

# Education policy handbook : selected topics and practical activities

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**Kovač, Vesna**

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Vesna Kovač

# EDUCATION POLICY HANDBOOK

Selected topics and practical activities



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Associate Professor Aleksandar Mijatović, PhD

**Reviewers:**

Professor Jasminka Ledić, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Professor Vlatka Domović, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education

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# AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Education Policy Handbook is intended for the students of various study programmes that train different profiles of educational workers and offer an education policy course. The aim of education policy course is to train students for understanding of education policy concept as well as for interpretation and analysis of different education policy dimensions and processes in national and international context. Recently, we have been witnessing a number of significant changes and trends in education policy. COVID - 19 pandemic has caused education systems to cope with a number of changes in a way in which teaching occurs in schools as well as in other educational institutions. In numerous countries, curriculum reforms are being conducted on each education system's level. The results of PISA and other international standardized tests, which are being used to measure the quality of both student achievements and education systems quality, are being analyzed. Under these circumstances, there are no doubts that working on education policy course will be dynamic, interesting and filled with new information.

The handbook is formed as an interactive material that offers basic scientific and expert notions about the topic, guides students to study additional readings, encourages active and cooperative learning and initiates the conduction of a smaller-scale researches. It is composed of eight thematic chapters: introduction to education policy; educational system management; educational institution leadership policy; education policy on teachers and teaching profession; education policy on quality; education policy on funding and social dimension in education; education policy on curriculum issues and analysis of education policy.

This handbook will be used as a professional and methodological basis for the work on the course created as a *e-course*. Every chapter consists of several basic methodological elements.

- Key scientific and professional information about every topic/chapter will be offered to the students in the e-book form. Every chapter starts out with *key learning outcomes* that offer better orientation to the students as they are covering each topic as well as help them during exam preparation period. Each text will offer key notions to the students regarding the topic in question, after which they will be guided to study additional recommended readings. Moreover, prepared *reading guides* will serve the students for independent search as well as guided reading of recommended texts as they will help them to focus on finding key information on the topic. At the end of each chapter, several revision questions as well as list of both used references and recommended readings, is offered to the students.

- As a part of each topic, a short lecture will be held by the professor with the aim of introducing the topic as well as explaining guidelines for its coverage. The lecture will be either held in real time via available apps and tools for video conferences or audio/video recordings of lectures.

- As a part of every chapter, students will create a *glossary* together, which will help them to better understand key or less familiar terms found in the chapter. In this way, students will actively participate in the creation of database that will serve as an additional source of study for everyone.

- In each topic, students will find several different types of *practical assignments* that will help them to evaluate their performance during text interpretation, gather additional information or for the conduction of a smaller-scale study. The realization of the smaller practical assignments will be facilitated by preselected *examples* and *illustrations*. The way in which practical assignments are designed encourages students to present their own solutions in various methodological forms, from filling out attached forms, creating shorter written reports, posters or preparing shorter audio/video presentations. Detailed instructions are provided for every practical activity. Students will not have to complete all practical assignments. The number as well as method of assignment selection will be explained in more detail during classes. Results of the work on the chosen practical assignments will be scored and graded during the final exam. Students' work on various activities will serve as a basis for active learning and continuous preparation for the final exam.

- During the coverage of each topic, forums for group and individual consultations, where students will be presented with an opportunity to report on their progress in reading and gathering additional information as well as receive feedback, suggestions or help regarding potential issue, will be organized.

- Presentations of each assignment will be organized as a part of each lesson. Depending on the type of practical assignment, presentations of written works or posters, oral presentations in real time or in the form of shorter audio/video recorded lectures, will be held. Students will receive detailed feedback on the quality of their work from the lecturer. Additionally, they will be presented with an opportunity to provide feedback on their group members' work.

This course is, due to its content, appropriate for working with students from different countries as it enables topic coverage from different perspectives: education policy of student's home country, Croatian education policy and global (international) perspective. A list of methodological recommendations for quality learning in teaching in higher education was taken into account. Furthermore, high degree of active and cooperative learning is ensured.

The course is appropriate for *peer learning* where the results of both individual and group practical assignments simultaneously serve as a source of study for other students. The course has a strong research character due to the fact that learning outcomes are realized via two graded tasks (assessment exercises) structured in the form of two smaller-scale studies. Almost a third of the time is spent in teaching organized on the basis of problem-based learning (PBL), as presented in lesson on education policy analysis. Students will continuously develop communicative and presentational skills by participating in discussions and presenting created tasks and works.

Ultimately, it is important to present several information regarding students' responsibilities as well as their workload for this course. Education policy course was designed as a 5 ECTS course which includes around 150 hours of active student's work during its duration. Moreover, during each lesson, it is planned that the students participate in a 2-hour long online class during which teacher's' brief introductory lessons as well as students' presentations followed by discussions will be conducted. Students will design two extensive graded assignments. They are expected to spend around 30 hours of work in order to complete each of them. During every lesson, students will choose and create several practical assignments whose scope should not exceed 10 hours of work per lesson, i.e., a total of 60 hours of work during the duration of the course. Active work on practical assignments also serves as a form of preparation for the final exam. Final course grade will be given based on the scores of two graded assignments (30% per assignment) as well as final exam score (40%). Detailed information in regard to monitoring and grading will be provided in the curriculum of the course.

I wish education policy students good luck and a lot of success in the *Education Policy* course!

# 1

## *INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATION POLICY*



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able:

- » to list key determinants of theoretically-practical construct “education policy”;
- » to describe key determinants of education policy global trends with special emphasis on identification of neoliberalism’s presence in education;
- » to describe international organizations’ actions in the field of education policy;
- » to identify and describe actual education policy topics, projects and programs at both national and international level.

### 1.1. Introduction

Education is becoming a popular topic of public debates. There are no individuals who are not interested in issues related to education, i.e., education policy from certain perspective. Moreover, education workers, present or former students and pupils, their parents, employers, politicians, university professors and researchers or taxpayers discuss education and education policy with great interest. Simultaneously, numerous questions are being raised: in which way do the educational authorities make decisions on education; are those decisions adequate or do they need revision, are the teachers paid sufficiently; do the students and pupils gain essential knowledge and skills during education. It is sufficient to look at the newspapers and the internet portals’ headlines to conclude which topics bring the most attention. These are some of them in the recent period: are schools and colleges ready for new school year in regards to epidemiological situation caused by COVID-19 pandemic; did the educational authorities prepare recommendations for the organization of teaching; did the teachers master methodical and technical skills needed for teaching in online environment; are the students ready to take on state exam. These are all questions encountered in the education policy domain. Yet, what exactly is education policy? Who studies it? How is it created and conducted? Answers to these and numerous other questions can be found in this handbook, with special emphasis being put on both key and global education policy topics. However, at first, it is necessary to answer the question what education policy actually is, which is the topic of this guidebook’s first chapter.

### 1.2. What is education policy?

The term *education policy* is, in a different way, not only mentioned and used in daily, but also in professional and political discourse. Sometimes, it depends on the context in which it is mentioned and sometimes on the subjects who are either involved in this field, or they speak, study and write about it.

**Practical assignment 1.1: Glossary related to Lesson 1**

*Individually:* State how you would define the term *education policy*. Write down one or two sentence in which you are going to illustrate how the term „education policy” is used in public discourse (e.g., „Education policy in Croatia does not ensure clear connection between education and labor market; ... The most important thing is that the Ministry of Science and Education and I as its minister are responsible not only for conducting education policies in Croatia, but also for the creation of certain attitudes and policies, and in that regard, there should be no dilemma about who is in charge of education policy in Croatia “; „Reform of Croatian education system can only be conducted in pair with strategically designed education policy that needs to gradually...”). Identify what is the meaning of the term *education policy* in each of the given examples.

*In group:* Think about the presented examples. Identify similarities and differences in the term’s meaning and scope in different contexts. Let’s create a small glossary related to Education policy course!

In the literature, different interpretations of the term (education) policy can be singled out (Colebatch, 2002). According to some, it is a field that seeks to organize society in its most general definition, i.e., organizing certain societies’ parts, institutions or projects as well as relations between them – in this case, education. Education policy is also interpreted as a (previous) statement on activities and attitudes of future government (or administration at certain lower institutional level) regarding education issues. Additionally, it can also be a statement on government/administration’s values and aspirations in education. Education policy is also seen as (educational) authorities’ activities focused on achieving common goals in the education area, purposeful directing of activities in education as well as presence of systematic activity form that addresses certain problem (in education area). Moreover, it also represents a term for standardization and articulation of practice in education: “this is how we work here”. Education policy is often interpreted as a constant power struggle between various interested parties in education. The last approach matches the translation of the english word *politics*, whereas previous approaches match the english word *policy* more. The focal point of education policy is, above all, its content, the process of its creation and implementation as well as preconditions and context in which it occurs. Term is both used in singular and plural (Spasenović, 2019): when talking about education policies, the term usually refers to a group of different interventions and actions that lead to the realization of one policy (e.g., education policies regarding teachers and teaching profession can include various interventions ranging from decision-making regarding teachers’ salaries, defining teachers’ working conditions to defining requirements needed for teachers’ career advancement); when talking about the term in singular, it most frequently marks policies’ totality (in this case education policy regarding teachers and teaching profession). Education policy is present as either document or text (e.g., laws or strategies that organize education area), discourse, practice or process. Although, everything mentioned just scratches the surface of the debates regarding education policy, for the purpose of this course, focus will be narrowed to the following topics:

- » Observing and describing decisions and priorities that educational authorities make regarding education matters in particular country (national and local level) and relevant international institutions (EU, OECD, UNESCO – international level);
- » Identifying common system of values, principles and common activity form, according to which decisions regarding education, at national and international level, are made (e.g., inclusive education policy);
- » Identifying and describing the ways of implementing decisions made at the school (institution), teacher (practitioners) and student (users) level;
- » Identifying attitudes and interpersonal relationships between different subjects/actors during decision-making and implementation process regarding education matters.

Even though experts of various profiles (policy analytics, government officials working in education department, researchers in the field of education etc.) can study education policy, it is important to ensure that various profiles of education workers (practitioners) become competent at identifying, understanding and analyzing education policy. In this way, experts-practitioners can gain better understanding of their own role during policy making and implementation process as well as take proactive stance based on the expert arguments in the mentioned process, especially during public debates and consultations. Apart from that, in their own daily pedagogical work, they can appropriately implement decisions from the education policy domain by taking care of end-users' well-being – pupils and students.

Education policy is seen as a part of public policy, which means that the focus is on the observation of the things that (educational) authorities do (or do not do) in order to organize, coordinate, make decisions, solve issues or conduct other activities in education department. It is important to identify the presence of three key elements in that context:

- » *Authority*: The assumption that authorized subject responsible for certain area of activity exists;
- » *Expertise*: Policy presumes knowledge in problem area as well as the way of acting in that area;
- » *System (order)*: Policy presumes introducing of a system and consistency, formula which is applied in certain scenarios (e.g., legal text).

Education policy trends can be followed through changes and initiatives in several (strongly connected and intertwined) fundamental thematic areas: education system management policy; policy on teachers and teaching profession; policy on leadership of educational institutions; policy on quality in education; funding and social dimension in education policy as well as policy of national and school curricula. Additionally, it is necessary

to follow in which way the dominant education values pass through the leading authorities' public actions: this refers to the imbuing of initiatives through which excellence, freedom, efficiency, responsibility and equality are advocated. Education policy can also be observed through individual (institutional) education system levels by following events as they occur, ranging from pre-school to higher education level.

### 1.3. Who participates in education policy?

One of the more frequent topics of academic discussions concerns education policy triangle, which is made of three key groups of actors responsible for (the creation) of education policy: policy at the state level (most frequently observed through the actions of line ministry), educational practice (observed through the actions of educational institutions and educational employees, including teachers' union) as well as research (observed through the actions of both university and other research centers that study education). There is a general agreement on the following thesis: policy at the state level in the context of (creating) education policy represents an overemphasized part of the triangle, (educational) practice is neither sufficiently studied nor involved in policy-making, while the results of the studies in education are insufficiently used (Kovač, 2007). Other actors also play an important role within or outside of the above-mentioned triangle. Therefore, the role of the so-called intermediators in education policy (*policy brokers*), who are responsible for higher efficiency during the dissemination of the results acquired in the studies on education, is mentioned (in the same matter, different authors differentiate the influence, consequences, use and value of the studies for users – education policy and practice). Even though there are no systematic studies on whose aim is to identify who, and in which way, acts as a policy broker in education policy, authors are starting to notice increasingly stronger influence of media, political lobbyists, unprofitable organizations and individuals (so called *political entrepreneurs*) who are trying to reach out to the targeted users of the educational studies' results. However, it seems that neither researchers, nor the studies' results users (education policy and practice) pay enough attention to the intermediary's role. This discussion is further expanded by the idea of introducing knowledge management in education policy. Moreover, the discussion about the levels of knowledge's value is shown as particularly important (for detailed information on this discussion, see Kovač, 2007): subjective value (how much will someone pay for the information), objective value (what would the decision be without that information) and normative value (what the use of this information contributes to). Through the analysis of different intermediating models in education policy, it is deduced that politicians most frequently use the following models: linear model (policy development stems from the studying of the topic recommended by the politicians); problem-solving model (studies fill in the gaps in knowledge, followed by actions and decisions); political model (researches justify the decisions made on the other basis, instead of scientific); tactical model (studies represent

an excuse to avoid decisions); enlightenment model (studies gradually encourage the public to familiarize themselves with the problem as well as to identify adequate decisions); intellectual model, i.e., model oriented on cooperative research (research with other intellectual activities – journalism, history, etc. – improves the quality of the discussion on public policy issues).

#### **Practical graded task 1: Analysis of newspapers' content on education policy**

*Individually:* In media (newspapers, internet portals, line ministry's official website, etc.), search for information on actual topics, programs or projects regarding education policy that are being conducted in your home country. Criteria that may help you to recognize whether you have chosen appropriate topic (relevant for education policy) are: topic that is in the focus of educational authorities that are responsible for education system; topic that causes either strong reaction or activity of the implementation structure (teachers, students, pupils, parents, etc.); topic that points out towards more general changes that are expected by applying certain decision in educational practice. The examples of these possible topics are: conduction of State Exam; introducing civic education, teachers' protests, etc. Prepare short review of gathered and studied information on actual topics, programs or projects regarding education policy. Try to identify the following information: the description of the chosen topic's characteristics; which actors participate in the discussions on this topic; which roles are taken by certain actors; do the all actors agree in the way in which the policy is being interpreted or conducted.

*Task duration:* 30 hours

*Presentation form:* written report (5 pages)

*Deadline:* 2 months

*Grading:* 30%

*Note:* more detailed instructions for this exercise will be provided

### **1.4. Creation and implementation of education policy**

Education policy functions as a cycle, which consists of several phases that need to be observed and interpreted independently: phase of determining goals and priorities, decision-making phase, implementation phase, evaluation phase and revision phase. Particular attention is caused by the first and the third phase, during which the focus is set on observing relationships between the actors who participate in the creation and implementation of education policy (Kovač, 2007). Some of the most frequent critics observed during education policy's interpretation are directed towards inadequate actor's participation in both first and third phase: key decisions are often made without consultations with those who will directly conduct the abovementioned decisions (education employees). Education policy's creation and implementation does not happen in isolation in comparison with the rest of socio-political, economical or cultural movement, so it is important to monitor and understand the broader context in which education policy occurs. Experts agree on the fact that even well-constructed policies can turn out unsuccessful if they are not implemented appropriately, or if necessary preconditions for its implementation are not created.

Nowadays, the *policy ecology* metaphor is often used for the purposes of analyzing education policy, i.e., *education policy ecology* concept is created (e.g., Weaver-Hightower, 2008). The concept tries to point out towards education policy's complexity as well as the presence of high number of relations that can have an effect on education policy's creation, sustainability, creation failure or implementation. Ecology in natural sciences usually refers to observation of relationship system between individual organisms as well as between organisms and their environment. In policy context, either individual policies or policy group, which exist in certain environment where they are created or implemented, either in textual or discourse form, are being observed. In other words, policy ecology consists of policies along with its supporting texts (e.g., laws), history, people, places, groups, traditions, economical and social conditions, institutions, relationships that either influence it or it influences them. Additionally, *education policy ecosystem* concept is used, which is defined as the environments within an education system in which different policies interact with one another (OECD, 2019). Policy ecosystems are comprised of core policy priorities for improvement, the existing context of the system in which policies interact, key actors (through their engagement and capacities) and the key systemic arrangements needed to make policies feasible and effective. Policy priorities for a particular country generally reflect: 1) key challenges (areas where the system is underperforming and which have been identified as points of concern, such as a high level of student dropout or unemployment); 2) key system-specific contextual issues to keep in mind (such as demographic change or development of new regional or national industries); and 3) systemic objectives (the short-, mid- and long-term goals defined by government administrations). Context consists of general political, economic, social and cultural circumstances as well as existing education system's structure and efficiency in certain country. Regarding actors, it is important to identify which individuals or groups are either involved or interested for certain policy, which roles do they as well as what is their position in that context. It is particularly important to identify which actors are the most influential in the context of the observed policy.

Regarding relationship between actors, it is important to identify the nature of their relationship, for example, whether the actors are in either competitive, cooperative, predation or symbiotic type of relationship. Actors need to be engaged effectively in education policy processes, feel a sense of ownership of the process and have willingness and the necessary capacity to make change and implement the reform. Regarding the process, the authors mention, for example, emergence, entropy, adaptation, conversion, fragmentation, succession, conservation, anticipation, etc. The policy process, is created and constructed, and it is always already manipulated by those with the greatest social, political, cultural, and economic resources. It is crucial to ensure that the discussion between different actors is exclusively based on data, studies' results and evaluations along with other key indicators. It can be concluded that education policy ecology metaphor provides a framework for asking

broader questions about the many contexts and influences swirling around a policy process. Who are the necessary and influential actors? What relationships exist among actors? Within what environments and structures do they all operate? What processes are they dealing with, reacting to, or creating? For policy implementation to be successful, institutional alignment needs to be ensured, aiming for a shared long-term vision and planning for policy monitoring or evaluation.

### **Practical assignment 1.2: Education policy ecosystem**

*In tandems or small groups:* Identify education policy's actual topic, program or project. Identify key education policy's actors as well as their roles and interpersonal relationships. Describe wider education policy ecosystem for particular education policy example.

*Task duration:* 2 hours

*Presentation form:* poster

*Deadline:* a week from assignement

## **1.5. Global trends in education policy**

It is important to note that international actors (e.g., EU; OECD, UNESCO, WB), exert strong influence on education policy, due to which individual country's education policy can strongly reflect actual international, i.e., global trends and values.

### **Practical assignment 1.3: Review of international organizations interested in education policy**

*Individually:* Choose one international organization or association whose work scope includes education policy. Access its official website and single out key information on its structure, purpose and aims related to education and education policy, key projects or programs, a list of key documents and publications related to education, etc. Prepare a presentation.

*In group:* Compare and single out similarities and differences of individual organization's purpose, approaches, contents, working methods, projects, programs and other aspects of their actions in education policy domain. Be prepared to take part in oral discussion.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Form of presentation:* Power point (cca 10 slides) or poster.

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignement

During the analysis of similarities and differences between individual international organizations, it is most frequently emphasized that both World Bank and OECD view education from the economic perspective, observing education and individuals as one of the factors contributing to global economy's development, while UNESCO strongly advocates humanistic approach to it as its promotes values such as human right to education, social

justice, inclusion, education for sustainable development as well as reducing the percentage of world poverty.

**Example: OECD's education policy (OECD, 2019)**

OECD's education policy is explicitly defined in recent publications related to education. Therefore, it is emphasized that the key goal is to formulate and implement policies that will improve economic and social well-being, i.e., empower people to fulfil and strengthen their potentials. OECD's policy is based on an idea that more educated individuals can contribute more in the creation of more participative and trusting societies, report better health, and are, in general, more satisfied with life. Moreover, key trends and challenges are: evolving skills' needs, demographic change and increasing system complexity. For example, as a result of social migrations, in numerous countries, student and pupil population also becomes heterogenous and multicultural. This implies rethinking the role of the school and the community in providing the learning environments required for the effective integration of students. It also poses questions on how to best activate the skills of migrants and other at-risk populations and how they could be developed further, to facilitate their integration into the labor market and society. Persisting policy priorities to promote equity and quality in education include: bridging performance gaps due to socio-economic background (among students from different population sub-groups and from different regions and among boys and girls); and increasing access to and quality of early childhood education and care. Emerging policy priorities include: integrating immigrant students into the education system; strengthening student performance for all students; and preventing grade repetition and delaying tracking.

In order to better understand similarities and differences in the way in which global trends in education are reflected in particular country, Spasenović (2019) summarized key notions related to education policies' transfer, reminding us on two key forms in which education policies' transfer occurs: policy borrowing and policy lending. The meaning of the first term (policy borrowing) indicates the fact that educational authorities only search for fitting model or solution that will be adopted and adapted to the national context, whereas the second term (policy lending) implies that international actors or governments of individual countries proactively offer or impose certain reform solutions or interventions to the other country. While describing education policy global area's actions, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) argue that global education policy is framed, created, expanded and conducted differently compared to the situation in which individual national states hold central authority over it. Therefore, the process of *education policy's diffusion* can be noticed in global context as a number of countries establish or conduct similar policies (e.g., lifelong learning policy, inclusive education policy, etc.). In the same matter, it is important to identify primary reasons why educational authorities make certain policy: for example, these can be, political changes in the country, dissatisfaction with the position in the international student's testing, dissatisfaction of certain groups interested in education, etc. Additionally, which education policy's segment will be adopted, should also be identified: goals, strategies, contents, methods or something else. Diffusion of education policy can both be successful or unsuccessful, depending on the extent to which the adopted segment gets adapted to the context in which it is getting implemented, i.e., are all needed preconditions for certain segment's adoption and adaption met.



### **EU's strategic documents on education policy: Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020')**

In their Europa 2020 strategic document and accompanying policy reports (European Commission (EC), 2010, 2011, 2012 & 2013) European Commission has clearly highlighted the goals which it wants to achieve up to 2020: 1. making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; 2. improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; 3. Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; 4. Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training. It defines education as a key area of action for the realization of the defined goals. It is emphasized that ...in the period up to 2020, the primary goal of European cooperation should be to support the further development of education and training systems in the Member States which are aimed at ensuring: a) the personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens; b) sustainable economic prosperity and employability, whilst promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue. The periodic monitoring of progress towards a set objective provides an essential contribution towards evidence-based policy making.

