position in terms of region. Not every region across the country offers the same care to pupils with special needs. Moreover, as in Austria, there is little professional experience and training to help these pupils with special needs.



## What is a service provider?

In the context of the BEYOND project, we use a working definition of a service provider. Service providers in the field of education are long or short-term services. They empower pupils with fewer opportunities and with support needs, or their families, to participate fully and successfully in the life of the local community in which they live and in the education environment. These services must be provided outside the school and cannot be under the direction of the schools. The service providers also support the transition of pupils with specific needs into mainstream schools. In this project, the service providers accompany the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.

As there are more pupils with specific needs in mainstream schools, teachers need more support, increasing the need for service providers in educational settings. Service providers must increase the strengths and the capabilities of the teachers and the school environment. Inclusive education must be an ideal to be pursued. The education starts from the strengths of the pupils, which is called adaptive education.

## THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION

The 'Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools' is a set of materials to support the self-review of all aspects of a school, including activities in playgrounds, staff rooms and classrooms and in the communities and environment around the school. It encourages all staff, parents/carers and children to contribute to an inclusive development plan and put it into practice. The three dimensions is one of the cornerstones the project is based on.



In order to achieve inclusion, we need to tailor our educational environment and our educational concept to the learning needs of each pupil in the diverse pupil population. With structural and inclusive changes in teaching and curricula, a school can create an inclusive environment. The concept of inclusion must be supported by

all teaching staff. Inclusion is the norm with a structural adjustment that applies practice what you preach. In order to realise inclusive education, there must be a certain sense of urgency at the following levels: practice, culture and policy (see index of inclusion Booth and Ainscow, 2011; Emmers et al., 2017).



Figure 3: Index dimensions

Inclusion ensures that more pupils benefit. Educational practice itself needs to be worked on so that it meets the learning needs, learning styles and talents of a diverse range of learners (inclusive practice).

A school can achieve this if the principles of UDL are applied. UDL stands for Universal Design for Learning and is a framework that provides guidance for putting a vision that stands for inclusive working into practice. Here we also argue that, just as in architecture, it is appropriate to devel-



op teaching and assessment practices with all learning styles and learning needs in mind, because making adjustments afterwards is always a costly, less effective and less aesthetically pleasing affair. By this we mean that retrospective adjustments in the form of assigning and implementing reasonable adjustments are very time-consuming for both the pupil and the teacher. An example of this is when a school must build stairs at the back of the school building so that a pupil in a wheelchair must go even further to enter the school. This is certainly less effective. However, sometimes retrofit is unavoidable. An example is that teaching material for a blind pupil must be translated into Braille.

According to the Index and the research of Elke Emmers, work is also needed on the perception of pupil diversity (inclusive culture). The attitude towards pupils is not always positive and pupils are confronted with a lack of understanding. A place and context where all teachers, pupils and other staff can find community in the concept of diversity. There must be an infusion of diversity practices throughout the educational institution. The school must create an inclusive culture with inclusive values and norms, and an open climate in which all pupils are welcome.

Moreover, a school needs to work on the frameworks and structures within which this educational practice is shaped school-wide and is supportive (inclusive policy). If a school takes inclusion seriously and really wants to work on a solid inclusion policy, the approach must go beyond project-based work. The school should opt for a sustainable, qualitative policy in which resources are made available and expertise is built up in a sustainable and long-term way.

It is an inclusive learning environment that supports a universal design approach, where a one-size-fits-all approach benefits everyone. Only structural and inclusive changes in education

and curricula are the solution to creating an inclusive environment. All learners will fully benefit from these structural and sustainable changes.

More information on the three dimensions can be found in the Index for Inclusion 'developing learning and participation in schools' (third edition, 2011) from page 73 to 172.

## DIFFERENT MODELS

Here we briefly describe four common models that relate to the role of service providers. Two of them have already been used in other European contexts, and two are new Flemish models.

The first model is called competence building inclusion. Ketrish & Dorozhkin (2016) discuss a pedagogical model of the "projecting competence building" which will provide effective forecasting, modelling and planning of educational process. This is when the teacher explores the problem together with the service provider. The starting point is that the teacher feels responsible for all pupils in the class. On that basis the teacher analyses his or her actions together with the service provider. This model is based on a practical question. It is a clear framework in which pupils and parents can participate (Everington et al., 1999; Zulfija et al., 2013; Navarro et al., 2016; Ketrish & Dorozhkin, 2016).

The second model is called actor-centred working. The teacher, parent and/or pupil contact a service provider with a question about the pupil. Together they look for the cause and focus on dealing with the problem. The starting point is what a pupil needs in order to achieve a goal (Mouroutsou, 2017; Massouti, 2018).

The third model is called consultative pupil guidance (GOL(L)D). The service provider tackles the experienced problems together with the teacher

and thus contributes to the teacher's professionalisation. The starting point is the teacher's existing competences, which are further developed through active, reflective coaching. The teacher is still the pivotal figure in education. Dealing with diversity is seen here as a process, a search, an evolution. The service provider is seen as a facilitator. The risk here is that there is less participation from the pupil or the parent (Van de Putte & De Schauwer, 2018).

The last model is called Interdisciplinary Inclusive Practice Design (IIPRAD). The basic principle is collaborative education in which the different partners work towards one goal. The goal is to maintain the pupil's well-being in the classroom environment, increase his/her motivation and promote cognitive development. In this model, there is role clarification: a distinction is made between 8 roles for the service provider (Emmers et al., 2014-2015, 2016, 2019).

## Eight roles for the service provider

In the following graph you can see the different roles of the IIPRAD model that can be considered in an inclusive environment. Depending on the workplace where the service provider ends up, the emphasis will be on certain roles. The following information on the different roles can provide inspiration on what tasks the service provider can perform. It is not intended that all roles are equally applicable, but rather that the possibilities of addressing these different roles are explored. We have questioned these eight roles in a questionnaire (see part 3).

The first role of the service provider is to be the voice of the child. The service providers got to ask themselves: What does the child/young person need? What is the pupil entitled to? How can the support a pupil needs best be organised?

