Urška Štremfel (ed.)

Empowering Teachers Across Europe

to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges

Volume 2

Policy Perspectives

WAXMANN

Urška Štremfel (ed.)

Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges

Volume 2: Policy Perspectives

Waxmann 2024
Münster · New York

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Hand In Hand
Empowering Teachers across Europe to deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity related Career Challenges

Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

Print-ISBN 978-3-8309-4867-4
E-Book-ISBN 978-3-8309-9867-9
https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998679

Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2024
Steinfurter Straße 555, 48159 Münster, Germany
Waxmann Publishing Co.
P. O. Box 1318, New York, NY 10028, U. S. A.
www.waxmann.com
info@waxmann.com

Cover Design: Anne Breitenbach, Münster
Cover Image: Dragan Vejnovic
Language Editing: Murray Bales
Review: Paul Downes, PhD, Alenka Polak, PhD
Setting: satz&sonders, Dülmen

This e-book is available open access under the license CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

This licence applies only to the original material. All marked third-party content (e.g., illustrations, photos, quotations, etc.) is excluded from the CC licence, and it may be necessary to obtain further permission from the copyright holder for its reuse.

Table of Contents

Foreword
Paul Downes 7

Introduction
Teachers' Social, Emotional and Diversity Awareness Competencies from the Perspective of Policy
Urška Štremfel 9

1 Why Do Teachers Need to be Systemically Supported in Developing SEDA Competencies? Insights from International Large-scale Assessment Data
Klaudija Šterman Ivančič 17

2 Policies Supporting Teachers' Social and Emotional Competencies, and Diversity Awareness on the European Union Level
Urška Štremfel 37

3 Perspectives from Austria
Valerie Fredericks, Christina Odescalchi, Yvonne Fasching, Marlene Williere, Fabian Aufreiter, Agnes Söllradl, Barbara Gasteiger-Klicpera & Lisa Paleczek 55

4 Perspectives from Croatia
Hrvoje Bakić, Gordana Galić & Urška Štremfel 81

5 Perspectives from Portugal
Gina Tomé, Inês Camacho, Marta Reis, Cátia Branquinho, Pascoal Amaral, Catarina Noronha & Margarida Gaspar de Matos 107

6 Perspectives from Slovenia
Urška Štremfel, Aleš Ojsteršek, Stanka Lunder Verlič & Mija Javornik 121

7 Perspectives from Sweden
Nina Eliasson & Helene Dahlström 147

8 National Policy Support for Developing Teachers' Social and Emotional Competencies and Diversity Awareness: Comparative Insights
Urška Štremfel 163

9 Supporting Teachers' Social and Emotional Competencies and Diversity Awareness in the Future
Implications for Educational Policies and Practices
Urška Štremfel, Ana Kozina, Tina Vršnik Perše, Iva Odak, Ivana Pikić Jugović, Lisa Paleczek, Valerie Fredericks, Nina Roczen, Mojca Rožman, Nina Eliasson, Helene Dahlström, Gina Tomé, Margarida Gaspar de Matos, Hrvoje Bakić, Aleš Ojsteršek & Iva Perković 183

About the Contributors 204

Foreword

Paul Downes[1]

A key impetus for this impressive book is the EU Council *Pathways to School Success* Council Recommendation 2022, a 'flagship' initiative of the EU Council and Commission. This places issues of school belonging, positive school climate, students' wellbeing and social and emotional education as central to inclusive systems in schools, as part of a focus on early school leaving prevention and fostering educational environments supportive of individual learners' needs. This book also operates against the backdrop of the major development at EU level in 2018 of the new EU Key Competence, *Personal, Social and Learning to Learn.* Emotional, relational dimensions are placed central to inclusion in education, as part of what I have proposed elsewhere as the 'emotional-relational turn' for equitable inclusive systems in education.[2]

The benefits of a positive relational classroom and school climate are increasingly recognised for social inclusion in education globally. Against the backdrop of the World Health Organisation's (WHO 2012) call for caring teachers, providing positive feedback to students and avoiding public humiliation of students, there is a need for system supports at both initial teacher education and for teachers' professional development, to work on what is termed in this book, SEDA, social, emotional and diversity awareness competencies. System responses are needed to facilitate improvement in teachers' communication skills across Europe and internationally, regarding fostering empathy and perspective taking in students, avoiding fear and anger based approaches to motivation, building on strengths of students in a caring, listening, relational environment, while sustaining high expectations for all students.