### **Additional information: On global education policy and neoliberalism (Kanić & Kovač, 2017)**

Analysis of numerous authors' papers, who contributed to the studying of education policy, shows that neoliberal principles, i.e., market mechanisms and principles (possibility of choice, competition, decentralization), liberalization (passing more lenient laws), privatization of education sector as well as managerial management, are becoming focal points of the majority of the global reforms.

The occurrence of neoliberalism in education is manifested in various way, but it can be stated that it is mostly manifested in redefining of the state's role as well as introducing market mechanisms, with its purpose being improving efficiency of education systems around the world. It is considered that neoliberalism reforms' fundamental goal is to restructure education in a way in which it would contribute to the economic development and growth, i.e., to increase industries' competitiveness as well as improve individual's quality of life. As an example of manifestation of neoliberal's occurrence in education, public-private partnerships are particularly prominent, as they represent a recent phenomenon that encompasses a higher number of different neoliberal principles and processes. Public – private partnership phenomenon is characterized by common governments and other partners' actions with the aim of improving educational services as well as national educational policies. They are defined as a long-term, cooperative, institutional agreements between public and private sector, whose aim is to realize different set goals. While public sector refers to the government, private sector includes different profitable and non-profitable partners, including international organizations. All types of public-private partnerships share the following characteristics: partnerships are formal in their core; they include private sector partners; they imply the development of long-term relationship as well as risk sharing among partners; they are focused on outcomes.

Moreover, these are six most frequently mentioned partnership types whose application is seen in numerous countries: infrastructural initiatives, contract education, private school management, vouchers, philanthropic initiatives as well as professional service and support.

- Infrastructural initiatives refer to long-term governments' contracts with private sector which are focused on financing, building, maintaining as well as managing of public schools' infrastructure and private renting of public schools' objects;
- Contract education refers to publicly funded education conducted by either private schools or private subjects. Additionally, it can include conduction of specialized curriculum or teaching services;
- Private school management implies contractual agreement which obliges private sector partners to manage public schools or particular education process' aspect;

- Vouchers imply financial sums (scholarships, subventions and tax reliefs) that enable students (especially low socioeconomic status ones) to attend accredited private schools and can be both publicly or privately funded;
- Philanthropic initiatives include partnerships where private subjects offer help in the form of scholarships, uniforms, teacher bonuses, expendable materials, furniture, equipment and sponsorships, while the most emphasized ones are school adoption programs;
- Professional services and support (capacity strengthening) represent private sectors' initiatives that refer to public schools' teachers training and professional development, curriculum's creation or improvement, school performance's evaluation, educational assessments and additional services such as school meals and transport.

## 1.6. International assessments/studies in education and education policy

It was previously mentioned that OECD stands behind one of the most known international student achievements' assessment, namely PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment). Study was started during the beginning of 2000, with the aim of gathering internationally comparable data on fifteen year old students' knowledge and skills (more information about the study can be found on OECD's official website: <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/>). PISA aims to assess the degree of youth's preparation for complete and active participation in the society during their obligatory education. Additionally, PISA tries to find the answer to the questions such as: how well does the school prepare students for life; are they capable to analyze, logically conclude and efficiently communicate their ideas; are they able to study and gain new skills during their whole life; will they be able to adapt to new jobs and environments; will they be able to solve problems which they encounter for the first time – knowledge and skills they have gained in school will become "obsolete" during that moment; will they be able to cope with rapid changes, recognize and use new technologies' potential, live in connected, complex world as active and responsible citizens, etc. Apart from assessing, within PISA framework, numerous contextual data is gathered via uniquely designed survey for principals, teachers, students and parents. The following data is obtained: students and their family backgrounds, including their economic, social and cultural capital; aspects of schools, such as the quality of the schools' human and material resources, public and private management and funding, decision-making processes, staffing practices, and the school's curricular emphasis and extracurricular activities offered; context of instruction, including institutional structures and types, class size, classroom and school climate, and science activities in class; aspects of learning, including students' interest, motivation and engagement; parents' perceptions of and involvement in their child's school, their support for learning at home, school choice, their child's career expectations, and their background (immigrant/non-immigrant) etc. This data, based on analysis, serves to determine which factors influence students' achievements as well as to create recommendations that policy-

makers could use while planning policy decisions and reforms, with the aim of improving their education systems' quality, efficiency and equity. Seven assessment cycles, with more than eighty participating countries (Croatia participates since 2006), have been conducted since 2000 until today.

#### **Practical assignment 1.4: OECD PISA project**

*Individually:* Find data about PISA conduction on OECD's official website. Study the questionnaires which are used for obtaining data on reading, scientific and mathematic literacy. Identify the way in which the questions are formulated. Find out the results which your home country's students scored on PISA testing. How are the results interpreted? How can the results be used for policy-making in education? Prepare presentations.

*Task duration:* 5 hours

*Form of presentation:* Power point (cca 10 slides) or poster.

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignement

Apart from PISA testing, other international studies, whose results can serve during policy-making, are carried out (e.g., OECD's TIMMS, PILRS, TALIS projects, etc.)

#### **Example: OECD TALIS (Teaching, Assessment and Learning International Survey)**

TALIS represents a study on learning and teaching organized by OECD. TALIS is the first international study in whose core lies learning environment and teachers' working conditions in schools. TALIS 2018, the third cycle of OECD's international TALIS study, enabled the creation of one of the richest database and indicators on teachers' professionalism so far. The aim of this study is to improve data's availability on teachers, learning, teaching as well as teachers' influence on learning and students in order to help participating countries in evaluation and education policy's development that promotes conditions required for efficient and quality teaching and learning. The following data is obtained in TALIS: teachers' working conditions and characteristics, school management (principal's profile); teachers' education and training; evaluation of teachers' performance and feedback that teachers get about their performance; teachers' beliefs, attitudes and teaching methods; teachers' self-efficiency, their job satisfaction and school and classroom atmosphere in which teachers work. Result analysis reveals to the participating countries the following data: are teachers sufficiently prepared to face various challenges in schools; in which way can evaluation or awarding teachers' performance support quality teaching and professional development; how can school management practices be improved in order to achieve better school and students' results; in which way can policy-makers ensure that resources invested in teachers' professional development have positive influence on their work. Results can be used in the following way: data (evaluation results) in individual country as well as average results within TALIS as well as OECD and EU's framework are identified; data between individual countries are compared; data obtained in individual country in regards to certain specific demographic characteristics are explained; recommendations that educational authorities or individual schools and their principals can use in policy-making that can improve learning and teaching are explained. More data on TALIS can be found on OECD's official website (<https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/>), as well as on the website of the organization responsible for TALIS' national conduction. In Croatia, National Centre for External Evaluation of Education is responsible for TALIS' conduction. (<https://www.ncvvo.hr/medunarodna-istrazivanje/talis/>).

## Revision questions

- » List *education policy* and *public education policy*'s determinants.
- » Describe key global education policy trends.
- » List key information from EU's strategical documents on education and education policy.
- » Describe couple of actual education policy's topics, programs or projects in your home country.
- » Describe "education policy triangle" concept as well as the most frequent discussions about it.
- » Describe key international organizations' actions related to education policy.
- » List couple of examples of public-private partnerships in education policy domain.
- » Describe PISA and TALIS project's key determinants and explain their importance in education policy context.
- » Find and comment PISA results in your home country.

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# 2

## *EDUCATION POLICY ON MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, students will be able:

- » to identify education system management structure in their home country;
- » to single out indicators of certain education system management's characteristics in their home country (realized degree of centralization, decentralization, school autonomy, etc.);
- » to identify and comment different local self-government unit's roles, tasks, strategies, initiatives and mechanisms within the institution management's framework at local level;
- » to find and present results of studies on education system's management efficiency.

### 2.1. Introduction

One of the education policy's priorities in numerous countries is related to finding out efficient management models in complex and dynamic education system. System's complexity is especially seen while observing the number and diversity of individual actors who are authorized, responsible or interested in decision-making process regarding education issues at different education system management levels (national, local and institutional) as well as established relations between them. One of the key questions raised is: which actors, at what levels, should be held accountable for which outcomes. It is known that correct management model, that would function efficiently in every education system, does not exist. It is considered that „ strength of the alignment, the involvement of actors and the processes involved in governance and reform” makes particular model good (Burns and Köster, 2016). One of the most important responses to the increasing complexity of education system is decentralization: allowing local authorities, school boards and schools a greater degree of freedom to respond to diverse and local demands.

The most frequently discussed topics that are being analyzed in the context of particular education system's management policy are: what is the education management's structure (which actors participate in management and at which level), what are certain management bodies' responsibilities and powers during making key decision on education matter; what is the relationship between management's centralization and decentralization; how is school autonomy conducted and what is the teachers' as well as other subjects' role in education system's management. Recently, both regional and local government as well as self-governments' role in managing of educational institutions is analyzed with more attention, with the focus being on concrete role, tasks and measures that are being taken at that management level with the aim of ensuring education achievements' efficiency.

**Practical assignment 2.1: Glossary related to Lesson 2**

*Individually:* Indicate any word, term or concept in text you are not familiar with (eg, management, governance, decentralisation...). Let's create a small glossary related to Lesson 2!

**2.2. Education system management**

Authors define key management functions, i.e., the most specific definition of the term “education system management” differently. It is most commonly defined as “harmonization of human, material and financial potential in education in order to optimally achieve school system’s goals” (Staničić, 2006). In regards to the nature of its role in education system, it can be observed as administrative (influences educational institution’s organization and functioning – creating legal and other premises for their functioning) as well as professional/ pedagogical (influences the quality of pedagogical processes in educational institutions). Management is furthermore defined by three starting points: who, where and how they manage. At an operative level, it is realized via national, regional or local institutions and bodies as well as management bodies at the educational institution’s level. Approach to management is observed through monitoring powers and responsibilities for making certain types of decisions regarding education issues which are in legal documents assigned to management bodies at various management levels.

**An example of education system management structure in Croatia in regards to levels and key actors (Staničić, 2006)**

MANAGEMENT LEVEL	MANAGEMENT BODIES AND INSTITUTIONS
National level	Parliament - Parliamentary Board of Education Ministry of Science and Education Agency for Teachers Training and Education
Regional level	State Administration at regional (county) level Administrative Departments for Education and Social Activities State administration units for administrative supervision
Local level	City Departments for Education Municipal Education Service
Institutional level	Administrative Board School Board Principal Teachers' council Parents' council, etc.

**Practical assignment 2.2: education system management structure in various countries**

*Individually:* Identify management bodies accountable for education issues at national, local/regional and institutional level in your country. Make a poster.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

## 2.3. Centralization and decentralization

International comparative studies, focused on education system management, most frequently obtain data that serve as a basis for discussion on country's attitude towards education: education system's centralization, i.e., decentralization as well as matters regarding the degree of school autonomy (EC, 2013; OECD, 2012; Rado, 2010). Centralized management is based on the idea that state (individuals, groups or institutions), based on their abilities and broad knowledge, can make the best decisions. In this matter, decision-making and implementation processes are most frequently firmly controlled until education's operative level, i.e., schools and classes. Governments in every country set up the overall framework that shapes their education system and defines its operation. They determine the organization and structure of the system (e.g., years of compulsory education, students' age of entry in school, grade levels, courses offered, and teachers' qualifications), who is allowed to provide compulsory education (public and/or private actors), what choices of schools are available to parents and students, what mechanisms are in place to finance education, its overall goals, as well as the standards by which providers are held accountable (OECD, 2012).

It should be emphasized that trends focused on the strengthening of decentralization process, i.e., strengthening of school autonomy, are clearly identified in policy documents. Even though decentralization can be generally observed as a transfer of authority, i.e., decision-making right, from state to lower management levels, while in practice, different decentralization forms can be identified, depending on the intensity and amount of control regarding certain types of decision, held by the state educational authorities. The fundamental purpose of advocating for the conduction of education's decentralization is not only connected with an idea of improving education's accessibility, its services' quality, ensuring local supervision on institution's performance and democratizing decision-making process, but also to achieve appropriate level of organizational, financial and professional autonomy of educational services' providers. Additionally, it is assumed that decision made locally, will be more appropriate for the specific context in which the schools operate.



It is known that particular national education systems do not reflect only the characteristics of centralized, i.e., decentralized system, followed by the fact that the present degree of decentralization is a consequence of socio-political, economical and other factors' influence to which certain national system was exposed over time. Furthermore, experts do not strive towards universal interpretation of both systems' pros and cons, as the action plan regarding education system's degree of (de)centralization depends on specific national context as well as desirable development guidelines. There are certain circumstances and situations where centralized management model is justified as it is illustrated by the following cases: a) radical changes, e.g., system's modernization along with the use of powerful state interventions or controlled guiding of foreign resources; b) strengthening of national identity, preservation of one nation's language, culture and tradition; c) reducing social inequalities in the society by applying state intervention measures; d) maintaining integrity or togetherness in a situation of state fragmentation and e) logical restrictions in decentralization processes' influence such as country size (Rado, 2010). Second group of possible reasons, due to which it is not advisable to support decentralization, refers to a situation in which justified distrust in professional capacities, i.e., authorities' competency to make quality decision at local level exists, or in situations where clear strategy of education reforms, which strives to conduct decentralization of education system management, does not exist. It is expected from the state to protect issues of public interest, supervise taxpayer's money-spending as well as prevent irregularities in working performance of different state institutions.

## **2.4. School (institutional) autonomy**

Since the 1980s, the transfer of decision-making power and responsibility to the local or school level has become an increasingly important policy discussion guiding school reform in various countries. It is possible to track the presence of school autonomy characteristic in national system with regards to individual decision types from the available international reports that offer the display of education management matrix (EC/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013). In this matter, key decision types which are made in education (according to agreed decision-making taxonomy) are connected together with subjects who participate in decision-making which leads to the creation of the following groups:

(a) Decisions regarding human resources (with regards to principal election, determining his duties and authority as well as teacher employment);

(b) Decisions regarding financial resources (using public resources for capital expenditure, maintenance expenses, expenses for acquiring ICT and other types of equipment as well as collecting funds from private sources);

(c) Decisions regarding teaching and learning issues (determining the content of required and elective curriculum parts, choosing teaching methods, textbooks, grouping of students as well as student assessment criteria).

Degree of school's autonomy is determined with regards to school's legal right (school's management bodies) to make decisions, which can be expressed at three levels: *full autonomy* (if the schools have the right to independently make decisions within the framework defined by the national educational authorities, i.e., legislation), *restricted autonomy* (e.g., situations in which schools make decisions based on the options defined at higher authority level) and *complete lack of autonomy* (which means that decisions are made by higher level authorities, while the schools can state their opinions during certain decision-making phases). It is important to state that only general description of decision—making practice, according to agreed indicators, is presented in these reports. Critics of increased school autonomy maintain that granting more freedom to schools tends to politicize staffing decisions, increase inequality between regions, and atomize standards (Eurydice, 2007).

**Table 1: Presentation of authorities at different levels held accountable for certain decision types: OECD average (OECD, 2016: 113)**

Responsibility		Held mainly by <sup>1</sup>	Shared with <sup>2</sup>	Minor role <sup>3</sup>
Resources: teachers	Establishing teachers' starting salaries	National authority	Local/Regional authority	Principal
	Determining teachers' salary increases	National authority	Local/Regional authority	Principal
	Selecting teachers for hire	Principal		Local/regional/national authority
	Firing teachers	Principal	Local/Regional authority	School board and national authority
Resources: budget	Formulating the school budget	Principal	School board and local/regional authority	National authority
	Deciding on budget allocations within the school	Principal	School board	Local/Regional authority
Curriculum	Deciding which courses are offered	Principal	Teachers and school board	Local/Regional authority
	Choosing which textbooks are used	Teachers	Principal	National authority
	Determining course content	Teachers	Principal and national authority	Local/Regional authority
Establishing student assessment policies		Principal and teachers	National authority	School board
Establishing student disciplinary policies		Principal and teachers	School board	
Approving students for admission to the school		Principal		School board and local/regional authority

1. More than 50% of students attend schools whose principal reported that a given actor has considerable responsibility.

2. Between more than 25% and 50% of students attend schools whose principal reported that a given actor has considerable responsibility.

3. Between 15% and 25% of students attend schools whose principal reported that a given actor has considerable responsibility.

**Practical assignment 2.3: authorities at different levels held accountable for certain decision types in various countries**

*Individually:* Take a look in recommended publication (OECD, 2016). Which subjects are authorized to make decisions about abovementioned issues in your home country? Make a poster.

*In group:* single out similarities and differences between various countries. Be prepared to take part in class discussion.

*Task duration:* 2 hours

*Presentation form:* poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

**2.5. Participation of various actors in education management**

Other important constituencies, such as teachers (through professional organizations and unions) and parents (through informal and formal types of parental involvement) also influence education policy and the delivery of services. Teachers' unions can be involved in negotiations over teachers' salaries, duties and conditions of work, as well as professional development and careers. The participation of parents and parents' organizations may range from input over programs of study to input over the allocation of resources in the school (OECD, 2012).

**Practical assignment 2.4: role of teachers' unions in education management in various countries**

*Individually:* On the Internet, search for data on Teachers' Union's activities in your home country. Describe their role in education management. In which way do they influence decision-making process?

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* written report (2 pages)

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

**2.6. Educational management at local level**

The following subjects play more significant role in decision-making process on education issues at local level in Croatia: school founders, i.e., local self-government offices (counties, states and municipalities) authorized for education issues; regional county offices and regional Education and Teacher Training Agency's branch offices. It is possible to single out certain attempts of grouping these roles as well as their importance for better school achievements (Kovač, Rukavina Kovačević & Rafajac, 2017). Fullan (2007) grouped individual roles into three management fields at local level: a) pedagogical (activities related to learning, teaching and pedagogical employee's professional development processes), b) political

(activities related to securing resources, establishing partnerships and networks) and c) managerial (activities related to supervision, support, planning and involvement).

#### **Practical assignment 2.5: education system management at local level**

*Individually:* Read the following article (Kovač, Rukavina Kovačević & Rafajac, 2017) on education management at local level. From the article, filter the following information:

- list and comment on various roles and tasks that are assigned to school founders in most national systems;
- list some interventions and indicators of efficient school management at the local level;
- list and comment on the effects of different types of interventions that are being implemented in the local levels of educational management.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* Fill in the reading protocol

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignment

Local educational authorities' presence in certain schools is seen through various activities, whose purpose is to support existing school's capacities with the aim of developing efficient learning and teaching. Efficient local self-governments develop specific and recognizable strategies used for improving schools and students' achievements. In total, three categories, which differ according to their primary focus, exist: a) correction-preventive activities, focused on supporting weaker schools which are trying to meet national achievements standard; b) developmental (they include correction-preventive measures) that result in guidelines for improving curriculum or they introduce certain additional curricular dimensions with the aim of improving professional opportunities and c) entrepreneurial-innovative that result in new school practices and services.

### Practical assignment 2.6: responsibilities and initiatives at local/regional level of education management in various countries

*Individually:* Look up which legally founded powers and responsibilities do the regional and local self-government units possess in the context of education management in your home country. Select one unit (e.g., city, municipality...) and describe the initiatives and programs they conduct. In the attached table, write down which power type do the identified initiatives belong to.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* fill in the protocol

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

<b>Powers to act within fundamental competencies/roles</b>	<b>Initiative's description</b>
<i>Capital objects and investments</i> (Issues and competencies related to maintenance of schools and other buildings (playgrounds, school gym), investment and building new objects, etc.)	
<i>Material conditions and equipment for school's functioning</i> (Issues and competencies related to ensuring fundamental conditions needed for school's functioning, IT equipment, etc.)	
<i>Principal's job performance quality</i> (Issues and competencies related to evaluation and improvement of principal's job performance quality)	
<i>Teachers and other experts' professional capacity</i> (Issues and competencies related to teachers' professional development; evaluation of teachers' job performance quality; improving teachers' material working conditions)	
<i>Education programs and services' quality</i> (Issues and competencies related to creation and implementation of additional school's educational programs and services)	
<i>Learning environment quality</i> (Issues and competencies related to creation and implementation better learning and teaching conditions for students (extended stay in school, etc.)	
<i>Students' school achievements</i> (Issues and competencies related to monitoring of students' school achievements, measures needed to improve results)	
<i>Students' social standard</i> (Issues and competencies related to ensuring equal conditions for vulnerable students (scholarships, textbooks, etc.)	
<i>Cooperation with local community</i> (Issues and competencies related to connecting schools with local community institutions (theaters, museums, healthcare institutions, business sector) as well as encouraging cooperation between schools)	
<i>Control and Supervision of school's regular business</i> (Issues and competencies related to regular or sporadic control of school's legal or financial business)	

## Revision questions

- » Describe education management structure in your home country.
- » Describe, and support with indicators, certain education management characteristics in your home country.
- » Describe educational institution management characteristics at local level on a chosen example from your local community.

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# 3

## *EDUCATION POLICY ON TEACHERS AND TEACHING PROFESSION*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, the students will be able:

- » to describe the way in which the teaching profession is regulated in key policy documents at the international and national level;
- » to collect and analyze available empirical indicators on key themes regarding teachers and teaching profession, with special emphasis on their home country;
- » to form and support policy recommendations created with the aim of improving teachers and teaching profession's status in the society.

### 3.1. Introduction

There are couple of reasons why educational authorities around the world pay significant attention to teachers and teaching profession. Regardless of the educational level or the type of educational institution they work at, teachers represent the most significant factor that determines the quality of educational results. Teachers spend significant part of their work time in the direct pedagogical work with children and students, which makes it critical to ensure that they possess highly-developed competencies needed for efficient teaching. Furthermore, teachers represent a large portion of working population whose salary is financed by the state budget, so government representatives have to carefully think about the questions regarding the selection, employment as well as financial and other material conditions which are essential for unobstructed conduction of their professional activity, appropriate level of job satisfaction as well as social reputation. The way decisions regarding teachers and teaching profession are made and implemented, reflects key education policy's characteristics and priorities within individual national education system. Some of the key themes which could be found on the education policymakers' daily agenda are: teachers' demographic characteristics; teachers' employment and working conditions; teachers' salary and awards; teachers' competencies; initial training and continuous teachers' professional development, evaluation of teachers.