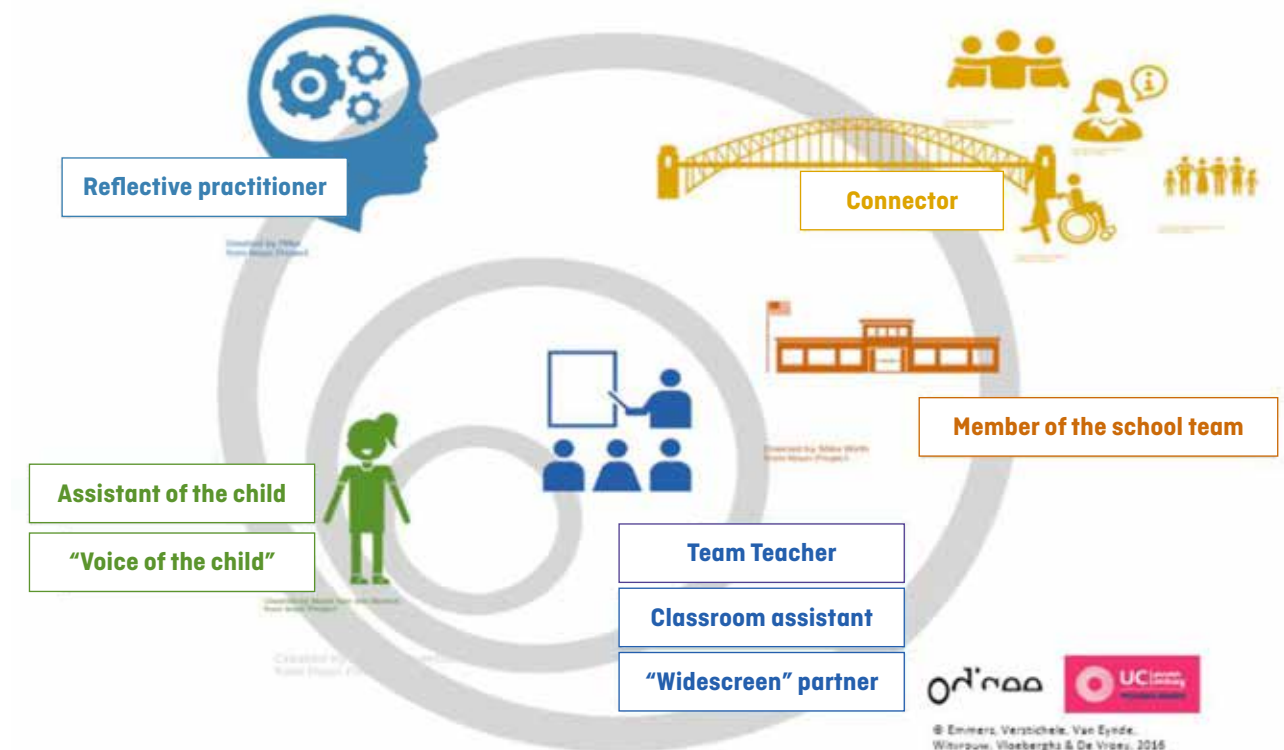


Figure 4: 8 roles for the service provider (IIPRAD)

The service provider represents the pupil's voice and listens carefully to his/her needs e.g., by ensuring that he/she can participate sufficiently in the normal classroom activities, gets help from classmates, etc. However, this is also a role that should always be done in coordination with the teacher. How do they jointly ensure that the pupil's interests are represented? How do they jointly ensure that the pupil's needs for support are met?

The second role is to be the assistant of the child. The service provider must first have an insight into the support needs of the child/young person, in their specific context and class, with their specific teacher. A second task is to envisage shared responsibility and socio-emotional well-being. To provide very concrete practical support is the third task. The service provider coordinates drafting and adjusting a support plan. This means that the service provider adapts the school or learning material to make it more accessible for the child. Arrangements regarding the specific help a service provider provides as the child's 'assistant', will be made together with the parents/pupil and the class teacher.

Besides being the assistant of the child, the service provider can also be a team teacher. The service provider takes on the role of teacher in co-teaching. The service provider is an equivalent teacher applying the planning, instruction and assessment together with the class teacher. One teacher can take the final responsibility of the class and the other teacher can rather take on the role of supporter. In close cooperation with the classroom teacher, the service provider supports the whole class group, with extra attention for certain pupils with specific needs. A strength here is that these roles of final responsibility and supporter can also change. To this end, the service provider makes agreements with the class teacher(s), they observe and inform about the support needs that the pupil(s) experience(s),

they make sure that the pupil(s) is (are) able to fully participate in the activities of the class, on the playground and in the refectory, e.g., by means of reasonable adjustments, by cooperative learning, or by being discreetly present as a supportive teacher. The supporter is looking for possible obstacles that may hinder participation and resolve them together with the child and others involved.

The service provider can also play the role of a classroom assistant. They can have a helping role towards the teacher and the pupils. For example, the service provider can set up the computer for a blind child. The definition and implementation of the 'classroom assistant' is not the same in all countries. In some countries this function does not exist in a separate model. E.g., the position of classroom assistant does not yet exist in Flanders. It is also usually not a teacher.

The fifth role is being a "widescreen" partner (inspirator for the teacher). The service provider will give a new vision on education and support. He/she will try to inspire the teacher with this. At the same time the service provider can also be inspired by the teacher. So, in this role, reciprocity and learning from each other, being an inspirer of each other is important. The role can be, for example, to be able to provide information from other settings, to be able to give tips, to observe and from here, in consultation with the teacher, choose the best approach. It is certainly important to not take over the role from the teacher, but to recognise and acknowledge each other's strengths and talents. The service provider and the class teacher need to be a dynamic duo, that is well-attuned to each other and often consult each other about what they want and what the intention is. It is also important that the things that happen in the classroom are regularly discussed, evaluated and adjusted in consultation with the teacher or the network in which the service provider supports.

Working together and becoming a connector (bridge builder between school, pupil and home) is a crucial role for the service provider. Building bridges can be done on a very small scale and is also about ensuring, for example, that communication from different angles has been passed on to each other. It is also about the ability to identify conflicts. The word 'communication' is then very important within this role: communication between teacher and parents, between teacher and child/young person, between teachers, parents and external guidance, ... The service provider will also contribute to existing consultation moments (e.g., parent contact). In that way, they enter into a 'partnership' with different parties (e.g., parents, teacher, service providers). The service provider can try to find out to what extent he/she has a coordinating role here. They can also think about how to work on coordination between the various parties who can be involved in the education and support of the young person. The service provider will always stand up in a positive way for the well-being and the concern of the child.

A seventh role the service provider is being a member of the school team. This concerns participation within school activities, but also within a multidisciplinary consultation. Depending on the specific prior education of the service provider, they will also bring in other expertise in this school team, such as support for care questions, tips from a specific expertise (e.g., as a speech therapist-) or enabling consultation with parents.

The last role for the service provider is being a reflective practitioner. This important role is always present and is interwoven with the other roles. The service provider looks critically at their tasks and functioning, which leads them to continue looking for a good approach, cooperation, etc. Questions that are raised by the practice in their workplace can be discussed in reflection and

dialogue. Reflection allows them to take some distance from the actual practice, and to look for opportunities outside the walls of the classroom and school. Being able to test, being challenged, experimenting, possibly failing and searching together (e.g., parents, teachers and service providers) again are factors that are characteristic of this inquisitive attitude. A continuous shared responsibility and trust in the partnership are central to this. Another aspect of this (exploratory) attitude is being open to an inclusive vision. The service provider must be aware of what an inclusive vision means and be willing to engage in the search process with all stakeholders.

### SWOT Interdisciplinary Inclusive Practice Design

Why is interdisciplinary collaboration in inclusive education important? Knackendoffel et al (2005) talk about the importance of teamwork 'to improve services to pupils whose needs are not being met satisfactorily when professionals act alone rather than in concert with others'.