This book addresses a strategic issue that can be described as a 'quick win' for policy makers, in education systems where there are rarely 'quick wins'. In other words, developing teachers' relational and cultural competences is a malleable system feature for initial teacher education and continuing professional development, one that is relatively inexpensive and with some subtle but significant changes of emphasis and priority, can contribute to the wellbeing

1 Institute of Education, Dublin City University, Ireland

2 Downes, P. (2011). The neglected shadow: Some European perspectives on emotional supports for early school leaving prevention. *International Journal of Emotional Education,* 3(2), 3–39. Downes, P., Li, G., Van Praag, L., & Lamb, S. (Eds.) (2024). *The Routledge International Handbook of Equity and Inclusion in Education.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003282921

of both students and teachers to enhance equitable inclusive systems across Europe and internationally.

It is important to emphasise that low teacher morale and burnout in some individuals and systems does not justify resort to old fashioned authoritarian teaching approaches based on anger and fear. The medical injunction *primum non nocere,'* first do no harm', must be recognised here, as well as that non-discrimination in school is a human rights' issue in education. Teachers need to be seen as not only education professionals but also as health professionals, influencing the mental health and wellbeing of their students. No one expects any health professional, whether nurse or doctor to respond through anger and generation of fear in their communicative culture. Likewise, this needs to be the case with teachers. A basic threshold of communicative competence regarding emotional and relational aspects is needed for teachers, while recognising that teachers' own wellbeing is a key component in further steps for a teacher's wider role concerning personal, relational support for students. In addressing issues of teacher burnout, it is important to recognise that teachers cannot solve all the social and emotional issues students' face and it is not a matter of a blame culture, towards either teachers or students. Moreover, teachers cannot be therapists addressing deep-seated traumas of children and young people. However, a broadening of the role of schools to see school staff as composed of multidisciplinary teams of professionals, such as specialist emotional counsellors/therapists is one major contribution at system level to easing pressures on teachers in the classroom. This is recognised in the EU Council Recommendation, *Pathways to School Success*, in its focus on wider health professionals as multidisciplinary teams in and around schools. Teachers' key role is in mental health and wellbeing promotion, and stress prevention for students, as distinct from therapy.

This important book offers a forensic analysis of system gaps in provision for teachers' conflict resolution skills, relational and cultural competences as part of a social and emotional education focus on both students' and teachers' wellbeing. The strong comparative and country-specific analysis on five European country systems offers a clear and concrete policy relevant focus for system development and reform in this area. It provides essential reading for policymakers and researchers in this domain, not only in the five countries directly scrutinised in this book, but also across Europe and indeed globally.

Introduction

Teachers' Social, Emotional and Diversity Awareness Competencies from the Perspective of Policy

Urška Štremfel[1]

Teachers have in recent years become the centre of educational policies on the European Union (EU) and national levels. Policy problems arising from the shortage of teachers, the ageing teacher population, the inadequate numbers of students enrolling in initial teacher education, the high drop-out rates from the profession and deficiencies in the area of teacher regeneration across the EU (European Commission, 2020; Eurydice, 2021) have seen teachers' personal and professional well-being appear high on the political agenda.

Content-wise, teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness (SEDA competencies) have been recognised as a vital measure for addressing these pressing challenges given that teachers staying in the profession face an increasing workload and high levels of work-related stress (European Commission, 2020; Eurydice, 2021; OECD, 2020). Teachers have also not been empowered to deal with the new era of diverse classrooms or to handle their heavier workloads. SEDA competencies have been shown to help teachers take greater ownership of their career, learning and development needs, and to manage their professional learning and their careers more efficiently (Goleman et al., 2002; Vorhaus, 2010; Zins et al., 2007). As they build SEDA competencies, teachers can make more appropriate career-related choices as part of managing their career, better identify their needs, manage their work–life balance more effectively, establish a better balance between professional autonomy and accountability (Council of the EU, 2017), remain motivated for continuous professional development, and be able to maintain their well-being and prevent burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Moreover, teachers' SEDA competencies have been shown to impact students' social and emotional competencies and academic achievements in at least three ways: a) such competencies influence the quality of the teacher–student relationship; b) teachers serve as role models of SEDA competencies for students; and c) teachers' social and emotional competencies influence how the classroom is managed. Together, these factors create a healthy classroom