#### **Practical assignment 3.1: Glossary related to Lesson 3**

*Individually:* Indicate any word, term or concept in text you are not familiar with (eg, professional development, appraisal..). Let's create a small glossary related to Lesson 3!



### 3.2. Key themes and highlights from policy documents that regulate teachers and teaching profession's matters

There are numerous published policy documents that form recommendations with the aim of strengthening the profession's reputation as well as improving teachers' material working conditions. It is valuable to read documents published by European Commission on their official website ([https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/school/teaching-professions\\_hr](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/school/teaching-professions_hr)), as well as publications that present the results of empirical studies that should serve as a firm basis for decision-making at individual state's level (e.g., publications published by OECD about TALIS study's results; UNESCO's publications about their activities related to teachers published on <https://en.unesco.org/themes/teachers> website). It is worthwhile to additionally search the contents of professional teachers' associations (e.g., ATEE – Association for Teacher Education in Europe (<https://atee.education/>)).

#### Practical assignment 3.2: analysis of policy documents content on teachers and teaching profession

*In small groups:* Find and list key international and national policy documents that regulate matters regarding teachers and teaching profession. Single out key highlights from the documents' content. Create a poster to contribute to a common/group information board which will be used to compile individual work and which you will be able to access during your Education Policy course work.

Name of the document	Key highlights
Council Conclusions on school development and excellent teaching (2017/C 421/03). Official Journal of the European Union.	
Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on effective teacher education (2014/C 183/05. Official Journal of the European Union.	
Fill in...	
Fill in...	

*Task duration:* 4 hours

*Presentation form:* filling in the protocol

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

On the European Commission's official website, a particular section is reserved specifically for teachers and teaching profession. EU's working group, constituted by the representatives of Ministry of Education and subject's organizations, during their regular meetings, examines certain policies related to teachers and principals, discusses about common challenges and shares best examples of good practice.

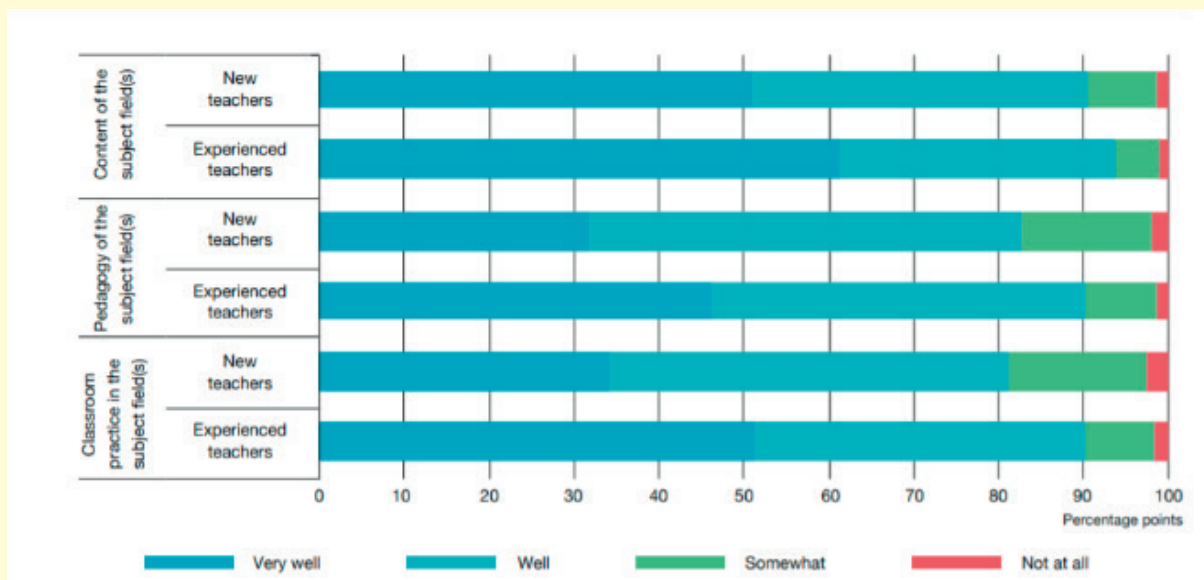
### 3.3. Policies on teachers' initial education

Advocation of (European) education policy for teachers' initial training can be seen from the contents of Council Conclusions of 20 May 2014 on Effective Teacher Education document that emphasizes the importance of teachers' initial training by considering it as a part of a more general political goal of improving the attractiveness and quality of teaching profession. Simultaneously, Council of Europe invites states (members) to reconsider its efficiency and quality as well as to encourage appropriate introduction into teaching. They consider teachers' education as a significant factor in attracting adequate candidates into teaching profession as well as in ensuring appropriate gaining of relative competencies needed for efficient work in modern classrooms. They also address institutions that organize teachers' initial education, emphasizing that teacher's instructors play key role in maintaining and improving the quality of educational workers. Higher education institutions that conduct teachers' initial education are seen as a hub for carrying out research on efficient development of teachers' competencies as well as efficient teaching and learning methods.

While comparing different models of teachers' initial education, it can be observed that most countries simultaneously offer two different models: future teachers can either follow teacher's education route from the very beginning (parallel model of teachers' initial education) or they can firstly get a degree in the area they are going to teach, and only afterwards specialize as teachers (consecutive model of teachers' initial education). Earning teaching qualifications can be offered as a separate shorter course that participants enroll in after they complete their standard (non-teaching) academic course. Initial education encompasses both theoretical and practical part, which is organized and implemented during studies in various ways. The average length of the course for gaining teaching competencies is equivalent to 60 ECTS points, i.e., about one year of full workload training.

### Do the teachers feel ready to teach after graduation?

Within the OECD *Initial Teacher Preparation (ITP) Study* framework, an international study with the aim of identifying common challenges, advantages and innovations in the teacher' initial training's system was conducted. The results offered valuable guidelines for the creation of referential framework for the improvement of that system. The data can help individual countries' educational authorities to analyze current state in their countries in comparison to international context, find solutions for common issues, identify good practices and make adequate policy decisions at both state and international levels. Furthermore, the results show that, immediately after graduation, the teachers feel more ready in regards to subjects they are going to teach compared to pedagogical, methodological and practical skills (Picture 1).



Picture 1. The percentage of teachers ready to teach in regards to various elements of formal education (OECD, 2013)

#### Practical assignment 3.3: teachers' readiness for teaching in various countries

*Individually:* In the report on conducted TALIS 2018 study (OECD, 2019), read how teachers in your home country evaluate the level of readiness for teaching in regards to various elements of formal education. How can educational authorities in your country use these results?

*Task duration:* 2 hours

*Presentation form:* poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignment

One of the more important questions that is analyzed in the context of teachers' initial education policies refers to the existence and regulation of competency standards for teaching profession. During 2013, Thematic European Commission's working group named Professional Teachers' Development published its report on the development of teachers' competencies for better learning outcomes. The report claims that teaching requires complex and dynamic combinations of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and opinions, while their gaining and development represents long-term process that requires purposeful practice as well as high quality feedback (European Commission, 2013). The existence of teaching competence standards or framework can be used for various purposes, whereas, in numerous countries, they are approved and regulated by the representatives of educational authorities in the forms of official documents that contain essential areas of competence. Most of these areas are common to the majority of national systems. These frameworks can be used as referential tools for accreditation of teaching track's study programs, i.e., regulating learning outcomes that are realized after initial education or particular professional development phase; as guidelines for various forms used for the evaluation of teachers (e.g., for the purposes of licensing, promoting, rewarding) and similar.

#### **Teaching competencies framework in Croatia**

In the context of implementation of Strategy of Science, Education and Technology (Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2014), National Council for Education named leaders and members of the Expert team for the implementation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategy of education, science and technology's goal: Raise the quality of teachers' work and reputation, point 4. 1. Teaching Professionalization (National Council for Education, 2015). In February 2016, a Framework of National Qualifications Standard for Teachers in Elementary and High Schools document was made, while *National Council for Education*, as an expert and strategic body that monitors the quality of pre-school, elementary and high school education system in Croatia, passes the Framework in the form of recommendation. The framework was created by applying Croatian qualification framework's methodology based on competency-based approach and groups of learning outcomes, organized according to key competencies essential for quality performing of tasks and activities in daily teacher's work as well as their professional development. Key groups of competencies were singled out:

- Academic discipline, teaching subject/ areas of education
- Assessment
- Learning environment
- Cooperation in school, with family and community
- Education system and school's organization
- Professional communication and interaction
- Professionalism and professional development.

The list of teaching competencies is generally periodically revised and adapted to the modern demands of teaching. Apart from competencies that are related to the knowledge on the contents of teaching subject and key pedagogical competencies, it is recommended to develop some additional skills such as adapting to multicultural classes or accepting

leadership roles in and out of school (Kovač, Rafajac, Buchberger, 2014). Moreover, due to the fast expansion of digital learning tools as well as open educational resources, it is required for teachers to understand them to a certain extent, which would consequently enable them to develop relative digital competencies and efficiently and appropriately use the above-mentioned resources in their teaching. Additionally, *policy* documents emphasize that specific matters that should be paid more attention to in the teacher education's programs include efficient methods of help for participants in the process of gaining mobile competencies, entrepreneurship, creative and critical thinking and strengthening of linguistic competencies. Attention should also be paid to efficient ways of offering support to different groups of participants, including participants with special needs and/or those with low income, participants from different cultural environments, migrants and other groups.

#### **Practical assignment 3.4: teachers' competencies framework in various countries**

*Individually:* Research whether official teaching competencies standards or frameworks exist in your home country. State their form, who signed the document, how are they used and which competency areas do they consist of. Prepare short presentation.

*In group:* Study the content of every group member's presentation. Identify similarities and differences in the approaches of different national systems.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

### **3.4. Policies on teacher employment and working conditions**

In certain education systems, obtaining university diploma, as a part of initial teacher's education, represents the only requirement in order to become a fully qualified teacher. In other systems, completing initial teacher's education is not enough, and graduated students have to meet other criteria. One of these requirements represents completing one-year introduction program (internship) after which the candidates take the state exam. The accountability for employing fully qualified teachers can be held by leading educational authorities, authorities at a local level (e.g., municipalities, provinces and similar) or schools. Teachers employed in public school are considered as public employees in all European countries.

An important point of education policy on teaching profession refers to the planning of teacher employment. Planning is encouraged in order to solve or relieve some of the key problems that individual national education systems have to face: the shortage of teachers in certain subjects, the shortage of teachers in certain geographical locations, oversaturation of teachers on the labor market, aging of teacher population, high percentage of teachers that leave their profession, the shortage of students enrolled in initial teacher's education, high percentage of students that abandon initial teacher's education. The shortage of teachers

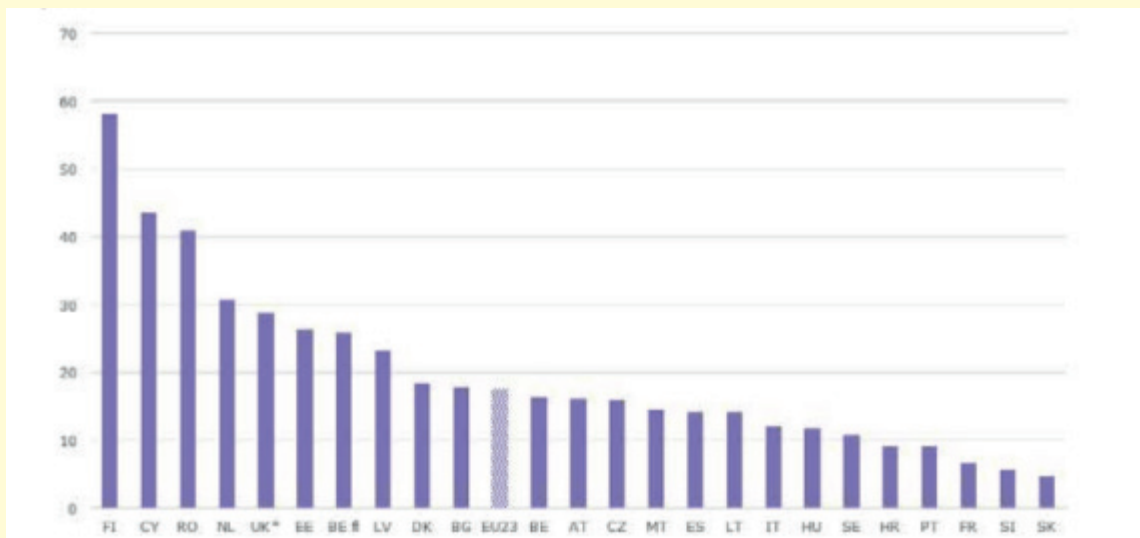
in certain subjects represents the most frequent problem in the supply and demand of teachers, which is reported in more than half of European national systems. This problem is not new, and is usually connected with certain subjects such as STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Planning in advance refers to the observing of demographic tendencies and statistical predictions in order to project future demand for teachers and balance out their supply. Simultaneously, different models of planning are observed (e.g., based on projection of number of students, current state of teachers in regards to demographic structure, subjects they teach, retirement, leaving the profession). Gathering data, their analysis and acting in accordance with findings, represent essential factors in process of planning in advance, which ultimately helps educational authorities in dealing with problems related to teachers supply and demand. Educational authorities have to take into consideration political reforms that refer to the teachers' retirement age, student and teacher ratio as well as reforms that influence education systems in their entirety by bearing in mind that abovementioned factors directly influence calculations applied in planning.

Some of the key education policy's discussions are held with the aim of solving abovementioned problems related to teaching profession. As some of the causes of listed problems are connected with working conditions, salaries as well as social position of teachers, recommendations for improvement of teachers' working conditions and social position can be found in *policy* documents. Investing in teachers is extremely important as it is emphasized in Council Conclusions on Effective Teacher Education of May 2014. The ministers agreed that member states have to improve the quality of teaching profession as well as make it more attractive and prestigious.

Since 2010, seven European countries conducted studies whose aim was to determine how society values teaching profession. Not only were data on teachers' perception on how society values teaching profession gathered, but also the perception of the society itself (expressed in attitudes of parents, students and other subjects from broader social context). Studies were conducted by either state bodies responsible for education or independent bodies such as syndicates, independent researchers or research bodies as well as public foundations.

### How much does the society value teaching profession?

Finland represents the only country where more than half (58%) of teachers think the teaching profession is valued in society. Less than 1 in 10 in Slovakia, Slovenia, France, Portugal and Croatia) share this view.



Picture 2. Percentage of teachers who agree/strongly agree with the following statement: 'I think that teaching profession is valued in society' (OECD, 2018).

Based on the results of the conducted studies, different countries created and conducted campaigns with the aim of strengthening of teaching profession. Campaigns can be a part of global strategy or they can serve as one-time initiatives. Generally, they consist of at least one of the following goals: a) general promotion of teaching profession; b) attracting future teachers into initial teacher's program, i.e., freshly graduated teachers into teaching profession; and c) encouraging teachers who work in the profession to stay in it or teachers who have left it to come back. Campaigns are conducted in various way, mostly through adverts, TV media or the Internet.

### How do different countries create campaigns to strengthen the reputation of teaching profession?

For example, in Sweden, *För det vidare* („Pass it on“) campaign was promoted by using Swedish National Agency for Education's website. Videos show famous young people (artists, actors, writers and similar) who speak about teachers who made an ever-lasting impression on them, teachers and students in the initial teacher education's program who explain why have they chosen teaching profession and comedians who imitate teachers during natural science classes. Those who want to become teachers can fill in the test on the website and obtain results which can help them during the selection of the most appropriate initial teacher education's program when it comes to subjects that they are going to teach at a certain education level (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015)

**Practical assignment 3.5: campaign for teachers in various countries**

*Individually:* Search for information about how is teaching profession publicly promoted in your home country. If such a practice doesn't exist in your country, write a proposal for the educational authority.

*Task duration:* 2 hours

*Presentation form:* written report (1 page)

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignment

### 3.5. Policies on induction and professional development of teachers

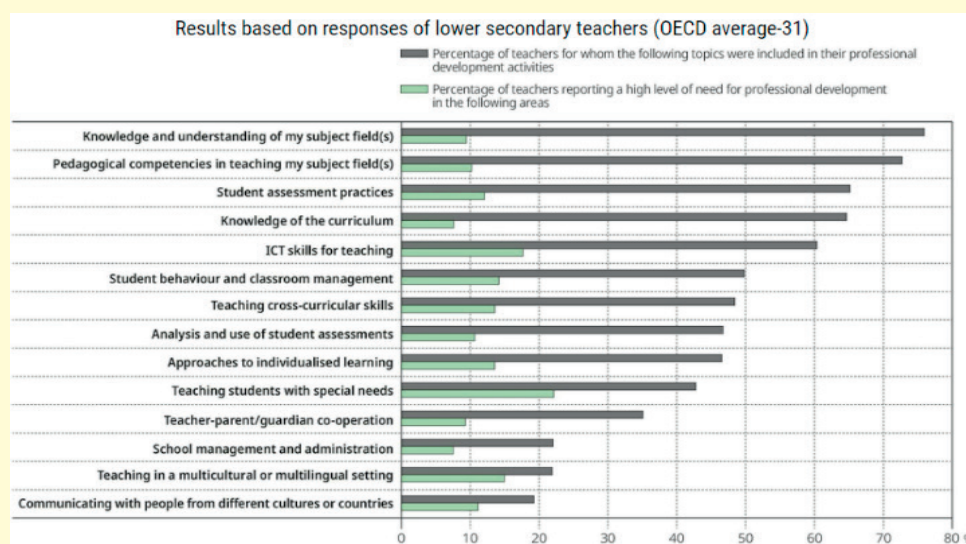
In European Commission's handbook for policymakers on induction into teaching, the importance of three types of support for beginning teachers is emphasized: personal, social and professional (European Commission, 2010). Induction into teaching is described as a "moment during which new teachers pass from initial education into professional life and is considered essential for further professional orientation and development as well as for the reduction of number of teachers who abandon the profession". Induction programs can consist of various elements such as mentoring, professional development, collegial assessment or discussions with schools' principals. For example, mentoring represents an obligatory constituent of induction programs in almost every education system that prescribed it. In the majority of European education systems, either future or beginning teachers have the access to induction programs. Induction is usually organized at the beginning of the graduated teacher's first employment in school, while in certain systems, this process is organized during trial.

After employment and induction into profession, teachers are expected to continuously develop professionally. In the majority of European countries, professional development is considered obligatory (i.e., there is minimal number of hours of regular professional development that every teacher has to go through, which can be regulated by law, important documents or employment treaties). The way in which certain country regulates teachers' continuous professional development represents an important matter in education policy, primarily due to empirical indicators that support its strong effects not only on the increase of students' achievements and reducing the differences in achievements between students, but also on the prevention of teachers' "burn out". It is important for educational authorities to identify teachers' needs for professional development by using appropriate mechanisms and ensure the most efficient forms of it. Based on the results of TALIS study, it is possible to find out a number of relevant indicators on this topic: portion of teachers who participate in professional development, forms of professional development, contents of professional development, professional development activities with the highest positive effect, the biggest needs for professional development by topics, obstacles that prevent participation and the type of support that teachers receive for participation in professional development.



### The highest needs for teachers' professional development according to relevant topics

In the TALIS study framework, a portion of teachers, who were offered listed topics during professional development, was monitored, i.e., those who have expressed the need for professional development on the listed topics (OECD, 2019). It can be observed on picture 2 that certain discrepancy exists in the evaluation of topics that are offered, compared to the topics that the teachers express the need for at the OECD level. The teachers express the highest need for the *Teaching students with special needs* area, whereas the lowest need is expressed for *School management and administration* area.



Picture 3: The highest needs for teachers' professional development (OECD, 2019)

### Practical assignment 3.6: teachers' professional development in various countries

*Individually:* Find out what TALIS' data show for your home country regarding this topic (OECD, 2019). Which obstacles prevent the realization of professional development and which incentives do the educational authorities offer to teachers for participation in professional development?

*In group:* Study the content of every group member's presentation. Identify similarities and differences in approaches in different national systems. Be prepared to take part in oral discussion.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignment

Career advancement and salary increase represent the most frequent incentives for teachers in European countries to participate in continuous professional development. Apart from the abovementioned incentives that are used to promote teachers' participation in continuous professional development, additional measures for removing obstacles that prevent participation exist in every European country. Some of these measures can include: freeing from training teaching during working hours, non-monetary needs for activities outside working hours (e.g., reduced hourly rate, time off, leave due to education), paying expenses, salary bonus for activities conducted outside working hours and similar.

### 3.6. Policies on appraisal of teachers

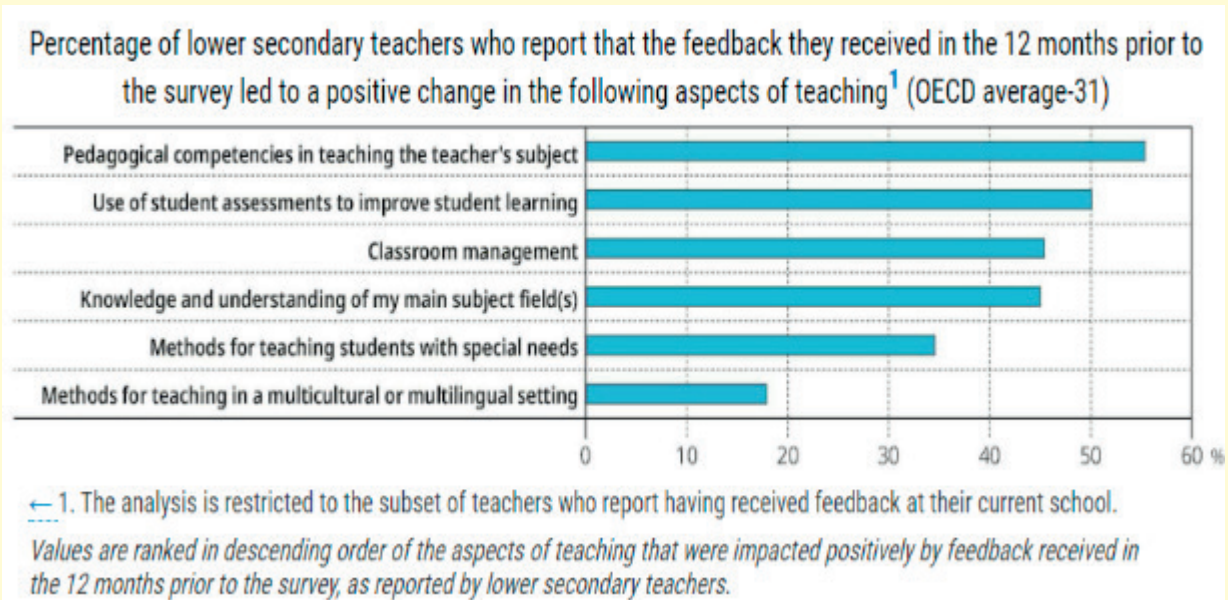
Various education systems regulate the matter of appraisal of teachers' work differently. Firstly, it is important to examine whether regulations, through which educational authorities define, regulate and describe appraisal of teachers, exist. Simultaneously, it is important to pay attention to the appraisal's purpose (why is it conducted), its scale and goals (what is being appraised), appraisal ways and methods (how is it appraised), subjects who conduct appraisal (who appraises) as well as which groups of teachers will be appraised (who is being appraised).