A strength of the interdisciplinary inclusive practice design lies in the fact that different stakeholders are given a responsible role. It is about solving problems together. Finding solutions together provides more opportunities for differentiation (Naraian, 2010). Other strengths of this model are goal orientation and equality between the different partners. The involvement of parents and children are also very important in this model. Finally, there is a commitment to knowledge, attitude and skills from different angles.

A possible weakness of this model is the intensive investment in coordination with all stakeholders, namely role clarification. The following question can be asked: Can a permanent team of teachers/supporters improve themselves together?

In this model there are several opportunities. There is guided and shared responsibility and a shared vision of inclusion. Carefully planned collaborative instruction that includes pupils with disabilities can help to make teachers' attitudes more positive (Solis, 2012). In addition, there is engagement at the level of practice, policy and culture and more feedback is given. Another opportunity is that the school and the service provider can learn from each other, as in peer learning.

The possible threats must also be discussed. The service provider wants to do too much or wants to go too fast in the process. That is a problem, because everyone must be able to follow. Also, the service provider may have too high expectations. Very important for the collaboration to work is the pre-condition that the teacher must have an open attitude and feel safe. For example, the teachers in the Solis (2012) study indicated that co-teaching should be included on a voluntary basis, with all teachers needing to be flexible and able to compromise.

## KEY FEATURES OF SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Now that the roles of the service provider have been discussed, we can move on to the practices where the service provider can fulfil these roles. The following section is based on the publication of Blamires & Moore.

Figure 5 (below) summarises the key stages of development of a support service from its early involvement with individual pupils outside the classroom (from the cupboard to the classroom, etc.) to its more advanced state of integrated cooperation with other services and agencies in a 'school community'. The table addresses six questions and provides 'indicators' of practice for the key features of service development that

these questions imply, namely: vision, agenda initiative, mode of operation, ownership of expertise, central tasks, relationships and evaluation of impact (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

### What is a service trying to achieve?

Service providers can see themselves as part of a more global approach to education in which schools and services work together to meet all the needs of their pupils. Some will be at the point of pupil integration and support will therefore be at the classroom level. Others will have moved to whole-school planning for longer-term effects, ensuring that their work is included in the school improvement plan. The least developed will be merely reactive, organising themselves to respond to crises that arise when schools fail to solve problems from their own resources. They will be seen as the "expert" when all else fails. Unfortunately, when they fail, schools will more readily blame the service. Proactive service providers work with schools to prevent crises, and at best this is done with other agencies on a planned basis across schools willing to share resources and expertise (Henderson, 2004).

### What are the competing agendas between the service, other services, the school and the Local Education Agency? How will these be resolved or negotiated?

There will be few services that recognise themselves as being substantially in the column of 'least developed practices'. They have moved out of the broom closet into the classroom and embraced curriculum change. Service providers need to provide the necessary support to accommodate teacher planning at the classroom and year group levels. The additional challenge here is to help the school identify its own support

needs. The priorities of the board may differ significantly from those of the services. In addition, there will be pressure from other agencies (e.g., multiagency plans such as the Early Years Development and Childcare Plan [EYDCP]). Services will be used to working with different plans from multiple agencies. Effective support requires this level of detailed agreement if schools are to reap the full benefits of integrated cooperation between services and between groups of schools (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

Therefore, to help schools be more inclusive, the development of support services will have to go much further. The needs within a school or group of schools will be so diverse that service providers cannot work in isolation. This will require involved professionals to contribute something that is specific to their professional background, but also accessible to other professionals (Hegarty et al., 1981). Interdisciplinary activity at the level of strategic management and commissioning are needed to give service providers a chance to move forward together. This difficulty is also highlighted in Lacey's (2001) research on inter-professional work within a special school. While the literature praises increased co-production and cooperation between disciplines, in practice there is much anxiety and even hostility (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

The service of the future will have to find a way to work within the context of both inter- or trans-disciplinary working and inter- or trans-school collaboration. There must be one team, which may represent many professional functions, but works as one service. The team should have clear and understandable working protocols and aim to enable schools to develop the skills, policies and culture needed to improve integration, within the context of school improvement. The team plans on a project basis, with clear mechanisms for agreeing priorities with schools, and provides

monitoring and evaluation strategies to track progress and demonstrate impact (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

### Who is actually doing the supporting and how are they doing it?

The services will often develop a strong dependency relationship with the teachers, either by taking the child away for "treatment" or by producing highly prescriptive packages that depend on the expertise of the support agent for implementation. If the packages are well researched and have a strong theoretical basis relevant to classroom practice, then the approaches they promote can have a positive impact. However, the key to success is teacher ownership. Tips for teachers can play a role in supporting quality teaching and learning, but teachers need to be aware of the danger of using methods and materials that are not easily integrated into their own repertoire of skills. Confidence-building support enables teachers to develop a skill, which in turn reduces dependency and increases competence and confidence in responding to diversity (Thomas, 1992). Service providers can work with mainstream teachers to develop specialist teaching. Applying existing knowledge and strategies in similar and contrasting settings is a further dimension of expertise to be developed. Schools have many similar competing agendas, challenges and experiences and can benefit from strategic planning and resource sharing. Support services are in a unique position to enable this (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

### Who has the expertise and how are these applied?

The agenda of increasing inclusion and participation across education implies that schools



must become more adept at providing successful educational opportunities to an increasingly diverse range of learners. New skills, knowledge or insights need to be applied to respond to diversity. Ainscow (1999) has stated that all that is needed for inclusion is a will and a commitment and that very often the school has the resources needed to include all its pupils. Hart (1997) also suggests that difficulties in learning can promote a process of reflection in which the barriers to learning for all pupils can be explored and overcome. More emphasis should be placed on networking and consultation. Service providers should be seen as people who seek to enhance the professional expertise of teachers through the ongoing development of their (specialist) teaching skills shared across schools (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

### What is the balance and focus of the main functions?

In a recent review conducted by a large LEA (Local Education Agency), it was found that a significant part of the service time is taken up by monitoring progress through evaluation. The teachers believe that much more time could be spent on designing viable intervention programmes, working together with the teacher. There is a need to move from such an “isolated” diagnostic assessment to more project-oriented activities. This activity should focus on working with the school and other agencies to develop school-based capacity for assessment, evaluation and intervention of pupils. This is particularly important if the practice of “intervention” is to be part of the school’s inclusive culture. Diagnostic assessment and evaluation are not necessarily inappropriate and may certainly be necessary for some pupils. However, on its own, it does not help the teacher or the school to work with the child in the context of the general learning opportunities offered by the school (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

The tasks can of course consist of several layers. Service providers work directly with pupils or carry out diagnostic work and this must be monitored down to the level of teacher planning and the development needs of the whole school. Projects involving other partners and a spread of expertise seem the most likely way to manage these multi-layered activities effectively. Assessments and evaluations are likely to be more effective if the proposed interventions are part of an inter- or trans- disciplinary team approach, where the interventions recognise and draw on expertise within the school and are of direct relevance to what the school is trying to do for all its pupils (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