1 Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

climate that fosters students' social-emotional learning and academic achievement (Jennings et al., 2013). Earlier studies show that teachers who possess greater social and emotional competencies are also better at supporting the social and emotional learning of their students (e.g., Collie, 2017; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Further, to create an inclusive environment in which all students, also those from disadvantaged social groups, report positive relationships, opportunities for personal development, an orderly environment, and that they all feel respected, cared for and supported in their personal growth, teachers must additionally possess diversity awareness competencies (e.g., Cefai et al., 2018; Durlak et al., 2011; Kozina, 2020).

Implementation-wise, policy experimentations were found to be a proper measure for searching for solutions to identified policy problems in the teaching profession by testing different innovative interventions in a range of (national) educational settings (European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), 2019), thereby contributing to policy developments in the field. The HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project (HAND:ET project) was carried out with these aims in mind.

The HAND:ET project focuses on teachers by supporting the development of their SEDA competencies[2] to empower them for the complexity of everyday working life with increasingly diverse classrooms and enable them to deal flexibly and competently with new challenges. It also puts teachers' well-being at the centre by highlighting how developing SEDA competencies simultaneously foster self-care for teachers and enhance teacher collaboration. By innovatively integrating diversity awareness with social and emotional competencies, the HAND:ET project equips teachers with the competencies they require to meet the challenges of teaching in diverse classrooms, preventing them from leaving the profession early, empowering them to monitor and plan their career while supporting their own as well as their students' well-being.

Volume 1 entitled *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges: Experimentation Perspectives* (Kozina, 2024) presents the HAND:ET conceptual framework, theoretical backgrounds, the process of developing the HAND:ET programme, the train-the-trainers process, the implementation of the HAND:ET system in five countries (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden), realising quality assurance, developing the assessment for the external evaluation, and evaluation results of the questionnaire scales and participants' perspectives.

2 For a conceptual understanding of teachers' SEDA competencies, please refer to Volume 1 (Kozina, 2024). Since SEDA competencies are complex and broad concepts, their conceptualisation within the HAND:ET project is crucial for understanding the scope and focus of this book, as well as what it addresses and what it does not.

Volume 2 aims to view the HAND:ET project framework and outcomes presented in Volume 1 from a policy perspective and explain the importance of pursuing sustainable systemic improvement and innovation in the field. Being implemented as an EU policy experimentation project, HAND:ET fully corresponds with the current EU educational agendas and sought to contribute actively to their further development (EACEA, 2019). Specifically, it makes an important contribution to realising the *Council Resolution on a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training Towards the European Education Area and Beyond* (2021–2030), which identifies teachers' well-being as a key priority of the EU policies in education (Council of the EU, 2021). It also aligns with the *Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success* (Council of the EU, 2022), which calls for systemic action to promote the well-being of both students and teachers. Furthermore, it supports the *Council Recommendation on Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning* (Council of the EU, 2018), which introduces personal, social, and learning-to-learn competence as one of the eight key competencies, marking a significant step forward in focusing on personal and social related issues across the EU. We argue that the detailed insights presented in this book concerning existing EU and national policies for supporting teachers' SEDA competencies is the first step towards accomplishing these aims. Since the positive effects of the HAND:ET project vary considerably among the countries (Kozina, 2024), the insights into national policies for supporting teachers' SEDA competencies may at least partly add to understanding of the findings. In addition, insights into policy arrangements, as well as supporting teachers' competencies, are essential because teachers' perception of policy and social support has been identified as an important factor in their well-being (e.g., Casely-Hayford et al., 2022).