Appraisal can either be summative or formative, it can be created for all teachers or just for particular group. Appraisal can be conducted in various phases of teaching career – at the very beginning of the career, when teachers complete initial induction program, in regular intervals for employed teachers as well as at certain point during their career. It can be conducted for the purposes of career advance, professional development or improving personal teaching practices. In certain systems, appraisal is conducted by body at the state level, while in certain systems, appraisal becomes a matter at either local or school level. Appraisals can be: government representatives, representatives of local authorities, inspector or external evaluator, teachers' expert associations, school faculty, school's principal, teaching coordinator/mentor/colleague evaluator and others.

Teachers can be appraised by using various methods as well as based on different sources of information. The most frequently used are: discussion between teacher and appraiser, monitoring of teaching process, analysis of students' achievements, surveying of students, surveying of parents, collegial evaluation and others. In certain countries, the rest of the instruments or sources of information are taken into consideration, including pedagogical material made by the teacher (e.g., lesson plans), portfolios and other evidence of additional achievements. The final appraisal score can be expressed as either descriptive or alphanumeric.

### Positive changes in teachers' performance after receiving feedback

Results of the TALIS study indicated certain positive changes in teachers' performance after receiving feedback: better knowledge or understanding of the subject they teach; developed pedagogical competencies needed for the subject they teach; efficient use of student assessment for achieving better learning outcomes; more successful class management; better use of teaching methods to work with students with special needs as well as teaching methods in multilingual or multicultural environment.



Picture 4: Positive changes in teachers' performance (OECD, 2018)

Evaluation's consequences should be adequate and in accordance with appraisal's purpose. For example, consequences such as receiving a mentor with the purpose of improving teaching or designing a professional development plan are in accordance with evaluation's formative function. In order to ensure either high efficiency or reaching desired standard, evaluation's consequences can also be incentives such as salary raise and financial bonuses, changes in the scale of work tasks or in the advancement probability, while sometimes, either resignation or non-renewal of contract is applied.

### 3.7. Policies on teachers' career advancement

The term "career advancement" is defined as an advancement of teachers into higher professional title during various levels of their career as well as advancement followed by taking additional professional responsibility based on the gained experiences. Advancement onto higher level is usually followed by salary raise in the majority of countries. Regarding requirements one has to meet in order to advance to a higher career level, six criteria are most frequently considered: positive appraisal/evaluation, amount of working experience, possession of certain competencies, special professional development, research activities as well as either leading or creating courses of continuous professional development.

Furthermore, bodies at a different educational level can play a role in decision-making regarding teachers' advancement in different countries. Along with teaching, teachers can, during advancement period, take additional roles and responsibilities: mentoring, pedagogical/methodological roles outside of classroom, managerial roles and similar. For example, they can be selected as a subject/curricula's coordinators, program's coordinators, leaders of teaching process, internship coordinators, school counselors, ICT coordinators, coordinators of linguistic laboratory, working groups and council's coordinators, teachers researchers, class masters, project's coordinators, coordinators of school-parent communication, coordinators of continuous professional development, teachers' educators, counselors/inspectors for other schools, exams' coordinators and similar. Employed teachers' professional orientation also includes giving support to the teachers in managing as well as in planning of their advancement in teaching profession.

### **Practical task 3.7: Teacher advancement criteria**

*Individually:* Search for information about teacher advancement criteria in your home country (EC, 2018). Prepare short presentation.

*In group:* Study the content of every group member's presentation. Identify similarities and differences in approaches in different national systems.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

## **Revision questions**

- » How are teachers and teaching profession issues regulated in the EU's key education policy documents?
- » Describe and support with arguments the importance of educational authorities' advocacy for teaching and teaching profession's matters.
- » Do the indicators of certain education policy's topics on teachers and teaching profession deviate in your home country in comparison to global indicators, or are they in agreement with the trends (e.g., indicators on professional development)?
- » Single out examples of good practice either from your home country or any other one related to education policy's advocacy for improving attractiveness and reputation of teaching profession in the society.
- » Single out several recommendations that can be send to educational authorities' leaders with the aim of improving attractiveness and reputation of teaching profession.

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# 4

## *EDUCATION POLICY ON EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION LEADERSHIP*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, the students will be able:

- » to explain the importance of educational institution leadership and its effects on both institution and its users' achievements;
- » to recognize and describe the characteristics of educational institution leadership's efficient practices;
- » to identify key education policy's trends related to leadership and analyze the state of certain national education system;
- » to form recommendations for improving educational institution leadership in certain national education systems.

### 4.1. Introduction

Leading educational institutions, especially schools, is one of the trending education policy's topics that is usually a part of the daily agenda due to several key questions and themes. Researches show that the principals play key role in creating effective learning environments through their influence on factors such as teachers' development and cooperation, motivations and working conditions and the general school climate and environment. School leaders are, furthermore, pivotal for bridging education policy and practice and for linking schools to their wider community. School leadership emits strong influence on both students and school achievements, which leads to recommendation of certain leadership models which are, based on empirical evidence, recognized as more efficient. The school leadership profession today faces a number of challenges: insufficient preparation and training, limited career prospects and inadequate support and rewards, difficulties to attract suitable candidates into the profession and retirements of ageing school leaders. Certain national systems face the abovementioned challenges in different ways.

#### **Practical assignment 4.1: Glossary related to Lesson 4**

*Individually:* Indicate any word, term or concept in text you are not familiar with (eg, leadership, principal..). Let's create a small glossary related to Lesson 4!

### 4.2. Educational institution leadership as an education policy topic

Leadership represents a complex phenomenon that has been examined by numerous researches and experts, about which countless theories exist as well as something that is operationalized by various models, styles and types in both theoretical and practical aspect.

Educational institution leadership is seen as a way of exerting influence (either individual or group) on other people, i.e., on the creation and realization of organizational goals by using available resources in the most efficient way. Although the first association with educational institution leadership is probably related to their principals' formal position, in practice, leadership can additionally be observed through other subjects' activities, both outside and inside the institution. Leadership function can be both delegated as well as distributed (formally and informally) from principal to other individual or group of subjects, e.g., professional associates, teachers or special working teams. Experts agree that there are several traits shared among successful principals: building vision and choosing direction; understanding people and caring for their professional development; creating encouraging working environment as well as focus on learning and teaching through supporting pedagogical process' quality.

#### **Practical task for students 4.2: Leadership scenarios**

*In small groups:* Create one scenario that describes leadership situation in an educational institution. Revise what leadership represents so you could clearly distinguish this process from other processes occurring in the institution.

Scenario should include following elements:

- participants and their leadership roles;
- desired goal;
- the way the desired goal will be achieved;
- environment in which the leadership occurs.

Your scenarios will serve for:

- observing key leadership elements;
- observing different leadership types.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* Written scenario (max 3 pages)

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

Analysis of different leadership scenarios can lead to identification of certain specific points or dimensions due to which leadership varies in its occurrence. Focus can be put on various points or dimensions; leader's role, relationship between the leader and other subjects, content around which key decisions are made; the way these decisions are made. Furthermore, by conducting detailed analysis of practical scenarios according to particular aspect, certain leadership model can be identified, observed as well as described. The following represent some of the school leadership models which pedagogy literature pays more attention to: distributed leadership; transformational leadership; interpersonal leadership; moral leadership; democratic leadership; autocratic leadership and many others.



Variations of school leadership, in regards to particularly observed aspect, can move in certain continuity (from the complete lack of aspect's representation to its full representation), whereas this (although significantly simplified) approach can help in better recognition and understanding of those leadership models that are recognized and recommended as more efficient in education policy context.

#### How to recognize certain school leadership model's characteristics (Pont & Nusche, 2008)?

MODEL	CHARACTERISTICS
Distributed	Focus is set on monitoring of the decision-making authority and responsibility distribution. This model transcends emphasizing of formal leader's positions and roles, while, simultaneously, emphasizing every subject's expertise out of which, distributed influence on decision-making arises.
Instructional	Focus is set on priority content about which decision are made as in this leadership type, they are directed towards learning and teaching processes. This school leadership type can be briefly described through a set of principals' roles and tasks (along with other subjects involved into school leadership) focused on improving learning and teaching processes through directing, supporting and ensuring resources for teachers and students involved in these processes.
Transformational	Focus is set on principals' (and other subjects) orientation towards changes, development and innovations. This model emphasizes the role of principal who is focused on creating environment that will encourage subjects' devotion to school, who advocates for schools' change and development, creativity and innovation, and where creating common vision and goals of school is encouraged.

In relevant publications (e.g., Pont & Nusche, 2008), recommendations directed towards national systems that emphasize the importance of encouraging instructive, distributed and transformational educational institution leadership can be noticed, along with the need to ensure adequate training and professional development programs for the principals which will enable them to develop competencies needed for successful leadership. PISA and TALIS results confirmed in multiple successive cycles that education systems with higher index of instructional and distributed leadership were more successful. Apart from the abovementioned statements, key points related to the topic of educational institution leadership can be found in the European and national policy documents.

**Key points from Council conclusions on effective leadership in education document (EC, 2014/C 30/02)**

Innovative approaches to leadership can contribute to attracting and retaining candidates of the highest calibre and enabling learning environments to cope with — and fully exploit the potential of — the continuous innovations emerging at fast pace in education. It is also necessary to professionalise, strengthen and support the role of educational leaders, by first identifying the competences they require, by developing more structured career paths and by assessing the specific professional development needs of those taking up leadership positions and providing relevant training opportunities. Member states urge to „...make educational leadership more attractive, particularly by... exploring and developing attractive forms of introductory training, early career support and continuous professional development for educational leaders; promote, where appropriate, innovative approaches to effective educational leadership, particularly by... recognising and promoting the leadership potential of staff within institutions, particularly through ‘distributed leadership’, by providing them with opportunities to work with colleagues in other institutions and by providing them with encouragement and opportunities to develop their potential in this respect.“

**Points from Croatian Strategy for Education, Science and Technology on educational institution leadership (MZO, 2014)**

The issue of educational institution leadership is defined as a part of 5<sup>th</sup> Goal that states: *Develop educational institution's management practice*. In order to achieve this strategical goal, the following measures were defined and operationalized: 1) redefine principal's role; 2) create competency standards for principals; 3) institutionalize future principals' education and 4) create licensing program and procedure. Even though some measures were successfully realized (e.g., both registered profession standards and qualification standards for educational institution's principals were created; training programs for principals were accredited), certain ones are yet to be realized. The following measures are expected to be realized in the future: create legal recommendations for principal's institutional education and training; develop principal's performance evaluation system and create a rule book on licensing programs and procedure.

**Practical task for students 4.3: Instructional school leadership**

*Individually:* Read the following article (Kovač, 2021) on instructional school leadership (ISL). From the article, filter the following information:

- In which way can instructional principals' behaviors be identified and monitored?
- Which ISL variations can be detected in practice? What causes them?
- Which education policy mechanisms can be used in order to encourage ISL?

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* Fill in the reading protocol

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignment

**4.3. Education policy on principals' professionalization**

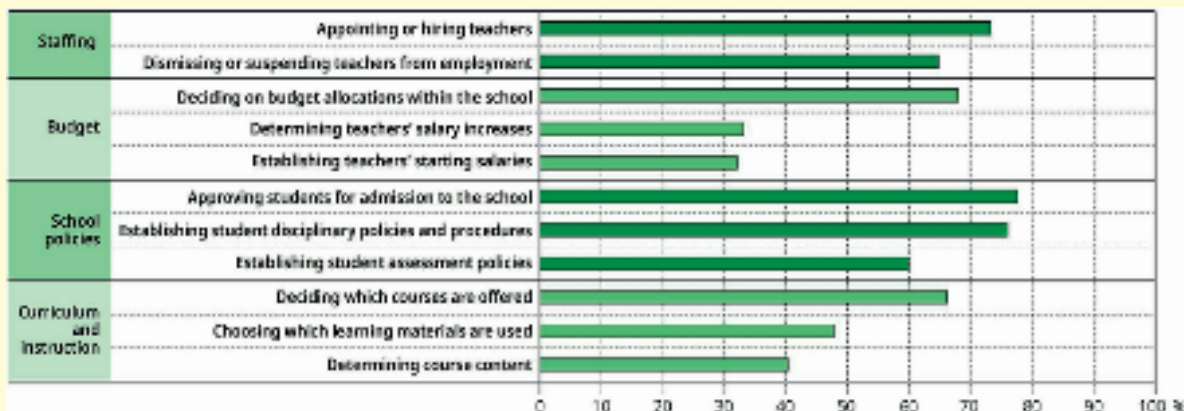
The demands for full principal's professionalization appeal to the importance of implementing adequate policy solutions for several key elements. Firstly, it is necessary to define key principal's duties as well as competency profile required to do their professional

duties. Secondly, it is important to ensure candidate recruiting system which is based on examining principal's competencies along with a system that will include their training before taking position. Thirdly, a system that will enable principals to additionally master these competencies, especially during their first tenure, must be developed. Fourthly, it is necessary to organize external evaluation system – licensing – seriously designed test of gained competencies that not only ends up with earning a license, but also its periodic renewal. Additionally, it is important to organize adequate quality evaluation system of principal's working performance.

Numerous countries transferred a part of task execution authority from local, regional or national level to school level which provided both schools and their principals with higher degree of autonomy in decision-making process for certain key matters. Consequently, the principals' role has significantly expanded and has started to include higher number of professional tasks and necessary competencies. One of the key policy questions is directed exactly towards the importance of defining the scope of principal's job as well as their competency profile. Inadequate solving of this questions leads to the reduction of this profession's attractiveness, the shortage of interested candidates for taking over principal's duty as well as abandonment of the profession.

#### Principals' responsibilities (OECD, 2019; Markočić-Dekanić, Markuš Sandrić & Gregurović, 2020 )

This cycle of studies analyzed to which extent does the principals' responsibilities lie for certain tasks. Picture shows the percentage of principals at the average TALIS evaluation level.



Picture 5: Principals' school responsibilities (OECD, 2019)

The percentage of principals who reported that they hold significant responsibility for staffing matters in Croatia is very high: 88% of elementary and 85% of high school principals report that they hold significant responsibility for appointing and employing teachers, while 85% of elementary and 87% of high school principals claim that they are responsible for their firing or suspension. If we compare the average score of other participating countries with Croatia, these percentages are somewhat lower (60-70%). Croatian principals are less responsible for deciding teachers' salary, yet more than three quarters of them state that they hold significant responsibility for the allocation of school's financial resources. Contrary to the other participating countries' average scores, Croatian principals do not express high responsibility for the teaching area as only 11% of elementary and 17% of high school principals state that they are responsible for choosing subjects which will be taught in school. Furthermore, 13% of elementary and 24% of high school principals state that they make decisions on teaching contents, while 28% of elementary and 35% of high schools decide which teaching materials will be used.

TALIS' data also show that Croatian principals spend around half of their working hours on administrative tasks along with the tasks and meetings related to school management, around third of their time in interaction with students, parents, local community and other subjects, while little less than fifth of them to tasks and jobs related to school curriculum and teaching process. This distribution of working hours is similar to the other countries' distribution if average TALIS values are observed.

The election and employment of principals in Croatia is still not conducted based on assessed and proven competency needed for principal's duties and roles. For example, the only additionally evaluated competencies during the selection are proficiency in foreign language, basic digital skills and experience in working on projects.

#### **Practical task 4.4: Authority, responsibility and employment of principals in various countries**

*Individually:* Find a relevant legal or policy document that regulates issues regarding authority, responsibility and employment of principals in educational institutions in your home country. For example, in Croatia, these issues are regulated in Law on Education in Elementary and High Schools (Narodne novine, 68/2018). Within the document, try to find information on how is either principals or other management bodies' (e.g., school boards) election process conducted. Additionally, refer to the parts of the document where abovementioned issues are regulated.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* Poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

Education policy must ensure the conduction of programs for gaining principal competencies adapted to different phases of their career. While discussing principals' initial training program, it is important to analyze two questions: the first is related to the type of initial training available to the principals, while the second refers to whether these programs are obligatory or optional regarding candidate selection policy. Furthermore, regarding the first question, programs differ in regards to the way they are verified, which institutions conduct them, their length, which competencies do they develop and whether they have developed system of testing gained competencies. In that sense, Croatia can boast about

well-developed system of educational programs: No less than three specialistic studies at three universities, which develop full or very extensive profile of principal competencies, are conducted. Moreover, high-quality programs are conducted regardless of their university counterparts, such as Principals' Academy conducted by Forum for Freedom in Education. Education and Teacher Training Agency traditionally conducts principals' professional development programs. Regarding the second question, in Croatia, initial training programs are offered outside of formal principals' professionalization system. Neither monitoring, nor program quality assurance systems are conducted. Programs are not publicly, but rather self-financed. Principals will enroll into these programs based on personal as well as extrinsic motivation to achieve desired career advancement.

#### **Practical task for students 4.5: Interview with the principal**

*Individually:* Conduct short interview with educational institution's principal in your home country. Ask them some of the following questions:

- How did their election for principal duty go?
- Did they go through certain test of principal competencies prior to taking office?
- Did they educate or train themselves on how to conduct principal duty?
- Which challenges do they mostly face in their work?
- How do they evaluate the relationship between educational authorities towards principals, their working performance and their profession in general?

*In group:* Compare obtained data and analyze them. In which aspects do you find the most similarities and differences? Be prepared to take part in oral discussion.

*Task duration:* 4 hours

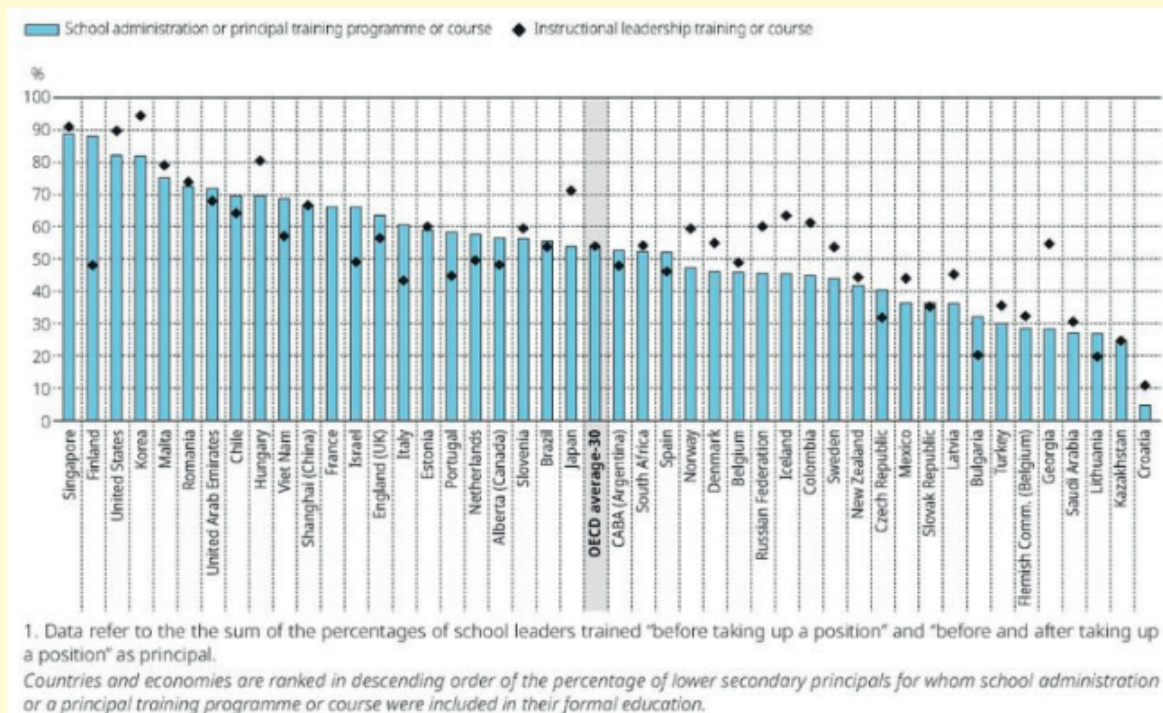
*Presentation form:* Written report (max 3 pages)

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

European trends differ regarding this matter. In certain countries, special institutions responsible for principals' education are founded. For example, *Šola za ravnatelje*, founded by Slovenian Ministry of Education, operates in the same country and offers license earning programs; *National College for School Leadership* operates in England. Additionally, Austria plans to implement the requirement to earn 20 ECTS through principals' education programs before taking office, followed by earning 40 ECTS in total in the 4 –5 year period after taking office by enrolling into university program designed for gaining principals' competencies. If they have gathered 5 years of experience at this position, the same experience can be acknowledged as 30 ECTS, while the rest can be earned through the university program. In Serbia, licensing requirement was passed into the law in 2018. During the same year, they started to conduct licensing assessments, with a program for gaining principals' competencies being available prior to it.

### Initial principals' training

According to TALIS (OECD, 2019), across OECD countries and economies, over 50% of school leaders completed teacher training or an education program or course before taking up their position as principal.



Picture 6: Initial principals' training before taking office (OECD, 2019)

Picture shows that Croatia finds itself at the bottom in regards to the percentage of principals who went through initial training before taking office.