The process of school self-evaluation, aimed at increasing the school’s capacity for inclusion, will be informed and strengthened by drawing on the expertise of different disciplines, facilitated using a project-based approach (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

### How well are we evaluating what we do?

Little is known about the outcomes achieved by children with SEN. A lack of monitoring of their performance and a lack of relevant performance measures makes it difficult to recognise the good work being done in many schools, or to identify where children are poorly served. Service providers need to review and adapt the provision of guidance and support to schools and establish new criteria for measuring effectiveness. As the role of service providers evolves, the challenge of effective self- evaluation becomes greater. The progress from cupboard to classroom to school and community brings with it a requirement to monitor the quality of the interplay of a range of relationships. The effectiveness of a service will be judged by two sets of criteria: the progress of pupils and the increased capacity of schools to

integrate. In other words, how well the support brings together the two agendas of standards and inclusion. There are three main challenges, namely laying a sound strategic foundation, developing the capacity of schools and early childhood institutions, and monitoring, challenging and intervening. All three should be taken into account when evaluating the functioning of services. In particular, evaluation will need to focus on the role of support services in school monitoring and self-evaluation (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

### Conclusion

Service providers are at a crossroads when it comes to supporting additional educational needs in mainstream schools and early childhood settings. The gap in the pace of change in schools, and particularly in services, brought about by new initiatives will make it difficult for services to respond in a way that supports an agenda of increasing inclusion. For some, the gap may be too wide to survive. Others will strengthen their role by doing innovative work and rising to the challenge of change by forging local partnerships of services and schools to reap the benefits of previous experience, specialist knowledge and expertise. This is the vision. There will be many paths to achieve it, and many obstacles along the way. The figure below shows an overview.





Main feature and question	Cupboard Least developed practice	Classroom Transition	Whole-school Transition	Community Best practice
<b>Vision</b> What is the service trying to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-term expediency</li> <li>Reactive Responding to crises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration of pupil and support work into the classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longer term planning of support through School improvement plan</li> <li>Proactive problem-solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working for an inclusive culture in a community of schools.</li> <li>Towards self-sufficiency in meeting all pupils' needs</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda initiative</b> What are the competing agendas between the service, other services, the school and the LEA? How will these be resolved or negotiated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service agenda oriented</li> <li>Little contact with other services</li> <li>Encouraging support dependency</li> <li>Operates from own expertise base</li> <li>Reactive single service team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service and teacher</li> <li>Responding to teacher and pupil need</li> <li>Inter-disciplinary collaboration</li> <li>Negotiating agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service and SENCO</li> <li>Challenging policy and practice across the school</li> <li>Inter-disciplinary planning meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service and school(s) Collaboration</li> <li>Clear and understood protocols</li> <li>Enabling inclusion in the context of school improvement</li> <li>Proactive</li> <li>The ability to relate quickly to agencies and others</li> <li>Focused team which includes schools</li> </ul>
<b>Mode of operation</b> Who is actually doing the supporting and how are they doing it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging dependency</li> <li>Treatment culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prescriptive packages of support and intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher ownership</li> <li>Well-researched and strong theoretical base for interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced capacity for inclusion through school development</li> <li>Specialist teaching</li> <li>Development of a focus support school improvement and single pupil service plans</li> </ul>
<b>Ownership of expertise</b> Who has the expertise and how are these applied?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guarding expertise and importing expertise into school's individual pupil support focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing expertise with class teacher</li> <li>Supporting curriculum change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to whole-school policy development and practice</li> <li>Sharing expertise across the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expertise shared across agencies and groups of schools</li> <li>Priorities turned into projects</li> <li>Giving away expertise</li> </ul>
<b>Central tasks</b> What is the balance and focus of the main functions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Isolated Diagnostic Assessment</li> <li>Responding to severity of pupil need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment to monitor individual pupil progress</li> <li>Responding to teacher's planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment to diagnose school development needs</li> <li>Responding to whole-school development needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-agency assessment and planning</li> <li>Project orientation</li> </ul>
How well are we evaluating what we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No clear method for evaluating effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher/parent satisfaction as evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School satisfaction with service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed, clear mechanism for evaluating current position shared across schools and agencies</li> </ul>

Figure 5: Key stages of development of a support service [Blamires & Moore, 2004]



## Analysis of questionnaires

In the previous section, we focused on the education system and factsheets of the above countries. In addition, we described in detail the roles that a service provider can assume. Now we will take a closer look at the results of the surveys. The purpose of the questionnaires aimed to reflect upon the realities regarding inclusive education: What is the service provider trying to achieve? What kind of cooperation initiatives exist? Which different roles do service providers perform? The questionnaire is based on a literature review of models described above: the IIPRAD model and Blamires and Moore.

This survey was one of the steps to building this report. Indeed, questioning service providers involved in inclusive education will emphasises the role of the service provider in each country. Service providers in the field of education offer long or short-term services, that empower participants with fewer opportunities of support needs, or their families, to fully and successfully participate in the life of the local community in which they reside and the education environment. It is important to note that only a limited number of questionnaires were administered per country. This means that the results may not be generalizable to the whole country. The complete questionnaire can be found in the annex at the end of this report.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Each country surveyed a minimum of five service providers in their country using the same questionnaire. The table below shows how many questionnaires were collected for each country. It is important to note that only one questionnaire was administered in countries that are not part of the partner countries in this Erasmus+ project. This is the case of Spain, Moldova, Malta and Slovenia and therefore these results cannot be generalized. As a result, we only discuss them briefly in our results. Greece couldn't be surveyed due to the structure of support, provided via authorities.

Country	Number of questionnaires
Belgium	9
France	9
Portugal	5
Finland	6
Austria	5
Spain	1
Moldova	1
Malta	1
Slovenia	1

Table 1: Number of questionnaires per country

In the first part of the questionnaire, participants had to answer questions including as how long they have been working as a service provider, in how many schools they work and what studies they have done before.

In Belgium, three participants have zero to nine years of working experience, five participants have ten to twenty years of working experience and one person has more than twenty years of working experience. More than half of the participants have been working as service providers for ten to twenty years and usually work in one to

five schools. The interviewees are mainly teachers (six) and remedial educationalists (three).

In France, three participants have zero to nine years of working experience, four have zero to twenty years of working experience and two have more than twenty years of working experience. Five of nine participants work in more than five schools. The remaining participants work in one to five schools. Four specialized teachers, two psychomotricists, one teacher, one psychologist, one operational director were surveyed.

In Austria, three participants have zero to nine years of working experience and four participants work in one to five schools and one participant in more than five schools. There are two master's degrees in special needs education, one bachelor's degree in pedagogy, one social pedagogy bachelor and one recreational pedagogy bachelor.

In Finland, three participants have zero to nine years of working experience, two have ten to twenty years and one person has more than twenty years of working experience. Half of the participants work in one to five schools. The other half in more than five schools. Here the participants concern three occupational therapists and two teachers.

In Portugal, two participants have zero to nine years of working experience and one person has between ten to twenty years of working experience. Three participants work in one to five schools and one participant in more than five schools. The studies they have completed are psychology (2), occupational therapist, speech therapist and physical therapist.