Given that teachers' well-being only recently emerged on the EU agenda (Council of the EU, 2021), the non-binding character of EU cooperation in the area of education (e.g., Alexiadou & Rambla, 2022; Gornitzka, 2018) along with the structural and cultural differences in national educational contexts, the consideration of ensuring systemic support for the development of teachers' SEDA competencies in different national contexts is particularly valuable. All the more so when we consider that teacher education is a field with a strong institutional character due to state control over the budget, regulations and provisions, and is hence also highly politicised (e.g., Symeonidis, 2021). Like in other educational fields, teachers' professional development depends on complex professional and social negotiations, in turn leading to variation in national policy responses and approaches. For example, the selection of national case studies (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden) was predetermined by the countries' participation in the HAND:ET project. However, they may also be grouped by different inter-sectional criteria. Austria, Croatia and Slovenia are Central European countries, Portugal is a Mediterranean

one, while Sweden is from the North of Europe. Portugal entered the EU in 1986, Austria and Sweden in 1995, Slovenia in 2004, and Croatia in 2013. This might also somewhat determine their differences when it comes to the field of teacher professional development and the (non)coherence of their national policies vis-à-vis the EU's current priorities.

The book is organised in line with the role policy experiments (like the HAND:ET project) play in policy development (e.g., Huitema et al., 2018; Kozina, 2024). First, the policy problem the HAND:ET policy experiment addressed is described. Second, insights into the EU priorities aimed at tackling the recognised policy problems are presented. Third, the national policies in place today for supporting the development of teachers' SEDA competencies are introduced. Finally, based on the findings concerning the EU's priorities and national policies presented in this book and noting the results of the policy experiment presented in Volume 1 (Kozina, 2024), the HAND:ET project recommendations for supporting teachers' SEDA competencies in educational policies and practices are set out.

The first chapter by Klaudija Šterman Ivančič, entitled *Why Do Teachers Need to be Systemically Supported in Developing SEDA Competencies? Insights from International Large-scale Assessment Data*, identifies major challenges of the teaching profession nowadays, showing how they are linked to teachers' well-being, teacher–student relationships, and positive educational student outcomes, and what is the role of SEDA competencies in addressing them. After analysing results of the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS 2018) and the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA 2022), the chapter points to significant shortages in teachers' and students' SEDA competencies in the HAND:ET field trial countries (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden). Still, the results vary considerably among the countries. The chapter therefore outlines the challenges of supporting teachers' SEDA competencies and demonstrates the need for national system-level support, including supportive EU policy measures in the field.

Urška Štremfel shows in the second chapter, entitled *Policies Supporting Teachers' Social and Emotional Competencies, and Diversity Awareness on the EU Level* how only in recent years have teachers' well-being and SEDA competencies become a high EU strategic priority since teachers and the quality of teaching were previously mainly viewed as a source of students' academic achievement and quality, effective and efficient education and training. By providing certain opportunities for cooperation, the EU policy framework of today invites national education systems to contribute to resolving the challenges facing the teaching profession, including teachers' well-being. The chapter underscores that reflecting on the current national policy frameworks is an important first step in this respect. These national policy frameworks are presented in the chapters that follow.

In the third chapter, Valerie Fredericks, Christina Odescalchi, Yvonne Fasching, Marlene Williere, Fabian Aufreiter, Agnes Söllradl, Barbara Gasteiger-Klicpera and Lisa Paleczek show that in *Austria,* despite some (good) practices in the field (e.g., aptitude assessment regarding SEDA competencies for future students of teacher faculties, handbooks for teachers, how to prevent burnout), a "systematic framework and an overarching concept that recognise the importance of SEDA competencies and give possibilities concerning how and for what purpose they can be specifically and explicitly promoted" (p. 71 in this book) is lacking.

Hrvoje Bakić, Gordana Galić and Urška Štremfel in chapter 4 present that despite teachers' SEDA competencies not being systematically supported in initial and continuous professional development programmes in Croatia, several examples of such courses and programmes are identified. The research findings presented in the chapter hold several policy implications indicating that the development of teachers' SEDA competencies should be incorporated into the planned renewal of the system of teacher professional development and thereby be better systemically supported.

In the fifth chapter, Gina Tomé, Inês Camacho, Marta Reis, Cátia Branquinho, Pascoal Amaral, Catarina Noronha and Margarida Gaspar de Matos describe how in *Portugal* teachers' well-being is a very topical issue, also evident in teachers' strikes. The authors explain the government policy initiatives for addressing the issue, largely seen in changing and improving teachers' working conditions. Yet, the few national studies that exist reveal that the promotion of activities that foster teachers' socio-emotional competencies is an urgent and promising measure.