Vast majority of countries records frequent implementation of appraisal policies and practices regarding principal working performance, with their purpose most frequently being related to the decisions on principals' working status. According to PISA study's data, with the exception of Poland and Croatia where it is voluntary, in all other countries with available data school leader appraisal is mandatory (OECD, 2016). Accountability for principals' appraisal can be held by institutions at either national, local, regional or at the school management bodies' level. Some of the key principals' behavior and practices that are subject to evaluation are: general issues related to leadership practice, pedagogical/instructional leadership, organizational development, school climate, relations with environment, evaluation and responsibility skills, resource management, interpersonal skills. Various instruments and data gathering methods which can contribute to the formation of objective take on principals' quality of work are used: interviews with principals, principals' portfolio, self-evaluation, external school visits and analysis of students' achievements. Prior to the introduction of evaluation procedures, it is necessary to clearly define constituents of efficient, successful and skillful school leadership.

**Practical task 4.6: Leadership trends in practice**

*Individually:* In publication, search for educational institution leadership practices in your home country in regards to the trends listed in the table (OECD, 2019). Describe the practice by listing several key information.

LEADERSHIP TRENDS	PRACTICE IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY
School management structure	
Initial principals' training before taking office	
Examination of gained competencies as a condition for entering into profession	
Standardization of principals' tasks and workload	
Evaluation of principals' quality of work	
Implementing possibilities for rewarding and advancement in principals' career	

*In groups:* Compare similarities and differences between different national systems. Single out examples of good practice and write down several recommendations for improvement in your own national system.

*Task duration:* 5 hours

*Presentation form:* Fill in the table

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

**Revision questions**

- » Single out key recommendations from relevant policy documents that regulate issues regarding educational institution leadership.
- » Describe the characteristics of instructional, distributed and transformational educational institution leadership.
- » List global challenges and trends related to educational institution leadership.
- » What is the situation in your home country regarding the abovementioned challenges and trends? Support your answer with several empirical indicators.
- » Form several recommendations for educational authorities in order to improve leadership practice of educational institutions in your home country.

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# 5

## *EDUCATION POLICY ON QUALITY IN EDUCATION*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able:

- » to define the concept of quality as well as its application in education;
- » to identify and describe the presence of public policy on quality at different education systems' levels;
- » to research and describe the quality assurance system in the selected educational institution (kindergarten, school, university...);
- » to evaluate the efficiency of quality assurance system.

### 5.1. Introduction

The request for quality at every education system's level reflects one of the more significant education policy's global trends. These requests are seen in different practices such as conducting national standardized achievement exams for students (e.g., Matura state exam in Croatia), students' evaluation of teaching at the university or conducting external assessment of educational institutions. One of the key reasons for the increasing request for quality is connected with the increasing concern of national authorities whether resources set aside from state budget are being used in adequate and efficient way. One of the most important (ending) indicators of education's quality are students' academic achievements.

Quality assurance systems are especially developed at the higher education level. Numerous policy trends have contributed to that, with most frequently mentioned being: increased access to higher education for different groups of students; increase in the number of different subjects interested for financing and monitoring higher education's efficiency; general trends and changes in public administration; increase of higher education institutions' autonomy; diversification of higher education's service providers as well as increased demand for internationalization of higher education and students' mobility. Data gathered as a part of evaluation process' framework can be used to inform the public about the efficiency of education as well as for improving practice in the education systems' framework.

### 5.2. Quality in education

The term quality is very frequently used, often discussed about and is highly popular in international educational space. The word quality comes from Latin word *quails* which translates into "what". Quality represents a multifaceted as well as multidimensional concept, it has no universal definition that could be applied in either all fields, for every phenomenon or any subject and is dependent on subjective evaluations to a large extent. The use of the term "quality" differs depending either on the education level or different perspective of education system's subjects. The term carries different meaning for education policy

creators, politicians, journalists, school founders, principals, teachers, students, parents or for kindergarten, elementary schools, high schools or universities, private or public education.

### Practical assignment 5.1: Glossary related to Lesson 5

*Individually:* Indicate any word, term or concept in text you are not familiar with (eg, quality, quality assurance, evaluation...). Let's create a small glossary related to Lesson 5!

Different approaches are used for defining quality, out of which various understandings of quality in education arise. Additionally, four of the most present categories are most frequently singled out: adapting to defined mission or purpose, i.e., a group of standards or criteria that has to be satisfied (fitness for purpose); a way towards positive change in learning or personal development (transformation); responsibility towards various subjects by using available resources in an efficient way (responsibility); singling out towards excellence or achieving high standards (excellence). Even though the authors, while trying to define quality, mostly refer to quality in higher education, listed approaches can be applied at the other educational levels too.

#### Different approaches for defining quality

Quality as excellence reflects traditional academic attitude which states that the goal is to be the best, i.e., an expectation is set for academic communities to strive for the best result. The term excellence in education is used when describing individuals or institutions that achieve excellent results. It often serves as a motivation for achieving high standards, which simultaneously encourages competitive spirit. This approach is often emphasized by analytics and politicians while discussing quality. In higher education, this concept can be compared with the perception of prestigious international universities, such as Oxford, Cambridge, Sorbonne or Yale. These universities stand out for the service, i.e., education they offer to their students, laboratory or library equipment, study results that are conducted by these institutions or number of prestigious awards which are earned there. It is challenging to apply this definition of quality on the complete education system and it is impossible to evaluate all institutions according to the same criteria. The disadvantage of this approach is the fact that neither standards for measuring quality are set, nor does it define aspects which are implied as quality.

Quality as means of achieving desired standards refers to achieving desired products or services' characteristics. The advantage of this approach is that different institutions can set different standards according to their possibilities and goals. However, this approach does not mention criteria which are used to set the abovementioned standards, which means that meeting the same set standards does not guarantee achieving quality.

Quality as fitness for purpose is the most frequently used in pair with ensuring quality in higher education. This approach imposes an obligation that either products or services are used to satisfy customers' needs and demands, whereafter it is evaluated to which extent are the same needs and demands satisfied and achieved. In education, this approach is used for the purpose of evaluating the extent to which the desired learning outcomes of certain programs and activities have been achieved. Defining quality in education from this perspective directs education's purpose towards achieving goals and demands of different interest groups. Therefore, the ultimate goal of every education system is to ensure that the needs of individuals, society and citizens in their entirety are satisfied.

Quality as transformation reflects the attitude that the users of higher education's quality are pupils, i.e., students whose understanding, goals and attitudes change and form during their education, i.e., studying. Education is seen as a developing process of every individual pupil or student that enables them to gain knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities. It is believed that the curriculum represents a mean of achieving a change used with the aim of equipping student with knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities which will enable them to live and work in the society. Simultaneously, the assumption, which states that higher quality university trains pupils and students better in certain skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for life as well as labor market, is valid.

### 5.3. Public policy on quality in education

The presence of public policy on quality in education in certain national system is visible due to the existence of the following elements:

- » if an official decision on applying quality assurance system was passed (the law);
- » if a body, responsible for conduction of quality policy, is appointed (e.g., Croatian National Centre for External Evaluation of Education as well as Agency for Science and Higher Education exist in Croatia)
- » if the procedures of assuring quality, which refer to the defined criteria or standards, self-evaluation, external evaluation, report on conducted evaluation and procedures of improving quality, are regulated.

The efforts of European policy to implement quality assurance system in education is visible from the contents of EU's policy documents, while the national educational authorities' initiatives can be observed based on key strategical documents and relevant laws.

#### **Key highlights of Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on quality assurance supporting education and training document (2014/C 183/07)**

„...As key contributors in the drive towards better jobs, stronger growth and competitiveness, EU education and training systems face significant challenges which continuous quality enhancement can help to address. These challenges include: broadening access; reducing dropout and improving retention rates; supporting innovative learning; and ensuring that learners acquire the knowledge, skills and competences required for an inclusive society, active citizenship, lifelong learning and employability, regardless of their social and economic backgrounds.... Quality assurance mechanisms can play an important role in helping education and training institutions and policy makers to meet those challenges, ensuring that the quality of education and training systems and that of individual institutions are fit for purpose. Quality assurance – as part of a range of measures by governments and institutions – increases transparency and underpins trust in the relevance and quality of knowledge, skills, competences, and qualifications, which in turn is based on trust in the quality of the institutions and providers of education and training.

**Key points from Croatian Strategy of Science, Education and Technology (MZO, 2014)**

Strategy defines the matter of ensuring quality in education as a part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Goal's framework that states: *Organize quality assurance system in education*. In order to achieve strategical goal of assuring quality in education, the following measures were defined and operationalized: (1) raise the general level of quality of system management, (2) functionally transform and build internal capacities of national agencies responsible for ensuring support to educational institutions and other subjects in the process of development, as well as assuring high quality and success at work and (3) organize efficient management of quality assurance system.

Quality assurance system in higher education will serve as an example needed for explanation on how public policy on quality functions. The system is highly developed and its structure as well as its way of functioning can be monitored at different levels: European higher education area's level, national higher education system's level, university's level as well as at the individual university's constituent level, i.e., its smaller units. Certain elements of quality assurance are conducted at other education system's level as well.

**5.4. Basic elements of quality assurance system**

The quality assurance system in (higher) education consists of the following (interconnected) elements: official international and national body responsible for quality assurance; official standards and guidelines for evaluation process; internal evaluation or self-evaluation procedure; external evaluation procedure; official reports on evaluation's results and official use of evaluation's results.

**5.5. International and national coordination body**

European umbrella association for quality assurance in higher education is *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ENQA).

**Practical assignment 5.2: Description of international body responsible for quality assurance in higher education**

*In small groups:* Browse the website of the The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – ENQA ([www.enqa.eu](http://www.enqa.eu)). Describe the structure, objectives, activities and other relevant information about ENQA.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* Poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

National coordination bodies are more known as buffer bodies between the state and educational institutions whose primary responsibilities are offering logistical and administrative support in creating national networks, maintaining quality assurance systems and including it into international network. At the higher education level, Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) was founded in Croatia. Agency has been confirmed and authorized to conduct procedures of external quality assurance since 2011, something which was stimulated by being granted a full membership in the ENQA as well as with inclusion into European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). In elementary and high school education systems, national bodies responsible for conducting external evaluation are National Centre for External Evaluation (NCEE) as well as Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA).

### **Practical task 5.3: Public policy on quality in education in various countries**

*Individually:* Select one education system's level (e.g., higher education) and determine how is public policy on quality regulated in your home country (in strategical documents, laws and similar.). Is national coordination body organized? What is its name? In which way are body's authority and responsibilities organized?

*In group:* Compare the conduction of quality assurance system in higher education in different countries. Can you identify its similarities and differences? Be prepared to take part in class discussion.

*Task duration:* 5 hours

*Presentation form:* Poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

## **5.6. Standards and guidelines for evaluation**

In order to conduct comprehensive and complete evaluation of certain educational institution, it is necessary to determine fundamental evaluation areas. Therefore, standards, criteria of quality, evaluation indicators as well as examples of good practice are determined for every evaluation area. For example, the document *The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) is used as a reference document in higher education (ESG, 2015). Document was adopted by the Ministers responsible for higher education in 2005 following a proposal prepared by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in cooperation with the European Students' Union (ESU), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European University Association (EUA). The purpose of these standards and guidelines is to serve as a source of help and instructions to higher education institutions during the development of their own quality assurance systems, agencies that conduct external quality assurance as well as to contribute to the common reference framework, which can be similarly used both by institutions and agencies.

### The standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA (ESG, 2015)

The standards for quality assurance have been divided into three parts: Internal quality assurance; External quality assurance and Quality assurance agencies. For example, for internal quality assurance, the document proposes standards and guidelines for 10 areas: policy and quality assurance; design and approval of programs; student-centered learning, teaching and assessment; student admission, progression, recognition and certification; teaching staff; learning resources and student support; information management; public information; on-going monitoring and periodic review of programs and cyclical external quality assurance.

#### 1.3 STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

##### STANDARD:

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

##### GUIDELINES:

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. This means careful consideration of the design and delivery of study programmes and the assessment of outcomes.

The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching

- respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;
- considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;
- flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;
- regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods;
- encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher;
- promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship;
- has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.

Considering the importance of assessment for the students' progression and their future careers, quality assurance processes for assessment take into account the following:

- Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field;
- The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance;
- The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process;
- Where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner;
- The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances;
- Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;
- A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.

Picture 7: Standards and guidelines for *Students-centred learning, teaching and assessment* area (ESG, 2015)

The picture shows developed standards and guidelines for *Students-centered learning, teaching and assessment* area. Afterwards, these standards and guidelines are adapted and additionally operationalized in individual national systems up to the level of application during the higher education institutions' self-evaluation procedure. Final operationalization of these standards can be observed in the application of questionnaire for students' evaluation of teaching.

**Practical task 5.4: Students' evaluation of teaching in various countries**

*Individually:* How does your home university conduct evaluation of teaching? Which indicators are used in order to measure the quality of teaching?

*Task duration:* 2 hours

*Presentation form:* Poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignment

## 5.7. Internal evaluation or self-evaluation

Internal evaluation or self-evaluation in education represents a process of systemic gathering as well as synthesizing of relevant data with the aim of determining the successfulness of education policy, systems, institution, environment, program, process, employees, resources or other elements that can be used as evaluation subject. The fundamental question which evaluation seeks to answer is to which degree do certain evaluation elements achieve their purpose and goals.

Self-evaluation in general represents a process of systemic, critical and transparent questioning of one's own actions and their outcomes, and whose goal is to evaluate personal efficiency, determine the ways of improving as well as promoting professional and organizational learning. It is conducted internally, among faculty, without external pressure, control or stress.

The basic idea behind implementing self-evaluation into educational institutions is to involve subjects into monitoring and evaluation of their own working performance which enables better recognition of personal developmental needs, taking measures to improve personal job performance as well as more efficient and effective achieving of desired educational goals. Due to the fact that the evaluation's results are used more efficiently when participants independently decide or have an influence on what should be evaluated and reviewed, they individually conduct evaluation and interpret the results, which ultimately makes self-evaluation very efficient.



### Self-evaluation at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka

Responsibility for quality assurance and improvement system according to the current regulations is under Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences dean's authority who, with the help of Quality Assurance and Improvement Board, manages and conducts quality assurance system's activities and ensures support for its smooth functioning. A part of self-evaluation form, which is filled with data that reflect the degree of meeting expected standards and guidelines for *Students-centred learning, teaching and assessement* area, is presented in the picture below.

POSTUPOVNIK sustava osiguranja i unapređivanja kvalitete Filozofskog fakulteta

ESG 3. Učenje, poučavanje i vrednovanje usmjereni na studenta					
Standard: Sveučiliste i nastavnice trebaju osigurati izvodenje programa na način koji potiče studente na preuzimanje aktivne uloge u ostvarenju procesa učenja i do vrednovanja studentskih postignuća odražava takav pristup.					
Aktivnost/Standardizirani postupak	Dokument u kojem je aktivnost/postupak definiran	Pokazatelj primjene aktivnosti/postupka	Odgovori	Dinamika/rok provedbe	Dodatne napomene: mjere nakon primjene aktivnosti; obratobljenje aktivnosti
Primjena različitih nastavnih metoda Korištenje naprednih tehnologija s ciljem osuvremenjivanja nastave. Načini poučavanja prilagođeni su raznolikoj studentskoj populaciji (extracurricularna studentska populacija, izvanredni studenti, studenti starije životne dobi, podzastupljene i ranjive skupine itd.)	<a href="#">Priručnik za kvalitetu nastave</a> <a href="#">Pravilnik o studijima UNIR</a> <a href="#">Pravilnik o studiranju FFH</a>	Izvedbeni plan Rezultati vrednovanja rada nastavnika Rezultati ispitivanja zadovoljstva studenata Broj e-kolegija	Nastavni kolegija Voditelj katedri Prodekan/ca odjeka Prodekan/ca za nastavu;	Kontinuirano	U izvješću o radu izdati: Što se poduzima za unaprjeđenje ovog aspekta rada? Koje se aktivnosti provode s ciljem povećanja uspješnosti studiranja? Kakva je efikasnost postuđenih aktivnosti? Kako su studenti s njima upoznati?
Postupci vrednovanja studentskih postignuća: 1. Povratna informacija o radu	<a href="#">Pravilnik o studijima UNIR</a> <a href="#">Pravilnik o studiranju FFH</a>	Propisani način vrednovanja studentskih postignuća i način ispitivanja studenata u izvedbenom programu Javno objavljeni ispitni rokovi;	Nastavni kolegija Prodekan/ca odjeka; tajnica/i odjeka IV	Kontinuirano	Obaveza tajnica/ka odjeka uključivanje ispitnih rokova i drugih provjera tijekom nastave

Picture 8: A part of faculty's self-evaluation form

Gathered and analyzed data can represent documents that regulate quality assurance systems at the constituent level, documents that regulate teaching of every individual subject within studying program, results of students' teaching evaluation, results of students' study satisfaction, etc. Based on the conducted self-evaluation, a report that serves as a basis for institution's external evaluation is created.

### Self-evaluation of Croatian elementary schools

Self-evaluation of elementary schools, which was conducted for the first time in 2009, can also serve as an example (Bezinović, 2010). Within the self-evaluation's framework, the following elements were evaluated: material conditions, school management, teaching quality, curriculum's quality, student support during crises, students' extra-curricular activities, encouraging of students' self-initiative as well as reliability and cooperation with school's external partners. Publication describes self-evaluation methodology, subjects who participated in this process as well as used instruments in great detail.

**Kvaliteta nastave**

**Koliko je u vašoj školi općenito dobra i učinkovita nastava, poučavanje i poticanje učenika?**  
Koliko nastava zadovoljava individualne potrebe učenika? Koliko je nastava zanimljiva i koliko motivi-  
ra učenike na učenje? Koliko se koriste načela aktivnog učenja? Koliko se potiču vještine samostalnog,  
angažiranog, samoregulirajućeg učenja?

1 – jako loše										5 – izvrsno
---------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-------------

Kako to znate? Na temelju kojih pokazatelja tako procjenjujete?

Koja su najbolja obilježja poučavanja u vašoj školi i zašto?

Što treba poboljšati i što se poduzima?

Picture 9: A part of Croatian elementary schools' self-evaluation form (Bezinović, 2010)

The picture shows a part of self-evaluation form/protocol which refers to *teaching quality* area. The following questions had to be answered: Generally, how good and efficient teaching is in your school, teaching and encouraging of students (which indicators do you base your evaluation on); what are the best teaching characteristics in your school and why; what needs to be improved and which actions are being taken.

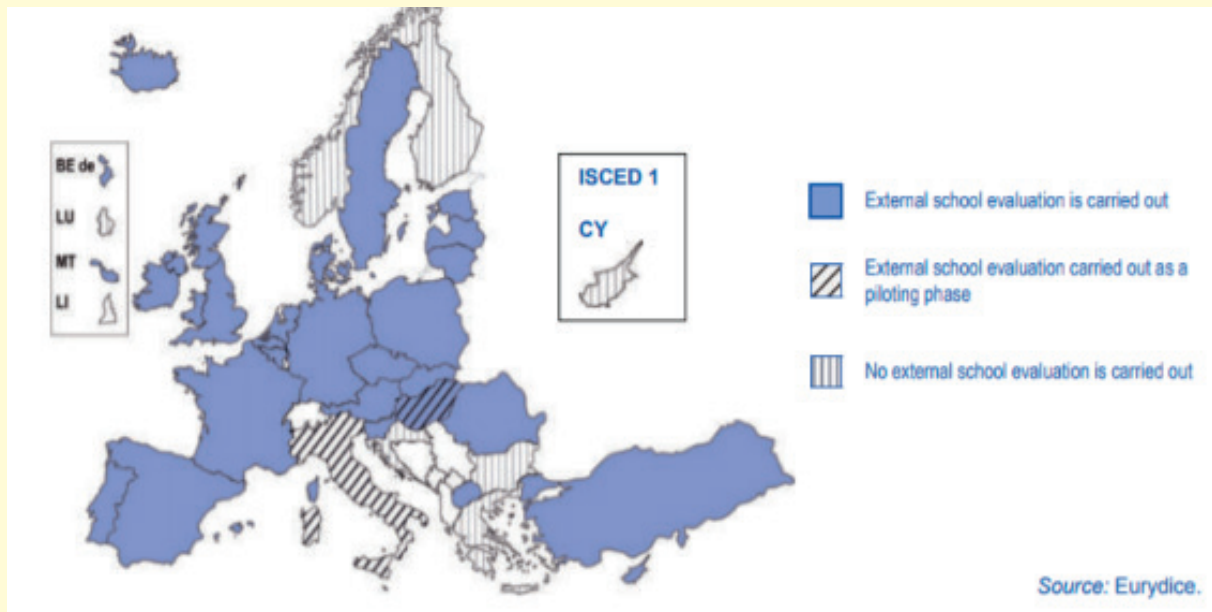
Abovementioned evaluation form is additionally used as a mean of starting up a long-lasting discussion on educational institution's quality. Furthermore, self-evaluation report represents the basis as well as starting point for the conduction of external evaluation.

## **5.8. External evaluation**

External evaluation is conducted based on the external evaluation group's expert visit, officially appointed by national coordination body. External evaluation group consists of several independent external experts from various fields, whereas their composition reflects institution's orientation towards external environment because not only the experts from the certain subject, but also representatives from other segments of external environment can become a member of the abovementioned group. It is recommended that at least one group member is a foreigner. It is important to mention that it is insisted on the connection between internal and external quality evaluation system's components: external evaluation serves as important stimulator for the internal (in the form of extrinsic motivation), while the results of internal self-evaluation represent the basis for the conduction of external evaluation. Key question during the conduction of external evaluation is whether the emphasis will be on accountability or the improvement as well as how to find a balance between these two basic purposes. The purpose of external evaluation system is mostly determined by the structure and the size of the education system, the degree of quality culture's development as well as political and cultural environment in which it is conducted. It is usually performed through peer review on the basis of self-evaluation report and experts' visit to the institution, while concluding opinion is made in accordance with previously arranged quality indicators at either state or international level. External evaluation concludes with the creation of final report that also consists of a list of recommendations for improving of evaluated institution and its performance. Based on the report and recommendations, the institutions adapt their strategic plans and create action plans in order to implement the abovementioned recommendations.