In the countries surveyed on a limited basis, the Spanish participant works zero to nine years in one to five schools with a master's degree in pedagogy. The Moldavian participant has been working in one to five schools for ten to twenty years. No degree was communicated here. The

participant from Malta has worked as an occupational therapist in more than five schools for more than twenty years. Lastly, the person from Slovenia has more than twenty years of experience and works in one to five schools with a diploma as a psychologist.

From this we can conclude that based on the questionnaire with the small sample, mainly persons with a professional education in teaching, pedagogy and therapy are working as service providers in the above countries.

## VISION

This section questioned what the service provider is trying to achieve. Participants were presented with a list of different statements, see in the box below, and could answer them on a scale of one to five. To examine what tasks a service provider performs, we calculated the average of the answers given by participants in each country.

### As a service provider:

- I try to find an answer to a crisis situation
- I work on the inclusion of a pupil into the class
- I support the school in long-term planning
- I practice proactive problem-solving
- I work towards an inclusive culture at school (taking care of all pupils' needs)

In Belgium, France, Finland, Portugal, Moldova, Malta and Slovenia, a score higher than four was given on every statement. The above tasks are therefore certainly part of a service provider's job in these countries. All the countries gave a high average score (4 to 5) on working towards an inclusive culture, what means that they are in the

final stage of development of a support service (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

In Austria, only the third proposition received an average score lower than 4 (2.6). It seems that the service providers in Austria do slightly less long-term planning than in the other countries, based on the questionnaires taken. Austrian service providers should move to school-wide planning for longer-term effects and ensure that their work is included in the school improvement plan (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

## COOPERATION

Here we try to find out what collaborative initiatives exist between different stakeholders involved in the education of children with special needs. We want to find out if there is a multidisciplinary team and with who they mostly collaborate. This was done using the questionnaire below where the possible answers were yes or no. The answers of each participant were added up.

### As service provider I am working:

- With the child
- With the child's parents
- With the teacher(s) and/or assistant(s)
- With the school board
- In a multidisciplinary context
- In a professional exchange with other service providers
- With the leading team of the school

In each country, the service providers evaluated their work with the child and the parents, teachers, assistants, and with other service providers. In addition, in Belgium and France they also often work with the school board. In the other countries

this is practically not happening. The service provider of the future will have to find a way to work within the context of both inter- or trans-disciplinary working and inter- or trans-school collaboration. Only then the service provider can move to the final stage of the development of a support office (Blamires & Moore, 2004). Furthermore, all service providers in all countries confirmed that they work together in a multidisciplinary context and are in a professional exchange with other service providers. This is therefore common in all the surveyed countries and means that they work with different stakeholders around one child. Moreover, this was also reflected in the factsheets.

## MODE OF OPERATION

In the questionnaire we asked how service providers operate. Specifically, we wanted to find out what roles service providers fulfil. We asked them to give a score of one to five on the eight roles of the IIPRAD model. For each statement, the participants could select an answer between 1 (totally disagree) and 5 (totally agree).

### Voice of the child

- I represent what the child needs.
- I represent the rights of the child.
- I define how the support that the child needs can best be organized.
- I ensure, together with the teacher, that the child can participate as much as possible in the regular activities in the classroom.

Almost all countries gave a high score to representing the child needs. The service providers of Finland and Portugal, for example, gave an average rating of 4.8, and the service provider of

Moldova, Malta and Slovenia even gave a 5. The service provider of Spain only gave a 3.

For representing the rights of the child, the service providers of the different countries gave again high scores. Now the service providers of Austria and Finland gave an average score of 4.8 and the service provider of Moldova and Malta gave a 5. The service provider of Spain again gave a 3. The next question was about defining how the support that the child needs can best be organized. More than half of the countries gave a high average score (4 or 5), but the other countries gave a lower score (Belgium: 3.7; Austria: 3.6; Spain: 3 and Portugal: 2.8). For the last question, about ensuring together with the teacher that the child can participate as much as possible in the regular activities in the classroom, only the service providers of Austria and Finland gave lower scores (respectively 3.4 and 3.8). In general, the service providers of the countries try to represent the voice of the child. In order to better fulfil this role, the service provider of Spain can start from an observational yet action-oriented, process-oriented view, looking at what each pupil or a specific pupil need. Portugal's service providers who participated in this survey also need to focus more on defining how the support that a child needs can best be organised.

### Assistant of the child

- I know the support needs of the child in his/her specific context are (in the specific context and class).
- I offer practical support to the child.
- I watch over the socio-emotional well-being of the child.

The first question was about knowing the support needs of the child in his/her specific context (in

the specific context and class). All the service providers of the different countries gave a high score (between 4 and 5), except the service providers of Finland, who gave an average of only 1.7. The same trend is for the following two questions. The second one is about offering practical support to the child. The service providers of Finland only scored an average of 1. The third one is about watching over the socio-emotional well-being of the child. The service providers of Finland scored an average of 1.5. Apart from Finland, the other countries fulfil the role of the child's assistant very well. Finland's service providers should have a better understanding of the child's support needs. Only then they can consider shared responsibility and socio-emotional wellbeing and take on the very concrete practical support. This difference also roots in different types of service providers with different functions.

### Team teacher/classroom assistant

- In close cooperation with the classroom teacher, I support the whole class group, with extra attention for the child(ren) with specific needs.
- I sometimes take the final responsibility of the class so that the teacher can take on the role of supporter.
- I ensure that all pupil(s) can participate fully in the activities of the class.

We see significantly lower scores from the participating service providers for this role. The service provider from Spain, Malta and Slovenia gave a 5 for the first question: in close cooperation with the classroom teacher, I support the whole class group, with extra attention for the child(ren) with specific needs. The service providers of Belgium, Finland and Portugal have lower

scores on average, respectively 3.3, 3.3 and 3. The service providers of France and Austria gave even lower scores on average (2.7 and 2.6). For the next question about taking the final responsibility of the class so that the teacher can take on the role of supporter, the service providers of Belgium, France, Austria and Portugal again gave a low score on average, respectively 2.8, 1.8, 1.8 and 1.8. For the last question where the service provider must ensure that all pupil(s) can participate fully in the activities of the class, the service providers of France gave an average of 2.2. From these figures, we can conclude that French, Belgian and Austrian respondents, in particular, are not sufficiently committed to this role. As previously mentioned, the function of classroom assistant does not exist in a separate model. An important note here is that in Belgium the service providers are not participating in the lessons but are working with children individually outside their classroom. Three of the five Austrian service providers that answered the questionnaires are working as LSAs and their job description does not cover team teaching. Nevertheless, these service providers can focus more on this role, for example, through reasonable adjustments, through cooperative learning, or by being discreetly present as a supporting teacher.

### "Widescreen" partner

- I can inspire the teacher(s) with my vision of inclusive education and support.
- I give information about other inclusive settings.
- That in accordance with the teachers' learning design and on consultation with them I go for the most suitable approach to support the child.
- The teacher(s) and I mutually respect and acknowledge our strengths and talents.