### External evaluation of schools in Europe

In the majority of European countries, external evaluation is obligatory. In most education systems (27 out of the 31 where external evaluation of schools exists), a central/top level body is responsible for the external evaluation of schools. There are two main types of bodies, more or less equally represented. The first one is a department of the central or top-level education authority, commonly identified as 'the inspectorate' or, less often, as the evaluation department. The second type is a distinct agency specifically dedicated to school inspection. In five countries, responsibilities for implementing the external evaluation of schools are decentralized to different degrees at regional or sub-regional levels.



Picture 10: Status of obligatory elementary schools' external evaluation (EC/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015)

*Question for students:* In publication, find the information on how your home country conducts external evaluation of schools. Pay attention to the following elements: Who is responsible for the conduction, which external evaluation mechanisms are being conducted, what is being evaluated and how are the evaluation's results used.

#### Practical task 5.5: External evaluation of schools

*Individually:* In recommended publication, find the information on how your home country conducts external evaluation of schools (EC/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015). Pay attention to the following elements: Who is responsible for the conduction, which external evaluation mechanisms are being conducted, what is being evaluated and how are the evaluation's results used.?

*Task duration:* 2 hours

*Presentation form:* Poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

## 5.9. Reports on evaluation's results

It is extremely important to ensure adequate way of using evaluation's results, which will reflect the fundamental purpose of the complete system. It is important to determine whose primary interest lies in the evaluation's results: individual institutions that want to improve their quality of work as well as compete with other institutions at national or international level; state who needs information for accreditation or certain groups of users in educational institutions' external environment. Reports on conducted evaluation (external and internal) have to be made public and have to be written in a style that is clear and understandable to the target audience. Every decision, recommendation or praise have to be easily accessible to the readers. Reports have to consist of descriptions, analyses (including relevant evidence), conclusions, orders and recommendations. They have to be published in easily readable form, whereas readers and the ones that will use the reports (within as well as outside relevant institutions) must be granted the possibility to comment their usefulness.

## 5.10. The use of evaluation's results

Evaluation's results can be used in various ways as the way of using them depends on whether the evaluation's purpose was primarily summative or formative. For example, after conducting self-evaluation, schools or universities may create their developmental or action plans. In the plan, numerous activities that the institution has to conduct in order to improve their results in the fields that require improvement, are concretized. Additionally, these are examples of certain activities that can be conducted: universities can organize various types of programs for higher education teachers for gaining teaching competencies; revisions of studying programs, preparation and publication of informational packages for students, starting mentoring system for freshmen and similar.

### **Practical assignment 5.6: Interview with key person responsible for quality assurance**

*Individually:* Contact the person responsible for quality assurance at the institution you study at. Conduct a short interview with him/her with the aim of gathering data on the experiences gained while conducting internal and external evaluation of the institution. Focus on the following information: how did the visit of the external group go; was the report on evaluation created; what is emphasized in the recommendations; did the institution create action plan; which activities did the institution do after conducted external evaluation and similar.

Did you, as a student, take part in the external evaluation process of institution you study at (for example, were you invited to the external evaluation group's discussion during their expert visit to the faculty)? How did the discussion go?

Prepare short presentation of results in the form of video report.

*In group:* Identify whether similarities and differences in the functioning of quality assurance systems in different systems as well as different higher education institutions exist. Single out and describe the examples of good practice in which you are able to observe significant improvements in institution's performance after conducted evaluation.

*Task duration:* 5 hours

*Presentation form:* Video report

*Deadline:* 3 weeks after assignment

## Revision questions

- » How is the concept of quality in education defined?
- » What are education policy's key points on quality in EU's documents?
- » How is the issue of quality regulated in laws and policy documents in your home country?
- » Describe the organization as well as the functioning of quality assurance system of the institution you study at.
- » How are self-evaluation and external evaluation conducted in your home country? How are the results used?
- » List several examples from the practice of quality assurance in education that exemplify the efficiency of quality assurance system.

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# 6

## ***EDUCATION POLICY ON EDUCATION FUNDING AND SOCIAL DIMENSION***

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able:

- » to describe global policy trends and challenges related to education funding;
- » to describe different ways in which responsibility for education funding is distributed between different authority levels, with the emphasis on practice in their home country;
- » to describe various ways and funding formulae according to which funds are allocated to different users, with emphasis on practices in their home countries;
- » to identify and describe pedagogical implications of education funding trends, with special emphasis on identification of social dimension in education.

### 6.1. Introduction

There are number of reasons why education policy has to take responsibility and utmost care about the issues regarding education funding. The experts agree that well-designed school funding policies are crucial to achieve quality, equity and efficiency objectives in school education. It is further emphasized that school funding policies can best be designed so that available resources are directed to supporting high quality teaching and providing equitable learning opportunities for all students. It starts from the assumption that education is an investment in the future as it brings numerous economic and social benefits to individuals and societies. Education is mostly funded by public budget's funds, but contribution to education's funding is expected in different ratios from other sources as well (education's users and their families, private subjects, etc.). The way in which individual national system conducts education funding depends on numerous factors, both those related to individual national system (for example demographic matters) and global matters and processes such as effects of global financial crisis in broader context. Some of the following key matters are reported and discussed about in publications related to education funding: how individual national systems allocate funds for education; how is responsibility for education funding distributed between different authority level; in which way are funds intended for education, allocated towards different users, i.e., in accordance with actual policy goals and priorities; which funding formulae are used; which planning methods are used in education funding context.

### 6.2. Key education policy issues regarding education funding

It is often debated whether systems that invest more financial resources into education sector ultimately end up more successful. Even though there are no empirical indicators that can offer definitive answer to this question, the experts agree that investing into education

is essential for assuring smooth system's functioning, yet it is even more important that education policy creates appropriate way of available funds' allocation into areas that require them the most. Funding policy must be carefully monitored and coordinated from educational perspective, where educational efficiency is typically conceptualized as the ability to maximize educational potential for the lowest possible cost. Simultaneously, it has to be ensured that all three key goals (quality, equity and efficiency) are realized to the same extent.

### **Investing in education in Croatia**

According to *Education and Training Monitor 2020* data for Croatia (EC, 2020), in 2018, Croatia spent 5.3% of its GDP on education (EU-27 4.6%); the share of total general government expenditure (11.5%) was also above the EU-27 average (9.9%). Between 2017 and 2018, public spending on education rose by 1.5%, with the largest increase going to pre-primary and primary education (4.2%), probably reflecting the pilot phase of the curricular reform. The state education budget for 2020 received a 7.6% increase (HRK 18.6 billion), mainly to fund a three-step increase in teachers' salaries agreed after a strike in 2019. Due to COVID-19, this will be delayed until 2021. Funding of higher education institutions (HEIs) through performance contracts is 20% higher this year.

### **Practical assignment 6.1: Investing in education in various countries**

*Individually:* How much funds is allocated for education in your home country? Check in *Education and Training Monitor 2020* (<https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2020/en/chapters/foreword.html>) publication.

*Task duration:* 2 hours

*Presentation form:* Poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignment

Newer OECD publications (2017) particularly emphasize the importance of investing into early and preschool education by presenting the following explanation: research indicates that offering high quality early childhood education and care for all children increases student achievement in later stages of the schooling process and reduces the impact of socioeconomic background on future academic performance. Another important education policy's topic is related to the need that carefully planned funding is used to reduce education failures. Another discussion is related to the importance of balanced investment into schools at different geographical locations, thinking equally about either small rural schools important for its local community's development or larger schools in urban areas that can encompass more student population.



**Key terms related to education funding (OECD,2017)**

Current expenditure: Current expenditure describes incurred costs with teaching and learning activities, teachers' and other educational staff's salaries, other operating costs and costs with assets that have a duration of less than one year, except where noted otherwise. Operating costs refer to expenses associated with the maintenance and administration of a school on a day-to-day basis (e.g., heating, electricity, small repairs, perishable instructional materials, etc.).

Capital expenditure: Funding for capital expenditures covers spending on assets that last longer than one year. It includes funds for construction, renovation or major repairs to buildings (immovable) as well as on new or replacement instructional and non-instructional equipment (e.g., furniture, laboratory equipment, computers, etc.).

Lump sum: Consists of funding for the public sector and leaves discretion to subcentral authorities over the proportion allocated to early childhood and school education.

Block grant: Consists of funds that recipients (sub-central authorities or schools) can use at their own discretion for current expenditure in early childhood or school education.

Funding formula: Refers to a universally applied rule using objective criteria to establish the amount of resources that the recipient (sub-central authority or individual school) is entitled to. The relevant authority uses a formally defined procedure (e.g., a mathematical formula with a number of variables and related coefficients) to determine the level of public funds which should be allocated.

**Practical assignment 6.2: Glossary related to Lesson 6**

*Individually*: Indicate any other word, term or concept in text you are not familiar with (eg, GDP, funding, revenue..). Let's create a small glossary related to Lesson 6!

### 6.3. Sources of school funding

There are three key sources of education funding: public, private and international funds. On average across the OECD, almost 91% of the funds for schooling come from public sources. Furthermore, 55% of initial public funds for schooling originate at the central government level, while regional and local governments contribute about 22% of initial funds each (OECD, 2017). Regarding the composition of final funds allocated to schools, central government funding of public services depends mainly on taxes, while the sub-central revenue mix includes both taxes and transfers from higher levels of government. Sub-central governments may also rely on user fees. Private sources typically play a more important role in secondary than in primary education. Certain schools can also acquire funds from different sources. For example, especially in vocational education, schools can earn money by selling their services (e.g., hairdresser, catering), renting their objects, collecting donations, providing pay-to-play extracurricular activities, etc. International funding may complement national sources of school funding. The European Union's two structural funds – the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) – are designed to promote

economic and social development and address specific needs of disadvantaged regions across the European Union. In this matter, the roles of educational authorities at national level are important, as they are responsible for appropriate management and fund allocation from international funds, as well as roles of certain schools that compete for project funds. In this context, it is important to develop capacities of both schools and employees responsible for writing project applications as well as project leadership.

### **Practical assignment 6.3: Sources of pre-tertiary education funding in various countries**

*Individually:* In relevant publications, find the way in which sources of pre-tertiary education funding are structured in your home country. What is the ratio of financial resources allocated from public, private and international funds? Talk with the principal of one vocational school. Gather data on how the school she/he leads acquires its financial resources.

*Task duration:* 4 hours

*Presentation form:* Poster

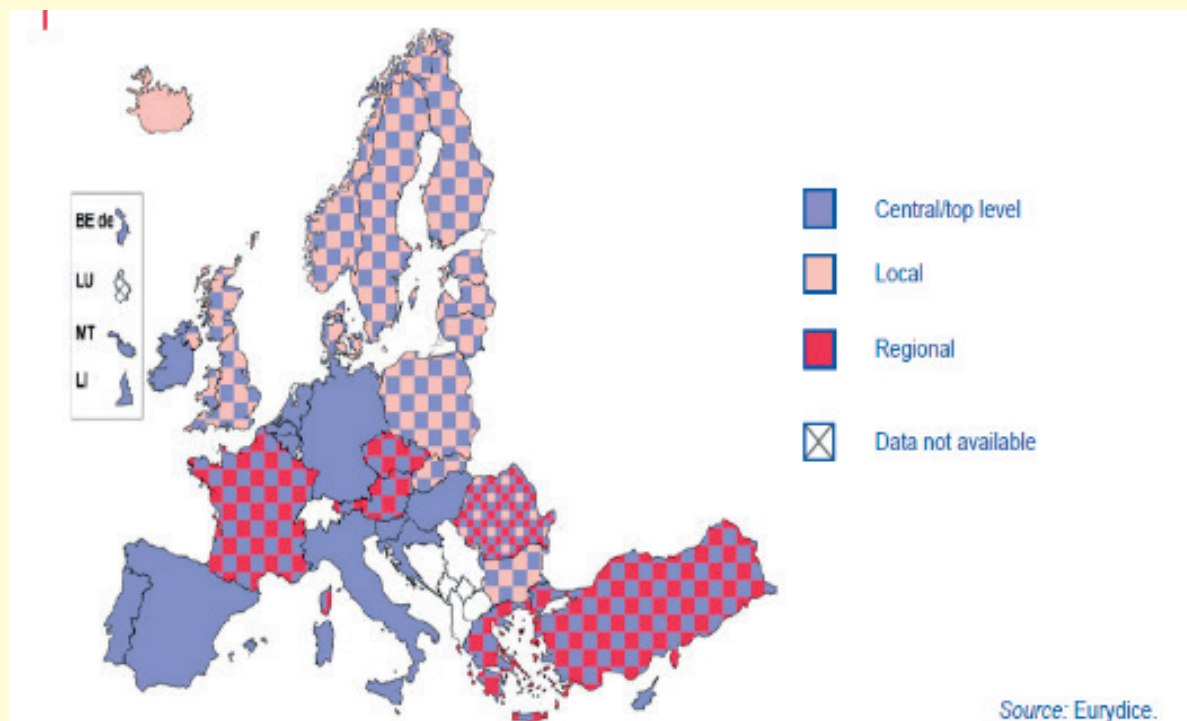
*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

## **6.4. Distributing school funding**

During the discussions about issues regarding the distribution of financial resources in education, authority level, which holds the largest amount of responsibility in certain national system for the allocation of funds towards individual school, is being particularly monitored. In many systems, there is a complex mix of responsibilities for the final allocation of funding to schools: local, regional or central authorities can be in charge to allocate the major proportion of resources to schools. Higher degree of financial decentralization will ensure that decision-makers recognize the needs of individual schools better, yet this could simultaneously lead to higher degree of inequality between schools within national system. On the other hand, higher degree of centralization can ensure more transparency which could result in equal treatment of all schools, yet it is more challenging to respect specific needs and circumstances of individual schools. In most countries in Europe, central authorities provide additional resources targeting schools that are assessed to have additional funding needs (European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice, 2016). Another important question is related to the matter of responsibility for covering specific types of costs in education: one of the most important expenses include teachers and non-teaching personnel's salaries, capital resources (movables and immovables) as well as operational goods and services.

### Levels of public authority involved in the transfer of resources for teaching staff

Picture shows the distribution of authorities held accountable for covering staff expenditure in different national systems. Furthermore, expenditure on staff represents more than 70 % of total annual education expenditure (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014).



Picture 11: Levels of public authority involved in the transfer of resources for teaching staff (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014)

Picture shows that the central or top-level education authority is involved in transferring resources for teaching staff in all countries apart from in Iceland, while in the one third of systems this level also represents the only authority level responsible for the salaries of teaching staff. For example, in northern Europe, the transfer of resources for teaching staff involves both central/top level and intermediate-level authorities.

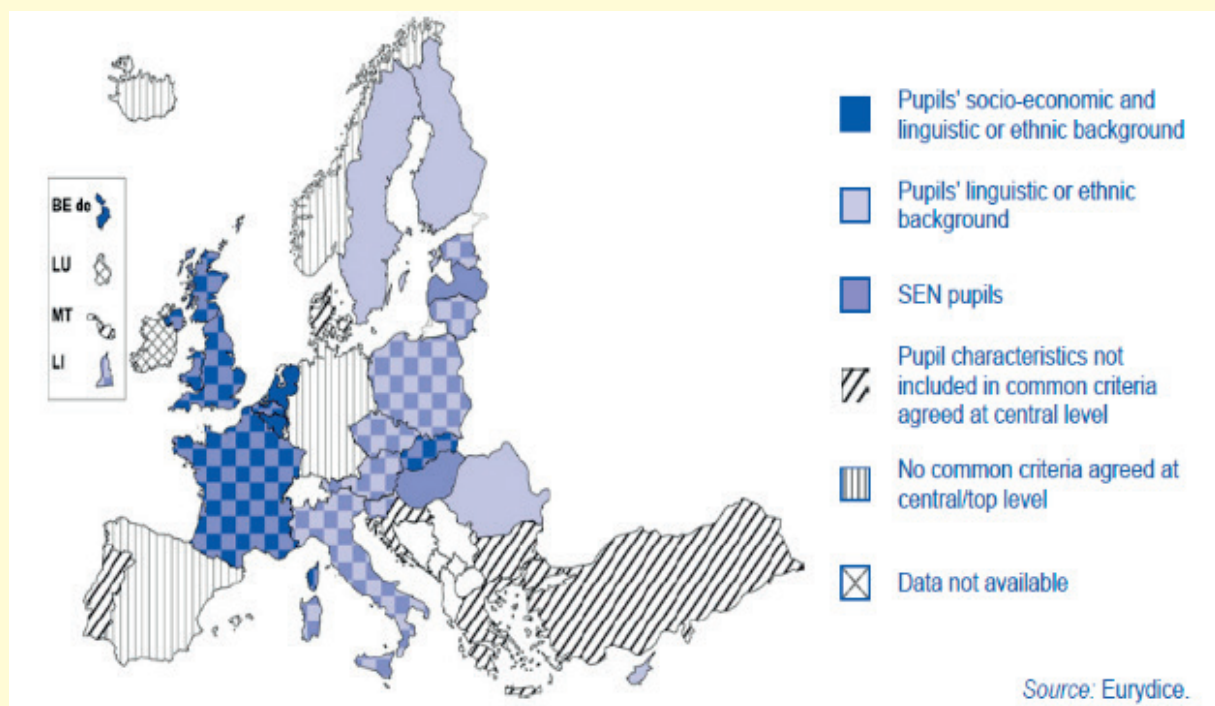
Funding formulas can be designed in various ways in order to meet different policy objectives. One of the goals can represent achieving equality. Vertical equality refers to equal treatment of users with similar needs, whereas horizontal refers to defining different ways of funding for users with different needs. Second goal can be focused on the encouragement of users' certain behavior types: e.g., either higher percentage of enrollment can be encouraged, or investments into teachers' professional development can be made in certain schools. Third goal can be market-focused, which is recognized in situations where additional funds are allocated to schools based on the number of enrolled students, in which the schools will be motivated to attract higher number of students.

In all countries, a set of measurable criteria is used by the central/top level authorities to define the amount of resource allocated to schools or intermediate authorities for staff

(EC, 2014). There are two key categories of these criteria: input based and performance-based criteria. The techniques used for making the necessary calculations vary in complexity, depending on the number of indicators considered. Vast majority of countries consider input-based criteria, with number of students as well as teachers in schools being the considered ones. Apart from that, individual school or pupil characteristics could be taken into account and thus undertake a more thorough assessment of each school's needs.

### Pupil characteristics taken into account

Picture shows that different countries take into consideration certain pupil characteristics as the basis for determining resources needed to cover teaching staff's salaries. The most considered characteristics are socio-economical, linguistic and ethnic, whereas in certain countries such as Croatia, pupil characteristics are not included in common criteria agreed at central level.



Picture 12: Pupil characteristics taken into account in determining the level of resources contributing to teaching and non-teaching staff (EC, 2014)

In around ten countries, central/top level authorities take geographical or demographic disparities into account when determining the level of resource for staff. Some of the characteristics considered are: population density of the local area; whether the school is located in a rural or urban district; additional learning needs pupils might have; pupils' mother tongue; ethnic background; socio-economic background of students, etc. Two countries only include a performance-based element in their standard criteria in calculating the level of block grants intended to cover staff costs. Different types of results, such as retention rates, actual or intended results by a school over a certain period, may be considered. While discussing fund allocation for capital resources and operational goods, the criteria mostly focus on pupil

numbers or infrastructure-related criteria, such as the number of square meters, the number of classrooms, the type of school, etc.

## 6.5. Budget planning activities

Due to the fact that discussions about budget planning activities for education purposes require higher level of economic and financial competencies, this chapter will single out only a smaller number of basic approaches to planning. Firstly, it is important to note that budget planning occurs at every education system's level, from national to school level. Experts emphasize that it is important to strategically connect spending plan with the defined policy priorities. Typical education objectives include educational quality (e.g., improving overall achievement, improving the competencies of the teaching workforce), equity and inclusiveness (e.g., additional support for students from a low socio-economic background; integration of special needs students in mainstream schools), expansion (e.g. widening access to pre-primary education, diversity of offerings in secondary education) and excellence (e.g. targeting high performers) (EC, 2017). At the same time, it is crucial to define measurable goals that want to be achieved carefully, accompanied by a range of targets with a defined time horizon. Fostering widespread awareness and a shared understanding of this strategic vision for education among different stakeholder groups and levels of authority can increase the coherence of budget planning activities across the education system.

### **Practical assignment 6.4: Resources allocation at local level in various countries**

*Individually:* Contact the person responsible for education at the local self-government unit's level in your home country. Gather information on how do they plan to spend resources allocated for education (annually, perennially), according to which criteria are the policies made, who participates in planning etc. Prepare a presentation.

*In group:* Identify similarities and differences in approaches to planning. Single out pros and cons of individual approaches. Be prepared to take part in class discussion.

*Task duration:* 5 hours

*Presentation form:* ppt presentation (max 8 slides)

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

## 6.6. Social dimension of education

Social dimension of education is a concept focused on reducing various forms of inequality and inequity that can limit both pupils and students' access to education, staying in education system as well as successful realization of learning outcomes, i.e., earning qualification. Improvements in education need to enable all students to have access to quality education early, to stay in the system until at least the end of upper secondary education,

and to obtain the skills and knowledge they will need for effective social and labor market integration.

In education policy context, social dimension of education is reflected through instruments and measures that educational authorities use, at various education system's levels – national, regional, local and institutional – with the aim of giving support to students and pupils, particularly those coming from vulnerable or marginalized social groups, in order to ensure their quality education. These measures can be both of material (financial) or non-material nature.

The highest performing education systems across OECD countries are those that combine quality with equity. Equity in education means that personal or social circumstances, such as gender, ethnic origin or family background, are not obstacles to achieving educational potential (fairness) and that all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skills (inclusion) (OECD, 2012). Students from low socio-economic background are twice as likely to be low performers. Lack of inclusion and fairness fuels school failure, of which dropout is the most visible manifestation – with 20% of young adults on average dropping out before finalizing upper secondary education.

Every country's education policy is aware that both economic and social costs of both academic failure and dropout are high, thus making investment into equitable and inclusive education, that is, investing with the aim of reducing inequalities and offering support to students coming from marginalized and vulnerable groups, simultaneously fair and cost-efficient.

**Social Dimension in Higher Education: EUROSTUDENT Study (Šćukanec, Sinković, Bilić, Doolan & Cvitan, 2015)**

Social dimension in higher education becomes important education policy matter, particularly in the Bologna reform context (Farnell & Kovač, 2010)) and is mentioned as a key goal of the discussions during regular ministerial conferences. Complete and universal definition of social dimension was approved at the London ministerial conference in 2007. According to it, the goal of social dimension is that student population which enrolls, attends and completes higher education at all levels reflects our societies' diversity with the emphasis that the students must have the possibility to complete their study programs without obstacles stemming from their social and economic status. At the Yerevan ministerial conference in 2015, Strategy for the Development of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning in European Higher Education Area to 2020, which invites state-members of Bologna process to develop efficient national policies that will ensure better access, higher participation and completion of studies for vulnerable student groups, was approved for the first time. Basic strategic goals of the afore mentioned strategy refer to:

- identification of vulnerable students and institutional obstacles at the higher education institutions' level that prevent their inclusion;

- development of national strategies with aims and measurable activities for dealing with the mentioned obstacles;
- exchanging examples of good practice regarding the improvement of social dimension;
- development of system for systematic data gathering on social dimension, continuous and efficient monitoring and evaluation of achieving expected results.

In order for policies, whose aim is to improve social dimension in higher education, to be based on data, international EUROSTUDENT study started, whose goal is to gather data on student corpus' demographic profile, students' socio-economic status, costs students have during their studies, sources of financing, students' satisfaction with various aspects of their studies, working during their studies as well as their experiences and plans for international mobility. In 2010, Croatia participated in the study for the first time. Every country participating in EUROSTUDENT writes their national report, while international comparative report is still in the making (<https://www.eurostudent.eu/>). Policy recommendations, formed on the gathered data's basis, which can serve educational authorities in the relevant decision-making process as they are trying to improve social dimension of education, can be found in the report.

Summary of the results on studying's financial aspects, referring to the cost structure during studying as well as students' income, can serve as an illustration. Based on the student groups, higher portion of costs during studies is generally reserved for life costs (accommodation, food, transport, communications, healthcare, children, social activities etc.) and studying costs (tuition fee, enrollment fee, materials, giving, etc.). Sources of income usually include: family, job, savings, loan, scholarship and other income. Scholarships are usually awarded via national institutions (Ministry and national foundations), followed by local governments, higher education institutions, companies and other institutions that support the development of higher education. As a part of the answer to the question of seriousness of financial hardships, several student groups, who evaluate their hardships significantly more serious compared to other students, are particularly singled out: students of professional public studies, extramural students, students who enrolled into college after they turned 21, students-parents, students who have finished vocational high schools as well as students whose parents have lower levels of education. Simultaneously, these student groups have higher percentage of members who were not awarded with scholarships. With that being said, this study very clearly defines the most vulnerable student groups, who encounter problems regarding sufficient income needed to cover studying costs in Croatia. Education policy leaders should direct public system of financial support for students towards improving of the vulnerable student groups' position, followed by giving support primarily on the basis of needs.

#### **Practical assignment 6.5: EUROSTUDENT data in various countries**

*Individually:* Does your home country participate in EUROSTUDENT study? Single out key findings on social dimension in higher education in your country.

*Task duration:* 4 hours

*Presentation form:* ppt presentation (max 8 slides)

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

### **Revision questions**

- » list key policy trends and challenges regarding education funding and support them with either examples or key indicators;
- » describe the way in which responsibility for education funding between different authority levels is

distributed in your home country;

- » describe which funding formulae for allocating funds to different users are applied in your home country;
- » describe the concept of social dimension in education;
- » describe and support with appropriate indicators the way in which the financing trends are reflected on concrete pedagogical practice in your home country.

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# 7

## *EDUCATION POLICY ON CURRICULUM ISSUES*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able:

- » to single out key policy documents' points regarding curriculum issues;
- » to analyze practices at international, national and local level that reflect policy trends as well as advocacy for certain curriculum issues;
- » to describe actual evaluation programs of key competencies as well as describe in which way are the results for policy-decisions related to curriculum issues used.

### 7.1. Introduction

Curriculum is often labeled as education policy's key instrument which can be used in order to influence the quality, efficiency and a number of other education system's characteristics. Education policy regarding curriculum issues is most frequently followed by having an insight into policy documents' contents that dictate what, how and why it will be taught in public educational institutions. Additionally, valuable indicators can be gained by monitoring either the conduction of comprehensive curriculum reforms which occur within certain education systems or curriculum's smaller periodical changes. Curriculum interventions are always strongly connected with actual political, socio-economic and cultural movements. At the same time, they equally strongly reflect international, national and local interests (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Never politically nor value-neutral, curriculum emits a number of important education policy's messages. One of these messages is related to the authority distribution, as well as form of control over education system during the period in which curriculum reform is encouraged. These are some of the most frequently observed and analyzed issues in the context of relationship between education policy and curriculum reform: who and in which way participates in the creation, implementation and evaluation of national curriculum; which curriculum elements are enacted and prescribed at either national or regional, i.e., local level; in which way are the attitudes of different political, social and cultural groups reflected through curriculum.

#### **Practical assignment 7.1: Glossary related to Lesson 7**

*Individually:* Indicate any word, term or concept in text you are not familiar with (eg, curriculum, competencies...). Let's create a small glossary related to Lesson 7!

### 7.2. Key policy documents' points regarding curriculum issues

If the key policy documents' contents at the EU level were interpreted (e.g., EC, 2018), strong advocacy for the development of the, so called, *transversal* skills, which should

help individuals to *better adapt to labor market*, can be noticed, whereas the development of the abovementioned competencies is recommended through a list of interventions into the existing school and teaching programs followed by the development of instruments needed for their evaluation. School curriculum interventions can be tracked through other international initiatives focused on the strengthening of certain groups of desirable social competencies, such as those that prepare an individual for *active citizenship, environmental protection and sustainable development, interculturality or society informatization*. Globalization processes' influence on the creation of actual (curricular) education policies is not only connected with growing interest for the issues of cultural identity, education's internationalization, strengthening of communication as well as exchange of information at global level, but also with certain socially relevant issues such as ensuring social justice, i.e., improving education's accessibility to certain marginalized social groups.

### **Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning: European Reference Framework (EC, 2018)**

Document emphasizes that encouraging competency development is one of the goals of the vision, which aims to create European education area, within whose framework, full education and culture's potential as a motor for the creation of new jobs, achieving social justice and active citizenship as well as mean of experiencing European identity in all its diversity, could be used. A list of benefits, that developing key competencies would bring for people, are emphasized, for example: maintaining quality of life standard, maintaining high employment rate, encouraging social cohesion, i.e., fulfillment, staying healthy, ensuring resistance as well as the ability to adapt to change, etc. Simultaneously, the document warns about the results of OECD's international PISA and PIAAC studies that indicate permanently high percentage of teenagers and adults who lack basic life skills (e.g., OECD, 2016). The importance of education for sustainable development and sustainable way of living, human rights, gender equality, promoting culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, respecting cultural diversity as well as intercultural understanding and culture's contribution to sustainable development is encouraged. Language learning is highlighted as getting increasingly important for modern societies, intercultural understanding and cooperation; learning STEM contents as well as developing entrepreneurial competencies is key while choosing a profession in industry and economy. It is stated that new ways of learning should be studied for increasingly more mobile society which, more often than not, relies on digital technology. The importance of skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, the ability to cooperate, creativity, digital thinking and self-regulation are being emphasized.

In that context, the Reference Framework sets out eight key competences:

- Literacy competence;
- Multilingual competence;
- Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering;
- Digital competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Citizenship competence;
- Entrepreneurship competence;
- Cultural awareness and expression competence.

The document describes each individual competency into great detail (essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to each competence). Additionally, variety of learning approaches and environments, support for educational staff and assessment and validation of competence development is suggested.

Furthermore, OECD's documents emphasize that knowledge and skills have become the global currency of 21st century economies and the demand for skills continues to shift towards more sophisticated tasks (OECD, 2017). It's emphasized that the knowledge economy calls for much more than the memorization of facts or the performance of mechanical, repetitive tasks. Individuals are required to understand complex concepts, apply their knowledge to real life settings, analyze and evaluate information in various formats, make decisions based on evidence, and transform and produce new knowledge while also being able to make effective use of new technologies, to work collaboratively and to communicate effectively.

#### **Practical assignment 7.2: National curriculum framework in various countries**

*Individually:* Search for key policy document that regulates *national curriculum framework* in your home country. For example, In Croatia, line Ministry of Science and Education publishes annual performance curricula frameworks for school subjects for the current school year, in which a set of basic learning outcomes/teaching contents that students have to realize for each school subject, is determined. From the document, single out basic idea, purpose and goals and compare them with recommendations listed in relevant international authorities' policy documents on curricular issues.

*Task duration:* 4 hours

*Presentation form:* written report (max 3 pages)

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

#### **Practical assignment 7.3: Curricular reforms in various countries**

*Individually:* Comprehensive Curricular Reform as well as project "Škola za Život/School for Life" represent key national projects (curricular reforms) that have recently being carried out in Croatia. Both initiatives have stirred up huge interest in the Croatian public and media. Was curricular reform recently carried out in your home country? Gather key information on curriculum reform's characteristics that is being carried out or was conducted in the recent past in your home country. You can find the needed information on the line ministry's official website as well as in media. Consequently, prepare short presentation.

*In group:* Identify similarities and differences of curriculum reform's characteristics in different countries. Be prepared to take part in class discussion.

*Task duration:* 5 hours

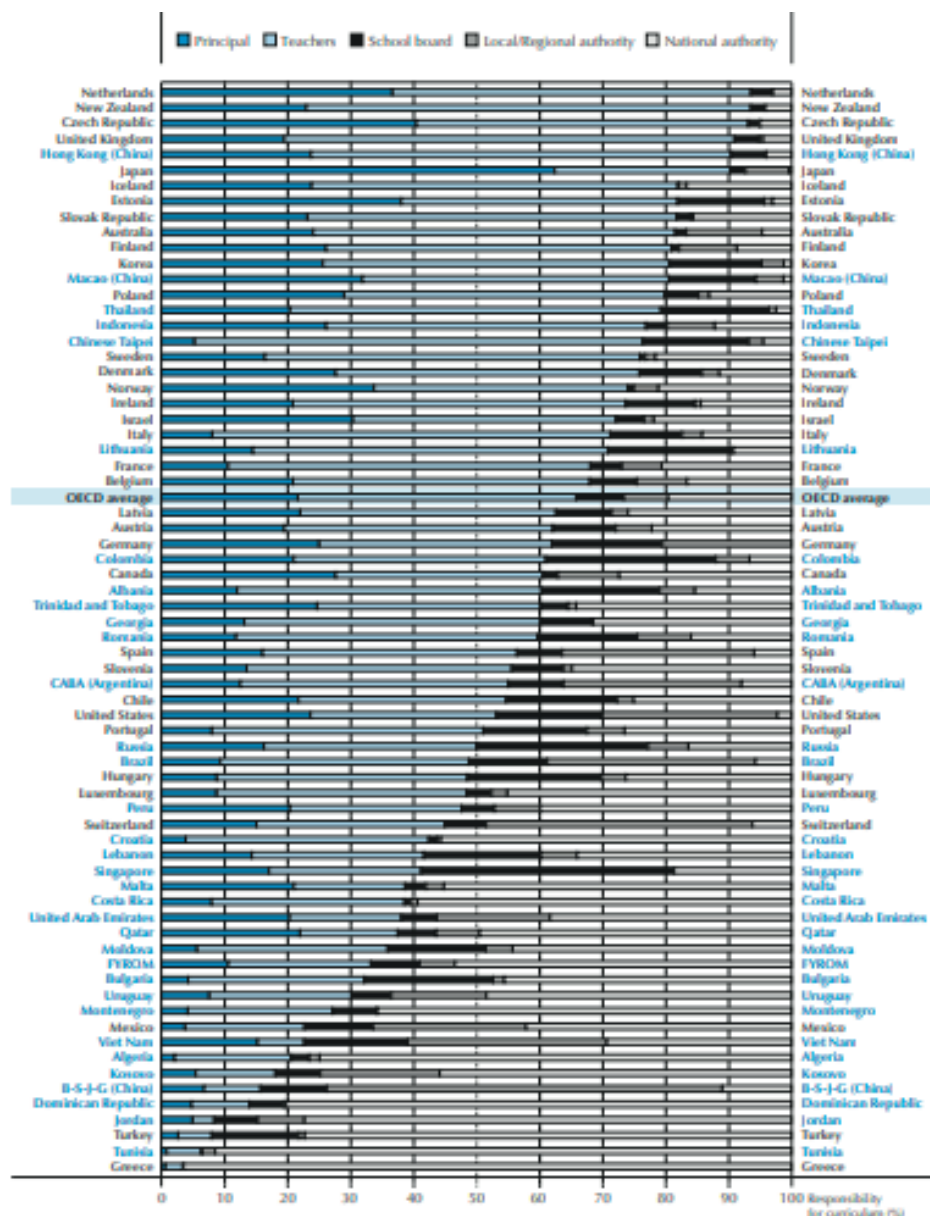
*Presentation form:* ppt presentation (max 6 slides)

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

### **7.3. Policy trends' characteristics and examples related to curriculum issues**

Although discussion about education policy's key characteristics related to curriculum issues requires more complex methodological approach as well as insight into bigger corpus of empirical data, it is possible to single out several simpler illustrations of these characteristics which can encourage further analyses. One of the key (national) education policy's characteristics on curriculum stems from the answer to the question: which (educational)

authority level makes decisions regarding curriculum issues, which repeatedly raises up the question of the relationship between management centralization and decentralization (see Picture 1). Picture 1 shows that in Croatia, issues regarding curriculum are predominantly related to the authority operating at national level, whereas the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Iceland and Finland predominately regulate these issues at school as well as unit of local self-government's level. Rizvi & Lingard (2010) comment that, in the global education policies context, when the curriculum issues are being observed as policy instrument needed for achieving better economic efficiency of a particular country, decisions related to curriculum, become priorities of the national level authorities to a larger extent.



Picture 13: Responsibility distribution at different authority level for curriculum issues (OECD,2015)

One of the characteristics can additionally be related to the monitoring of either contents' predominant areas or competencies which are being implemented into national or school curricula. Furthermore, by observing initiatives at both education policy's regional and local level, it is possible to notice introduction as well as implementation practices of those curriculum dimensions which are either neglected in national curriculum, or they represent local community's specific need or interest. For example, in Croatia, significant attention was brought by City of Rijeka's initiative on the implementation of civic education (MSE, 2019) as an extracurricular activity across schools in Rijeka.

### **Civic education in the City of Rijeka**

City of Rijeka is the first Croatian city that implemented Civic education as a school subject in elementary schools located across its area. Rijeka did it in order to promote non-violence, tolerance, solidarity as well as to develop human values in students which are based on accepting and including diversity, respecting human rights and understating life in civil society. Enrolling into this subject has been enabled to students in Rijeka since 2016/2017 school year. For the above-mentioned curriculum, City of Rijeka created a guidebook for students, which was offered for free to all cities, counties and municipalities that wanted to implement Rijeka's learning model. Additionally, in the published analysis of education policies, training and education in EU state-members for 2018, while analyzing Croatia, European Commission especially emphasized "Rijeka's model" of civic education (more information on this topic is available at the website: <https://gradanskiodgoj.rijeka.hr/o-gradanskom-odgoju/>).

Education policy's additional characteristic on curriculum can stem from leading expert, political or ideological debates' content, which reflect the attempts to influence the formation of certain (national or school) curriculum's elements. Until recently, education policy issues regarding curriculum were mostly out of public's focus. Recently, there are more discussions in media on (national) curriculum's issues as different expert, interest or political groups more frequently express their opinions and interests on curriculum topics in public. In Croatia, more notable discussions were held about the implementation of civic education in school curricula. Additionally, the position of religious education as a facultative subject was questioned as well as the need for the implementation of sexual education.

### **Practical assignment 7.4: public interest in curricular issues in various countries**

*Individually:* Research whether media in your home country publishes contents regarding education policy on curriculum issues. Single out key topics and discussions. Identify which interest groups, and in which way, advocate for curriculum topics that they support. Prepare short presentation.

*Task duration:* 3 hours

*Presentation form:* written report (max 3 pages)

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

## 7.4. Key competence evaluation's policies and practices

Education policy's advocacy for curriculum issues can be monitored through initiatives and projects concerning evaluation of students' achievements at different standardized achievement tests. Achievement testing becomes crucial education policy's instrument that is needed in order to obtain data about the efficiency of both education systems and individual institutions. At international level, the most famous and the most comprehensive testing is conducted by OECD, not only within the framework of the already-mentioned PISA and PIAAC programs, but also the others such as TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) which determine the level of achievement in basic literary domains. Apart from basic literary domains, achievements in other key competency groups are being tested. For example, within the ICCS (International Civic & Citizenship Education Study) program's framework, students' knowledge as well as understanding of the terms and topics related to civic education is assessed, followed by the report on their values, attitudes and behaviors.

PISA 2018 study has, for the first time, along with reading, mathematical and scientific literacy, assessed student's global competence (OECD, 2020). Four dimensions of global competence were encompassed by the questions. *The capacity to examine issues of local, global and cultural significance* dimension refers to the application of knowledge about the world as well as critical thinking while forming an opinion on certain issue such as poverty, migration, inequality, environmental risks, conflicts, stereotypes, etc. Second dimension refers to *understanding and appreciating different perspectives and world views*. Third dimension assess the student's capacity to *establish positive interactions with people of different national, ethnic, religious, social or cultural backgrounds or gender*. Fourth global competence dimension refers to the student's ability and capacity to *take constructive action towards sustainable development and collective well-being*. Across all countries and economies, positive associations were observed between performance on the cognitive test and students' attitudes and dispositions, notably with students' respect for people from other cultures, attitudes towards immigrants and self-efficacy regarding global issues.

### **Practical assignment 7.5: PISA research on students' global competence**

*Individually:* Analyze PISA results on students' global competence. Identify which results did students from your home country achieve. Prepare several recommendations for policy-makers focused on the strengthening of those competencies for which the students showed lower achievement levels.

*Task duration:* 5 hours

*Presentation form:* Poster

*Deadline:* 1 week after assignement

Different types of standardized tests, whose aim is to assess students' achievements after finishing certain education level, are conducted at national level. In Croatia, after graduating from high school, State Matura exams are conducted. State Matura tests and assesses students' knowledge, skills and abilities gained during elementary and high school education in accordance with regulated curricula. Based on the State Matura results, every student's knowledge is being objectively assessed, after which comparable score of all students can be obtained, which consequently enables further education or employment. In education policy context, it is important to monitor in which way educational authorities and individual schools approach to the analysis of the results obtained at various standardized tests, whether they use them, and if they do, in which way, in order to make policy decisions.

### Practical task for students 7.6: Standardized state exam in various countries

*Individually:* Research whether your home country conducts (and if it does, in which way), standardized state exams. Find out public reports on the state exam results. Examine the way in which the state exam results are used at either national or school level. You can gather data by searching either line ministry or institution authorized to conduct national exams' websites. Additionally, you can conduct an interview with previously mentioned institution's contact person. Prepare short presentation.

*Task duration:* 5 hours

*Presentation form:* written report (max 2 pages)

*Deadline:* 2 weeks after assignment

## Revision questions

- » Single out recommendations regarding key competencies from EU's policy documents. Afterwards, list the competencies in question.
- » State at which authority level are the decisions regarding curriculum issues made in your home country.
- » Single out examples of trends and practices which reflect certain education policy issues related to curriculum in your home country.
- » Single out key results of your home country students on PISA test in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy as well as on global competence assessment. Create several recommendations for policy-makers at national level.

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# 8

## *EDUCATION POLICY ANALYSIS*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able:

- » to describe problem-solving technique for the purposes of education policy's policy analysis,
- » use practical instructions for education policy analysis on a selected example from the education policy area.

### 8.1. Introduction

Both school counselors and other educational employees are often required to analyze education policy during their professional careers. For example, they identify education policy issues in direct practice; collect data required to understand the problem; communicate with professional community; participate in public discussions; speak out about identified problems, and are trying to actively influence changes. Although they do not have to become experts - policy analysts in order to do the previously mentioned activities, it is always useful to develop and use education policy analysis skills.

Education policy analysis is appropriate in situations in which experts are trying to come up with solutions for different policy problems. These kinds of analyses are based on either current problems or policy-makers/practitioners' requirements to solve identified problems. In this context, the problem is defined as an unsatisfactory condition or situation that has to be either changed or improved. In this matter, education policy analysis is perceived as a rational process that implies phased approach. It is characterized by several predefined phases or stages that begin with analysis of existing condition, determining as well as selecting the most optimal course of action, followed by implementation and evaluation of the applied solutions.

Moreover, for the purpose of education policy analysis models' practical application, several key phases will be introduced and described:

- » defining and describing problem;
- » data collection;
- » recommending policy option/solution;
- » evaluating policy options;
- » selecting the best option.

The abovementioned elements describe simplified and adapted education policy analysis model introduced by Bardach (2008) that is primarily created for students and beginning practitioners. In reality, policy analysis is conducted by a team of differently profiled experts

(political scientists, economists, lawyers). Policy analysis can be requested by different group of clients (e.g., politicians), while its results are delivered as a written report, presentation or any other adequate form. Public (practical) policy recommendations can be suggested by experts competent in policy education, yet only authorities in charge possess the decision-making power, i.e., authority to legitimize suggested option (e.g., by passing a law, writing rulebooks, strategies, etc.). It is important to mention that numerous authors, especially those specialized in political sciences, have critically examined both the scope and the limits of linear rationalistic approach to education policy analysis. Consequently, they criticized it by stating that it does not pay enough attention to broader context in which certain policies are made and conducted (for more information see Grdešić, 1995; Hill, 2010; Spasenović; 2019). Due to the abovementioned reasons, presented model includes broader (social, political, value) context analysis, whereas regular linear phased model is expanded with not only the possibility to use more iterations of individual stages/steps as well as return to previous stages, but also to modify previous stages according to newly acquired insights.