Most service providers of the different countries gave a high score to the competence to inspire the teacher(s) with their vision of inclusive education and support. Only the service providers of France, Austria and Finland gave lower scores on average, respectively 3.7, 3.6 and 3. Furthermore, most service providers agreed more or less to give information about other inclusive settings, except Finland (a score of 2.7). Many of the service providers gave a high score on average in consulting with teachers on the most appropriate approach to support the pupil (a rating of 4.1 to 5). Only the service providers of France and Finland gave again lower scores on average, respectively 3.4 and 3. On the last question 'the teacher(s) and I mutually respect and acknowledge our strengths and talents', each country scores high (from 4 to 5 on average). Only the service providers of Austria gave a score of 3.6 on average. In general, the service providers of Austria and Finland could focus more on the role of "widescreen" partner if you compare them with the scores given by the service providers of the other countries. The service provider can be inspiring for the teacher, but they can also be searching together. Here, a partnership with a teacher is important in order to be able to take on this role. The service provider can think about how to make time to fulfil this role.

### Connector

- I focus on the communication between teacher(s) and parents.
- I focus on the communication between teacher(s) and child.
- I focus on the communication between teacher(s), parents and/or external partners.
- I contribute to existing consultation moments (e.g. parent contact).
- On the basis of well-established partnerships with the parents, teacher(s) and the child I can further improve the inclusion of the child.

As a connector, a service provider should, according to the above models, first focus on the communication between teacher(s) and parents. The service providers of Finland gave a low score on average (2.3). The service providers of Belgium, France and Austria also gave lower score, respectively 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4. The other service providers gave a score from 4 to 5. On the next question about focusing on the communication between teacher(s) and child, the service providers of the different countries gave higher scores. In the third question we added communication with external partners to communication with teachers and parents. Again, we see the countries' scores dropping (France: 3.3, Finland: 3.3 and Spain: 3). The numbers are going up again when it comes to contributing to existing consultation moments (e.g. parent contact). The service providers of France, Austria and Belgium gave lower scores on average, respectively 3.6, 3 and 3.2. In general, it seems that service providers have less contact with the child's parents because when the word 'parents' is in the statement, the numbers drop. On the last question 'on the basis of well-established partnerships with the parents, teacher(s) and the child I can further improve the inclusion of the child' the participants of almost all countries gave high scores (from 4 to 5), except from Finland (2.5 on average). The service providers of France and Finland seem to find it more difficult to fulfil the role of bridge-builder between school, pupil and home. This role is certainly not easy, as you need a mandate to take on this role. Yet this role is very important within inclusive education. The service provider can try to find out which consultation moments already exist and how he/she can contribute to this, or look for other consultation moments or possibilities, such as a back and forth letter.

### Member of the school team

- I participate in school activities (conferences, school development process ...).
- I contribute my expertise on inclusion (and/or special needs support?) to the school team.

The lowest scores of the questionnaire were given on the statement about participating in school activities (conferences, school development process ...). The service providers of Belgium, France, Austria and Finland gave very low scores on average, respectively 2.1, 2.1, 1.4 and 2. However the service providers gave a higher score when it comes to contributing their expertise on inclusion (and/or special needs support) to the school team. Yet Austria and Finland again gave a low score on average (3.2 and 3). Service providers should participate more in school activities so that they get to know the children and the parents in a different way. This way, a bond of trust is created, which can only benefit cooperation. It is good that service providers generally share their expertise with the school. As a service provider, it is important to be a full partner in this and to look at how you can best fulfil this role. The service providers of Finland and Austria will have to focus more on this role to get more insight on how the school functions. But the participants are not paid for any extra activity except the time they spend with the child in class.

### Reflective practitioner

- I look critically at my tasks and my functioning in order to constantly improve the service.
- I critically reflect on my actions when I am in class.
- I critically reflect on my actions in retrospect, if necessary in dialogue with colleagues and other experts.
- I am aware of all aspects an inclusive vision entails and in which areas of my work this vision is already a reality and in which not (yet).

In general, high scores were given to this role by the service providers of the different countries. They look critically at their tasks and their functioning in order to constantly improve the service. The lowest score is 4.3 and the highest is 5. The service providers critically reflect on their actions when they are in class. Only the service provider of Slovenia gave a 3. The scores of the other countries are high (from 3.8 to 5). Also, high scores were given for critically reflecting on their actions in retrospect, if necessary, in dialogue with colleagues and/or other experts (from 4 to 5). The service providers are also aware of all aspects an inclusive vision entails and in which areas of their work this vision is already reality and in which not (yet). Scores were given from 3.8 to 5. Knowing their vision on inclusion is an important starting point for the implementation of truly inclusive education. This important role is always represented and interwoven with the other roles. Since the service providers of all countries fulfil this role well, a connection to the other roles is possible. Another reason for the high scores is that it is a role that is entirely in the hands of each and every person. There are no (or maybe only few) structural organisational obstacles that make it impossible to (self)reflect one performance.



## CENTRAL TASKS

In this section we wanted to find out where the focus lies and what the main tasks of the service provider are. To examine this, we asked two questions. In the first question, participants had to give an answer on a scale from one to four (1 = less important, 4 = most important).

**As a service provider I focus mainly on supporting:**

- The child
- The child's parents
- The school
- The community

In Belgium, they focus on the child first, followed by the school and an ex aequo between the parents and the community.

In France, the child is also the priority, followed by the child's parents, the school and finally the community.

Same for Austria, also here the child is the biggest focus. Followed by a tie between parents of the child and the school. And finally, the community.

In Finland the biggest focus is also on the child, followed by the parents and the school and lastly community.

Only in Portugal are the results different from the other countries. Here the focus is mainly on the community, followed by the parents, then the child and finally the school. This fits to the low score regarding the "voice of the child" question.