#### **Practical assignment 8.1: Glossary related to Lesson 8**

*Individually:* Indicate any word, term or concept in text you are not familiar with (eg, micropolitics, policy option..). Let's create a small glossary related to Lesson 8!

## **8.2. Defining policy problem**

Defining problem represents policy analysis' first stage: above all, this stage emphasizes the reasons why problem analysis has to be carried out, while simultaneously representing a guide during data collection activities. The way in which the problem is defined in its very beginning will largely influence the way in which case report will be created. Bardach (2008) singles out several recommendations that analysts should adhere to while defining *policy* problem.

Defining problem stage can be simplified/made easier if the terms deficit and excess are used. Additionally, using prefix too- can also help in problem definition (i.e., "too slow growth", "too fast growth", etc.) because it shifts the attention towards problems that currently seem to be under control, but have the potential to become an issue in either near or distant future. The following examples illustrate these statements.

### Examples of policy problem formulation

- Too few preschool children enter preschool education institutions
- In practice, there are too few teaching assistants, i.e., professional communication mediators that will enable adequate inclusion of all children with special needs in regular education.
- Too few Roma children finish elementary education in Croatian education system.
- In Croatia, a deficit in the number of enrolled students into three-year vocational schools has been recorded.

During the defining problem stage, it is highly probable that subjects will not be able reach an agreement whether the facts which are defined as a problem, actually represent one (different subjects have different perspectives regarding what represent a problem in reality). It is important to raise the following questions: What justifies the process of defining certain problems as public (of public interest), consequently justifying spending/investing of public resources in order to deal with the previously identified problems?

The following situations illustrate justified presentation of the identified problems as those of public interest:

- » collapse of either complete system or its portion (e.g., organization of practical teaching during “lockdown” period);
- » individual’s low life standard which denies them their right to education;
- » discrimination against certain marginalized or vulnerable groups in education;
- » government’s failure in fields in which its efficiency is expected (e.g., ensuring regular functioning of either kindergartens or public school systems).

### Examples of argued policy problems

- Insufficient involvement of Roma minority children in elementary education consequently leads to population’s low level of education as well as reduced human resources needed to strengthen country’s economy. Due to the unfinished elementary education, students may find it difficult to find a job during their lives which leads to the increase of socially vulnerable groups, social isolation as well as unfulfillment of their intellectual potentials.

- Insufficient number of students causes long-term abolition of three-year vocational school programs by the Ministry of Education which results in firing of not only professionally trained teachers of those programs, but also that school’s professional personnel.... A steady decline in the number of students enrolled into 1<sup>st</sup> grades of three-year vocational schools as well as abolishing certain programs indicates a deficit of professionally trained workers in Croatia.

First, during the further elaboration of the problem, it is desirable to include certain quantitative features into definition. Second, it is necessary to collect data/information that will

help in determining problem's significant dimensions. Additionally, it is important to precisely determine what is the meaning of "too little of something", "too much of something", "too fast growth" or "too slow growth". Lastly, it is important to collect data that describe problem's relevant dimensions more closely.

#### More precise quantitative features

"The newest data taken from the Statistical yearbook indicate that 10.909 students enrolled into 1<sup>st</sup> grades of three-year vocational schools during 2015/2016 school year. If we compare this data with the number of enrolled students into 1<sup>st</sup> grades of three-year vocational schools during 2005/2006 school year, which stands at 15.531, we can conclude that there are 4.622 less students in 1<sup>st</sup> grades, i.e., 30% of students in a span of 10 years".

It is important to identify certain problematic conditions that can be perceived as the cause of the problem. Sometimes, it is useful to define these diagnosed problems as ones that need to be mitigated or removed.

#### Examples of identified conditions, i.e., causes of policy problem

„Regarding the conditions that can become potential causes of the problem (insufficient inclusion of Roma minority children in elementary education), it is important to point out identified negative attitudes of their parents regarding education's benefits".

Hidden opportunities represent a special type of problem. Namely, a vast majority of analysts' work is based on identified objections, threats, worries and challenges, due to which they invest insufficient time and energy into thinking about improvements regarding the framework of the already existing opportunities which are not visible on the first sight in both narrower and wider environment. In the following table, ways in which as well as locations where hidden opportunities can be found, are listed.

<b>A LIST OF SOCIAL WELFARE'S GENERAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT OFTEN REMAIN UNDETECTED (adapted from Bardach, 2008)</b>	
COMPLEMENTARITY	It is possible to merge two or more activities in order to increase their mutual productivity
RESOURCE SUBSTITUTION	The world is filled with opportunities to substitute existing resources with cheaper ones which are currently being used in (production) process, while obtaining similar results
EXCHANGE	Unknown exchange opportunities that can increase social value exist among different subjects
MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS	System can be created in a way where certain parts have the potential to perform two or more functions

NONTRADITIONAL SUBJECTS	Identify employees or groups of users that occasionally possess the knowledge required to develop programs which can be usefully implemented
UNUSED OPPORTUNITIES	In numerous communities, school objects are considered unused (they are used for limited purposes, and only during certain part of the day and year)

### Examples of hidden opportunities

As a vocational education problem's hidden opportunity, we can observe potential media's influence on the public awareness regarding the problem as well as media campaign's influence on the strengthening of vocational education's positive image, which could start the problem-solving process.

While defining problem, two things should be avoided:

*Including/offering solution in problem's definition.* Defining problem must not implicitly include a solution. Solutions should be found by conducting empirical studies, which makes it inappropriate to offer solution while the process of determining and describing problem is still in motion. Moreover, while the problem is still being defined and described, the path for potential solution should remain open for suggestions. For example, it is inappropriate to define problem as: "New schools are being built too slow" because this directly insinuates that the best solution would be "build more schools as fast as possible", while more efficient use of the available resources is being neglected. It is better to formulate the problem as "The number of children in schools is too high in regard to currently available number and the size of classrooms".

*Conditions which cannot be improved can turn into problems on their own.* Numerous analysts claim that it is inefficient to define unimprovable conditions as problems (e.g., the amount of available money, unfavorable geographical location). They emphasize that problems should be treated as opportunities to improve existing states and situations, whereas defined problems should be treated as opportunities to choose among several possible options. Therefore, the process of defining problem transforms into a process of researching, creating as well as initial examining of potential ideas that could help to solve the problem.

An important element of policy problem's description refers to both the list and the description of policy process' subjects that appear as involved as well as interested in the context of the observed problem. In this matter, it is important to determine why is the problem relevant from different subjects' perspective, i.e., in which way does the problem reflect on every individual subject. In order to identify the subjects that act within certain policy area more easily, Grdešić (1995) offers typology of policy process' subjects that singles out those that act within state authority (holders of executive power, political representatives

or delegates, civil servants, etc.) as well as those that act independently of state authority (e.g., interest groups, scientists, syndicates, the public, media).

One of the suggested ways of analyzing policy process' identified subjects imposes recognition as well as description of their variable characteristics (Johnson, 2001).

<b>Demographic variables</b>	<b>Structural variables</b>
Interest group's size	Originality of group's incentive
Interest group's age	Members' requirements towards the group
Members' diversity	Constellation of membership's incentive: material, solidary or purposeful
Members' geographical dispersion	Members' attitude towards the group. Duty, involvement
Group's solidarity compared to goals	Other
Group's longevity (episodic or continuous)	
Number of employed professional personnel	
Other	
<b>Organizational structure's variables</b>	<b>Variables of political influence – efficiency</b>
Degree of organization	Primary focus in political decision-making arena: simple or multiple
Individual or group membership	Political resources/capital
Organizational stability	Actors' level of acceptance in political system as a legitimate group and voice
Management structure	The degree of political success
Degree of bureaucracy	Used influence strategies
Degree of internal democratization	Other
Spatial complexity	
Focus complexity	
Other	

The question why one would attempt to describe the subjects according to the listed characteristics is being raised. Namely, if we adequately describe particular subjects (individuals or groups), we can better understand their activities, advantages and disadvantages based on the previously mentioned characteristics. Additionally, it is possible to identify suitable area in which we can intervene with certain policy solution recommendation, which is based on the abovementioned characteristics' framework. Moreover, a question regarding the necessity of analyzing subjects according to every previously listed variable characteristic is being raised. Generally, it is sufficient to select several characteristics which can be identified as particularly important or interesting for certain subjects, whereas certain ones will neither be helpful nor will they offer information which can be useful during particular analysis. It is important to list as many actors as possible, deeply think about each

of them and be as creative as possible during the description process. The following table lists several illustrative examples of variable characteristics described in detail, alongside offered suggestions for the use of the information in problem definition phase during policy analysis creation.

<b>SELECTED VARIABLES</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>
Interest group's size	<i>Refers to the number of subjects in the entire population (e.g., general number of students, students of particular class such as seniors or a number of students from marginalized group; general number of teachers or teachers of the particular subject, etc.). This data can reveal that the size of the particular interest group can possess the potential to convince policy-makers that the problem involves too many subjects and as such it cannot be ignored; or one could think about the ways in which the group could be organized if a large group, which does not possess any organizational structure, is in question.</i>
Members' geographical dispersion	<i>Both groups that are gathered on a smaller area as well as those spread around whole country exist. Certain groups can organize themselves either easier or harder based on certain geographical area. For example, teachers are not only organized based on schools, but also geographical location (e.g., County expert groups of Geography teachers).</i>
Group's longevity (episodical or continuous)	<i>These data present the fact that certain groups stay in their role for a short period of time (e.g., seniors play that role only during one school year). In that case, it is hard to rely on a solution that implies one group's activities during a longer period of time, therefore, certain interventions will start earlier (e.g., when students enroll in either 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of high school).</i>
Political resources/ capital	<i>For every actor, it is necessary to determine which resources they do or do not possess. These data are important because one stage towards solution can include a situation in which a group can ensure resources (e.g., expert knowledge) which the other group in question currently does not possess (e.g., professional association can organize education on their own accord; minister can give an order to the Agency to organize educations, etc.).</i>

### 8.3. Collecting data/evidence

*The purpose of collecting data.* Thinking about the problem as well as searching for/collecting data represent two fundamental *policy* analysis activities in the latter requires significant time investment for the activities such as: reading documents, searching databases, studying literature, thinking about studies and statistical data, interviewing and scheduling or attending meetings with relevant individuals. During policy analysis, more often than not, the analyst does not have a lot of time at their disposal, and they have to rationally manage their time as well as collect the most relevant data. This means that during data collection process, data that can be transformed into "information" relevant for the analysis should be collected first, followed by its transformation into "evidence" that is related to the analyzed problem. This type of evidence is important for *policy* analysis because it is later used to create real



projections of the potential observed problem's *policy* outcomes.

Evidence/data collection stage is important due to three main reasons:

1. determining the nature and the size of problem that we are trying to define,
2. determining special features of the concrete *policy* situation that is being observed,
3. determining *policies* about which somebody previously thought about, similar situations in which somebody achieved effective results, but in different contexts (space and time).

*Data*: facts; they encompass all statistical data or empirical indicators (number of students, teachers, schools, etc.)

*Information*: they consist of data that carry meaning so they can be potentially used to divide/classify the phenomenon into different logical and empirical categories (data about the scholarship cost at certain higher education institution becomes an information when we create comparative list from it, e.g., from the lowest to the highest scholarship amount among five states).

*Evidence*: information that influences people's current beliefs about important characteristics of the problem that is being studied as well as ways in which it can be solved or reduced (e.g., different scholarship cost in particular systems can be put into relation with the policy regarding the availability of higher education to different student groups).

*Intertwining of problem definition and data collection processes.* Activities related to thinking about the problem as well as data collection on the problem intertwine and complement each other. A common mistake which can occur during this stage is spending time on collecting data that have either small or non-existing potential to transform into evidence. Therefore, before making decision regarding data collection, it is necessary to think about the data relevant for more precise problem defining process.

*The value of evidence.* Due to the fact that creating every piece of evidence takes a lot of time and resources, it is necessary to compare its most probable cost with its most probable value.

Generally, the value of every piece of evidence depends on the following factors:

- » Probability that it will cause substitution of certain resolution with a better one,
- » Probability that the substituted resolution would, either directly or indirectly, produce better *policy* outcome compared to the one produced by the initial resolution,
- » Value discrepancy between initial outcomes and the improved ones.

*The usefulness of assumptions and evaluations.* In certain scenarios, analyst can, based on their reflections (instead of collected concrete data), uncover valuable assumptions, i.e., evaluations regarding certain situation. Although this practice cannot represent an excuse

for the shortening of the time invested into collecting data necessary for policy analysis, occasionally these evaluations can result in significant time and resource savings. These types of practice are permitted only in situations when concrete data cannot significantly differ from the analyst's expert evaluation, whereas the difference between the evaluation and realistic data would not significantly impede either the understanding of the problem or the selection of the way in which the problem will be solved.

*Review of the available literature.* Almost every problem can represent certain academic discipline's research subject. In this context, it is necessary to examine relevant sources (expert and scientific books and magazines, online websites, means of public communication, public documentation, statistical data, etc.) in which various notions regarding the studied problem (theories, study results, case studies, practitioners' reflections, etc.) are published. Collected data can be used in numerous situations: understanding of the education system's development trends, identifying pros and cons, comparison at both national and international level, determining the needs for (political) actions, etc. In this matter, one should carefully approach the sources of information, especially those published on the Internet. Even though numerous interest organizations publish a significant number of interesting publications and data, their reliability and validity can be questionable.

*The use of analogies.* Occasionally, it is useful to collect data which at first both seem difficult to compare as well as unrelated to the studied problem, yet at the deeper level, it is possible to find significant similarities between them. Certain analogies (similarities, congruences) are easier to spot, and they make more sense compared to others.

#### **Example of an analogy**

The way in which one gets license in order to work in certain profession can be partially copied during the implementation of this practice in some other profession. For example, licensing practice has been present in the medical profession for a longer period of time. Nowadays, the implementation of educational institution principals' licensing is planned, a process which has not been considered until recently.

*Meeting potential critics and backers.* It is beneficial to meet subject groups interested for analysis' results. In this context, it is not only beneficial to predict partners, i.e., analysis' backers, but also those who will probably criticize the results. Moreover, it is advantageous to get acquainted with the views and perspectives of all interested subjects, i.e., those involved in certain problem. As they collect data from key individuals (via interview), less experienced analysts prefer to collect data from the individuals who are more easily contacted, i.e., those who are willing to back up the project. Individuals who are ready to cooperate can both clearly define those who are expected to show resistance as well as the reasons behind their opposite views.

**An example of subjects that have opposite views regarding the problem**

During the execution of the project whose aim was to digitalize schools in Croatia, one group of teachers supported the intent to buy IT equipment, whereas the other group was opposed to it. It was determined that significant percentage of the teachers who opposed the project were older, i.e., they were nearing their retirement. One of the frequently stated reasons for opposing was the fear of failure in the use of new technologies.

## 8.4. Creating policy alternatives/options

This stage is focused on suggesting *policy* problem solution, i.e., *policy* alternatives. This stage's expected outcome is the creation of several *policy* alternatives that derive from detailed description of the observed problem as well as collected data which validate its nature, size as well as direction. It is important to mention that we neither consider nor evaluate the quality of the suggested *policy* alternatives during this stage (evaluation is a part of the following stage!). In this context, we are discussing "*policy* options"; "alternative direction of actions" or "alternative strategies for either problem solving or reducing process". Approach to the process of creating alternatives starts after detailed problem defining process as well as analysis of the collected data. Furthermore, both previously used *policy* options and those suggested/considered by certain *policy* process' subjects are being identified, however analyst can, based on the obtained ideas, independently either identify or define new *policy* alternatives. One of the presumptions regarding *policy* alternative's successful creation is adequate identification of problem's causes, hidden or unused opportunities as well as any other aspect about which the analyst was actively pondering on during both problem definition as well as data collection stage. During this phase, the analyst can once again both consider and refine *policy* analysis' first two stages in order to increase the area which can be used to create ideas needed for *policy* alternatives' creation.

Determining alternatives should not necessarily mean that the suggested *policy* options are mutually exclusive (i.e., one's application does not automatically exclude other option's application). It can happen that suggested *policy* alternative supplements the already existing possibilities, substitutes the existing ones or helps in either problem-solving or reducing process. Moreover, it is desirable to list as well as encompass as many alternatives as possible at this stage's starting phase. During later analysis, by discarding unnecessary or undesirable alternatives as well as combining them with other ones, their number will be reduced to two or three best alternatives. During the process of creating new alternatives that differ from those propagated by key political actors, "brainstorming" technique can be helpful.

### An example

Let us assume that the problem of mismatch between faculties' admission quota and labor market needs is being analyzed. During the definition of the selected *policy* problem, it was probably noticed that precise data regarding certain problem's segments, which are essential for quantification of certain variables, do not exist (e.g., neither faculties nor other involved institutions collect data regarding bachelor's employment/further education. Therefore, one *policy* alternative in this case can state: oblige higher education institution to monitor bachelor' employment or further education.

Bardach (2008) warns that alternative stating "*consider and monitor other present trends and their development in public sector*" should be included during initial approach to the problem. This alternative puts emphasis on natural flow of social changes, which can reduce analyzed problem on their own, i.e., switch the focus on the other source of problem. Previous statement does not imply cessation of problem-solving process, instead it points out that majority of present trends largely influence the problem and change it. In order to determine the scope of "natural" changes' influence on the problem in question, the most frequent sources of changes in public policy (e.g., political changes caused by political elections, changes in estimations of unemployment and inflation trends, demographical changes, etc.), should be monitored.

The final list of alternatives (list which is being presented either to the client or public by the analyst) will surely look differently compared to the list of alternatives which the analyst created during this stage's starting phase. List of the potential alternatives that will be used during the following policy analysis stages should represent both simplified and conceptualized version of the collected/created alternatives so far. *Conceptualization* implies summarizing of the alternative's core idea in a simple sentence or phrase (concept), while the purpose of *simplification* is to distinguish core alternative from its variants. Designing *policy* alternative represents a complex process that requires numerous iterations. During this process, it is important to examine various way in which certain goals can be achieved. Additionally, it is possible to change goals in the light of what has been deemed doable in certain context.

## 8.5. Evaluating policy solutions

A simple table template, in which additional number of evaluation criteria (C) can be added if necessary, can be used in order to conduct evaluation of policy solution. The quality of the suggested policy alternatives (PA) depends on the quality of policy problem's description as well as collected data that support it. During the next phase of this stage, both list and introductory explanations of the most frequently used evaluation criteria are presented. It is important to notice that both explanations and sub-questions are exclusively orientational,

which implies that innovative and creative approach during the evaluation process is expected from the student.

*C1 Adequacy and feasibility for every actor involved in the process.* Think about the way in which the suggested solution/alternative will be reflected on every policy process' subject. Will the suggested solution please everyone equally? Will the suggested solution jeopardize certain subject's position?

*C2 Identifying main positive and negative consequences from both natural and socio-economical system.* Think about whether policy solution will cause certain consequences. For example, can the attention be diverted from one topic by focusing the same attention on the other topic (in financial, human resources or other context), and consequently create new problems.

*C3 Determining potential problems.* Problems can arise in numerous areas. For example, can certain subject, who does not like the suggested solution, rebel or oppose to its implementation? Do the policy-makers possess enough knowledge and resources to implement the solution? Does an organization that can implement the solution already exist or organizational conditions are yet to be ensured?

*C4 Assessing the degree of acceptability (legal, value, political).* Is an obstacle for the implementation of policy solution present in the context of existing legislation? Is the solution legally enforceable or do the laws and rulebooks have to be changed? Are certain values and principles violated by the solution (human rights, equity, equality, excellence, ethics, security, freedom...)? Is the policy solution acceptable for all policy process' subjects or does it directly jeopardize one's influence, interests, effort as well as position? Will somebody earn/lose media promotion or their odds to remain at political/social scene?

Table 2: Policy alternative evaluation table

<b>PROBLEM:</b>
<b>PA 1:</b>
<b>C1</b> Adequacy and feasibility for every actor involved in the process
<b>C2</b> Identifying main positive and negative consequences from both natural and socio-economical system
<b>C3</b> Determining potential problems
<b>C4</b> Assessing the degree of acceptability (legal, value, political)

## 8.6. The selection of policy solution (decision-making)

Decision-making process refers to the selection of the best policy solution among the suggested ones. Policy-solution can be described either as a possibility to solve defined problem or as both ways and means of satisfying certain decisions, which are at policy-makers' disposal. It is assumed that policy-solution can either partially or completely solve certain problem. They can be grouped in action strategies or they can be presented as individual solutions; they can be either mutually exclusive or complementary. The selection of the best alternative is, to a large extent, predetermined by the way the problem was defined and described. The selection of the alternative depends on the type of the problem as well as initiators/clients' motives and priorities.

Policy solution selection is based on the projection of their success, and it occurs in three areas: predicting consequences, comparing efficiency as well as examining the fairness of consequence distribution. Additionally, this phase precedes the process of putting policy solution into life, i.e., its implementation as well as starting new policy cycle.

### Practical graded task 2

Select one policy problem of your choice. Create detailed analysis of the selected policy problem from education policy area according to all relevant policy analysis criteria. This task should be done gradually and continuously, and in accordance with current notions regarding individual policy analysis' stages. During the analysis, follow the stages below:

*Problem description.* During the problem description process, list all relevant elements that refer to all your future policy suggestions. Along with the description of the problem, list all concrete data (indicators) that you have collected during the analysis, and which describe the problem in its real size, nature and direction. For this stage, you will spend 80% of your time.

*Creating potential policy options/alternatives.* List all policy options, conduct evaluation and write down its results. For this stage, you will spend 10% of your time.

*Suggesting the best solution and implementation possibilities.* Decide which policy alternative is the best and why. Try to convince policy-makers why is this option acceptable and which changes/implications will its implementation have in practice. For this stage, you will spend 10% of your time.

During the analysis, you are obliged to lead extensive notes regarding the description and analysis of the problem, which you are going to gradually write during the semester. Additionally, they can be attached to the final report. You should write your final report in no more than 5 standard pages (font 12, paragraph spacing 2.0)

*Task duration:* 30 hours

*Presentation form:* written report (5 pages)

*Deadline:* 2 months

*Grading:* 30%

*Note:* more detailed instructions for this exercise will be provided

## Revision questions

- » describe education policy analysis process;
- » choose one policy problem from the education policy area and analyze it according to the provided instructions.

## References

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