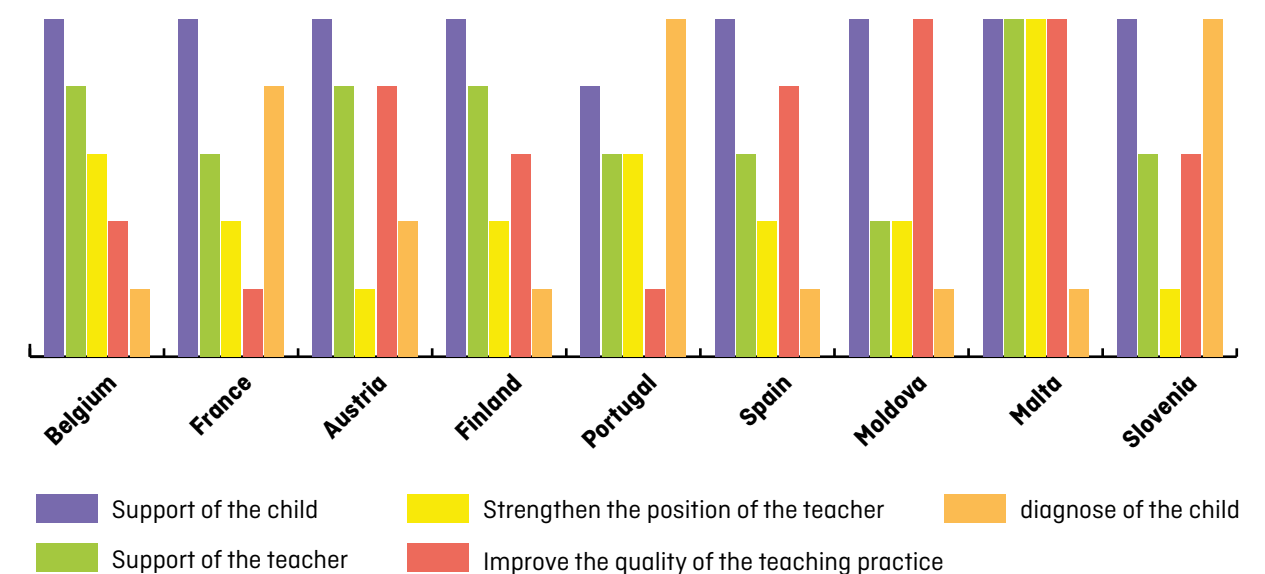
In general, the results show that the service provider mostly puts the child first. This is except for Portugal and Moldova. Additionally, the community is of least importance in the different countries except Portugal. The service providers should focus on working together with the school and other agencies to develop school-based capacity for assessment, evaluation and intervention of pupils (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

In the second part, the participants had to indicate what the main tasks of a service provider are. They had to rate each answer on a scale from one to five (1= less important, 5= most important). To get these results we looked at the average scores on each quote.

**My main tasks as a service provider are:**

- Diagnose of the child
- Support of the child
- Support of the teacher in his/her activities
- Strengthen the position of the teacher
- Improve the quality of the teaching practice

To summarize the results, a brief schematic representation of the results will be given first. This is in order to discuss them afterwards.



As a general conclusion we can say that the support of the child belongs to the most important task of a service provider. In all countries they put this task at number one except for Portugal. Portugal positioned the diagnosis of the child on one followed by the support of the child. In Belgium, Austria, Finland and Malta, the support of the teacher and his/her activities are ranked second. The least important task of the service provider differed across countries. Belgium, Finland, Spain, Moldova and Malta consider that the diagnosis of the child is the least part of their tasks.

In France and Portugal, the improvement of the quality of the teaching practice is considered the least important. Moreover, in Austria and Slovenia they find that strengthening the position of the teacher is the least important task of the service provider. In contrast to the previous question, the ranking of the other tasks differed greatly across countries. According to the results, the service

providers work directly with pupils. Important to have in mind is that this must be monitored down to the level of teacher planning and the development needs of the whole school (Blamires & Moore, 2004).

## IMPACT EVALUATION

Respondents had to evaluate the impact of the support here. They did this by indicating whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

**The service provider evaluates his/her work regarding:**

- The child
- His/her parents
- School
- Community



In Belgium, all participants agreed with the statement that the child and the school are represented in the evaluation of their work. This is also evident from the previous questions where the support of the child is considered the most important task. Also, eight out of nine participants felt that the child's parents are taken into account. Only five of nine respondents felt that the community is considered during his/her work.

In France, almost all participants think it is important to evaluate his/her work with respect for the school, the community and the child and his/her parents. Almost all participants gave high scores to the four statements.

Also, in Austria, people evaluate their work with regard of its impact on the child. Only three participants out of five indicated that they evaluate the impact of their work on the community. In addition, only two participants in each case indicated that they evaluate their work with regard of its impact on the parents or the school.

We also found similar results in Finland. These correspond to the other countries. All participants evaluate their work regarding the child, his/her parents and the school. Five out of six participants found the community important.

In Portugal, the child and the school are also mentioned as important factors for all participants. Three of the five participants consider the child's parents important and two participants consider the community important.

We can conclude that the service provider evaluates their work in relation to the child in all countries. We found this to be true across all countries and all participants. Only for the statement that the service provider evaluates their work in relation to society are conflicting results found across countries. Half of the participants in Belgium, Austria and Portugal consider this less important. While the majority of participants in France and Finland, and the four participants from Spain, Moldova, Malta and Slovenia see it as important.

## Recommendations

Any child may need support at some point during their school career. Different forms and levels of support are provided, which are designed to provide appropriate assistance to pupils who experience difficulties and have special educational needs at any point in their school career, so that they can develop and progress according to their abilities and be successfully integrated. We see many similarities but also significant differences across countries in how this support is provided. Putting the best bits by country together would lead to an ideal way of providing support but more importantly, raising awareness and thinking about how to provide support in the transition to more inclusive learning environments. An inclusion process is often a mosaic of people acting together. An important factor here is the idea that every stakeholder has a role and that every role is important. When everyone is involved and contributes their part, the inclusion process is very normal and very successful. It is very simple, and the only goal is the full participation of all children.

All countries in Europe are moving towards an inclusive educational landscape and together with different partners (schools, teachers, parents, children, service providers and other partners) we are looking for the best navigation route. We emphasise the importance of each partner in this process and equality as an underlying basis. Let this report be a unifying tool with which we can build further bridges.

The eight roles of the IIPRAD model serve as a tool for service providers to check which role they already fulfil well and which they do not yet. It is important that we do not assume that every support provider must fulfil all eight roles. There are

different types of service providers with different responsibilities. Not all eight roles are applicable for all kinds of service providers. E.g. those who provide their services outside the classrooms will never fulfil the team teacher role. In the analyses, we have indicated the roles on which certain countries could focus on more. An important note here is that less than ten service providers per country were surveyed, so we cannot conclude that all service providers in that country would have given the same answers. Nevertheless, it was an interesting exercise from which every country can learn something about the functioning of their own service providers and one can be inspired by other countries.

A powerful learning environment is one that supports a universal design approach, where a one-size-fits-all approach benefits everyone. Only structural and inclusive changes in teaching and curricula are the solution to creating an inclusive environment. All pupils will benefit fully from these structural and sustainable changes.

Schools must create a welcoming community that engages all its diversity in pupil learning services and the organisation by incorporating three key pillars: (1) inclusive culture, (2) implementing inclusive practices and (3) embedding inclusive policies (Emmers, 2017). It is important that different countries work together around this and think about how they support pupils with special needs in their countries. By engaging in dialogue about this, experiences can be exchanged, and we can learn from each other.

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## Appendix: Questionnaire

The data collected via this questionnaire will comply with the provisions of the relevant applicable data protection laws. The BEYOND Project Partners commit to carefully handling the privacy and data protection of natural persons whose personal data will be provided to them in this process. The data collected will be used strictly for purposes of research into the stakeholder networks that support effective transition to inclusive education. The BEYOND partners will take appropriate measures to ensure your personal data is not kept for longer than necessary for the intended purposes.

### INTRODUCTION

This questionnaire is initiated by a study, which is itself part of a project entitled BEYOND. "To Inclusive Education and BEYOND" (BEYOND) is a European project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, which aims to empower special schools and service providers supporting children with special needs, to facilitate the transition towards fully inclusive education.

This study will be a very strong tool to support policy reforms towards inclusive education. It will provide tools to reform, adapt or improve support services and their collaboration with other stakeholders, and ultimately facilitate the transition towards inclusive education.

This questionnaire will be one of the steps to building the study. Indeed, by questioning service providers involved in inclusive education, it will emphasise the role of the service provider in each country. Service providers in the field of education offer long or short-term services, that empower participants with fewer opportunities of support needs, or their families, to fully and successfully participate in the life of the local community in which they reside and the education environment.

Service providers normally are external partners that are not under the leadership of a school.

Those who are part of the internal organization support transition of these learners into mainstream schools.

Your answers to the questionnaire will be analysed and will help to build the framework of this study.

Thank you for taking the time to answer our questionnaire. We hope this will give us the opportunity to reflect upon the realities regarding inclusive education: What is the service provider trying to achieve? What kind of cooperation initiatives exist? Which different roles do service providers take on? ...

### 1. Information about yourself

#### Years in practice

- 0 - 9 years  
 10 - 20 years  
 21 years or more

#### Working in

- 1 - 5 schools  
 more than 5 schools

#### Professional education:

.....

### 2. Vision

#### What is the service provider trying to achieve?

1 = totally disagree    3 = do not agree, do not disagree    5 = totally agree  
 2 = disagree    4 = agree

	1	2	3	4	5
As a service provider I try to find an answer to a crisis situation.					
As a service provider I work on the inclusion of a pupil into the class.					
As a service provider I support the school in long-term planning.					
As a service provider is doing proactive problem-solving.					
As a service provider I work towards an inclusive culture at school (taking care of all pupils' needs).					

### 3. Cooperation

#### What kind of cooperation initiatives exist between stakeholders?

Please select which of the following statements you agree with (several answers are possible)

- As service provider I am working with the child.  
 As service provider I am working with the child's parents.  
 As service provider I am working with the teacher(s) and/or assistant(s).  
 As service provider I am working with the school board.  
 As provider I am working in a multidisciplinary context.  
 As service provider I am in a professional exchange with other service providers.  
 As service provider I am working with the leading team of the school.



## 4. Mode of operation

The following section lists different roles a support provider can take on.

For each statement, please select an answer between 1 (I totally disagree) and 5 (I totally agree).

1 = *totally disagree*      3 = *do not agree, do not disagree*      5 = *totally agree*  
2 = *disagree*              4 = *agree*

<b>The service provider represents the voice of the child.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
I represent what the child needs.					
I represent the rights of the child.					
I define how the support that the child needs can best be organized.					
I ensure, together with the teacher, that the child can participate as much as possible in the regular activities in the classroom.					
<b>The service provider is the assistant of the child.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
I know the support needs of the child in his/her specific context are (in the specific context and class).					
I offer practical support to the child.					
I watch over the socio-emotional well-being of the child.					
<b>The service provider is a classroom assistant/team teacher.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
In close cooperation with the classroom teacher, I support the whole class group, with extra attention for the child(ren) with specific needs.					
I sometimes take the final responsibility of the class so that the teacher can take on the role of supporter.					
I ensure that all pupil(s) can participate fully in the activities of the class.					

<b>The service provider is a widescreen partner.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
I can inspire the teacher(s) with my vision of inclusive education and support.					
I give information about other inclusive settings.					
I consult with teachers on the most appropriate approach to support the pupil.					
The teacher(s) and I mutually respect and acknowledge our strengths and talents.					
<b>The service provider is a connector.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
I focus on the communication between teacher(s) and parents.					
I focus on the communication between teacher(s) and child.					
I focus on the communication between teacher(s), parents and/or external partners.					
I contribute to existing consultation moments (e.g. parent contact).					
On the basis of well-established partnerships with the parents, teacher(s) and the child I can further improve the inclusion of the child.					
<b>The service provider is a member of the school team.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
I participate in school activities (conferences, school development process ...).					
I contribute my expertise on inclusion (and/or special needs support?) to the school team.					
<b>The service provider is a reflective practitioner.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
I look critically at my tasks and my functioning in order to constantly improve the service.					
I critically reflect on my actions when I am in class.					
I critically reflect on my actions in retrospect, if necessary, in dialogue with colleagues and/or other experts.					
I am aware of all aspects an inclusive vision entails and in which areas of my work this vision is already reality and in which not (yet).					

## 5. Central tasks

### What is the balance and focus of your main functions?

Please rate each answer from 1 to 4  
(1 = less important, 4 = most important).

As a service provider I focus mainly on supporting:

- The child
- The child's parents
- The school
- The community

Please rate each answer from 1 to 5  
(1 = less important, 5 = most important).

My main tasks as service provider are:

- Diagnose the child
- Support the child
- Support the teacher in his/her activities
- Strengthen the position of the teacher
- Improve the quality of the teaching practice

## 6. Impact evaluation

Indicate what fits (more answers possible)

The service provider evaluates his/her work regarding:

- The child
- His/her parents
- School
- Community

## About the BEYOND Project

'To Inclusive Education and BEYOND' (BEYOND) is a Erasmus+ funded project, which aims to empower special schools and service providers supporting children with special needs, to facilitate the transition towards fully inclusive education systems.

The project partnership is comprised of the following organisations:



**The European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)** is a wide European network which represents around 17.000 services across Europe and across disabilities. The main objective of EASPD is to promote the equalisation of opportunities for people with disabilities (through effective and high-quality service systems).



**Kehitysvammaisten Palvelusäätiö** - the Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability (KVPS) is a national service provider and developer with its roots set in parent-led governance. The foundation supports people with an intellectual disability and others with special needs as well as their families.



The **Centre de la Gabrielle** is a private, non-profit organisation founded in 1972. Today the Centre de la Gabrielle is an organisation with 300 employees who assist 500 children, young adults and adults with mental and/or intellectual disabilities.



**Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen** is a public authority and the official institution, recognised and funded by the Flemish department of education, responsible for the support of Catholic schools in Flanders. Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen represents approximately 1400 schools in primary education, more than 600 schools in secondary education and approximately 150 special needs schools.



**Chance B** was founded in 1986 as a 'self-help association' by parents with children and young people with disabilities as well as by teacher of the Giesdorf special school for children with intellectual disabilities. The aim of the association is 'to assist and support old, ill and people with disabilities so that they can live life to the full' in their communities.



**Centro de Educação para o Cidadão com Deficiência, C.R.L. - C.E.C.D. Mira Sintra** is a Cooperative for Social Solidarity, a non-profit organisation and was recognized by the Government as an organization of Public Utility. At the present, provides services for more than 2.000 people, since toddlers, children, youth and adults who need specialised support, due to problems in their development and/or deficits in academic, work or social performance.



**University College Leuven-Limburg (UCLL)** is renowned for the high quality of its teaching, research and regional development. UCLL's strong commitment to research ensures state-of-the-art training programmes for its 15,000 students. Within the teacher education department of UCLL a centre of expertise concerning education for all is active.

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