Aleš Ojsteršek, Stanka Lunder Verlič, Mija Javornik and Urška Štremfel in chapter six present that the development of teachers' SEDA competencies in *Slovenia* is (implicitly) related to ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment. Although the development of teachers' SEDA competencies is currently not systematically supported in initial and continuing teacher education, ongoing policy reforms (curriculum renewal, national education programme) suggest that this area will receive much more attention at the systemic level in the future.

Nina Eliasson and Helene Dahlström in chapter seven focus on the *Swedish* national policy framework from the perspective of the development of teachers' SEDA competencies. They find that initial and continuous teacher education in Sweden is strongly focused on developing students' learning competencies, not on teachers' own SEDA competencies. As in other countries, there are no formal requirements for teachers to possess SEDA competencies. There is also a lack of research looking in detail at the SEDA competencies of teachers in Sweden.

In the eight chapter, Urška Štremfel provides some *Comparative Insights Into Existing National Policies Supporting Teachers' Social and Emotional Competencies, and Diversity Awareness*. The findings reveal the considerable variety in national (non-)definitions of SEDA competencies for teachers in key national policy documents, the presence of the topic in initial and continuous professional development, current policy and political debates on teachers' well-being as well as the existence of systematic monitoring and policy-linked research in the field. Notwithstanding the recognised variety, it is concluded that the development of SEDA competencies is not systematically supported in the countries under analysis (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden).

In the final, ninth chapter, based on the summary findings of the HAND:ET policy experiment (see Volume 1) and the summary findings of analyses of EU and national policy frameworks in place today (found in this Volume), the authors Urška Štremfel, Ana Kozina, Tina Vršnik Perše, Iva Odak, Ivana Pikić Jugović, Lisa Paleczek, Valerie Fredericks, Nina Roczen, Mojca Rožman, Nina Eliasson, Helene Dahlström, Gina Tomé, Margarida Gaspar de Matos, Hrvoje Bakić, Aleš Ojsteršek and Iva Perković present guidelines on how to systematically support the development of teachers' well-being and SEDA competencies on the EU level and national policy level of the participating countries and therefore add to efforts to realise the EU's strategic priorities in this area.

The book provides valuable and hitherto missing insights into the current state of policies for supporting teachers' SEDA competencies in the EU and the selected national countries, along with evidence-based recommendations concerning how these competencies could be further systemically supported. Together with Volume 1 (Kozina, 2024), it constitutes a small step towards creating better classrooms today for a better society of tomorrow. It invites research, policy and practice communities to reflect on the insights it contains from their own perspective and to find their own and common ways of considering them.

References

Alexiadou, N., & Rambla, X. (2022). Education policy governance and the power of ideas in constructing the new European Education Area. *European Educational Research Journal*, 22(6), 852–869. https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041221121388

Casely-Hayford, J., Björklund, C., Bergström, G., Lindqvist, P., & Kwak, L. (2022). What makes teachers stay? A cross-sectional exploration of the individual and contextual factors associated with teacher retention in Sweden. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 113*, 103664. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103664

Cefai, C., Bartolo, P. A., Cavioni, V., & Downes, P. (2018). *Strengthening social and emotional education as a core curricular area across the EU. A review of the international evidence, NESET II report.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European

Union. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c7fae112-1529-11e8-9253-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

Collie, R. J. (2017). Teachers' social and emotional competence: links with social and emotional learning and positive workplace outcomes. In E. Frydenberg, A. Martin & R. Collie (Eds.), *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific* (pp. 167–184). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3394-0_9

Council of the EU (2017). *Council Conclusions on school development and excellent teaching* (2017/C 421/03). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017XG1208(01)&from=EN

Council of the EU (2018). *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning* (2018/C189/01). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01)

Council of the EU (2021). *Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030)* (2021/C 66/01). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)

Council of the EU (2022). *Council Recommendation of 28 November 2022 on Pathways to School Success and replacing the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving* (2022/C469/01). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H1209(01)

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., & Taylor, R. D. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development, 82*(1), 474–501. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x

EACEA (2019). *European Policy Experimentations in the field of Education and Training led by high-level public authorities.* https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20210122045332mp_/ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/european-policy-experimentations-in-the-fields-of-education-and-training-led-by-high-level-public-authorities-2020_en

European Commission (2020). *Supporting teacher and school leaders careers: A policy guide.* Publications Office of the European Union. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f02d4648-7a07-11ea-b75f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

Eurydice (2021). *Teachers in Europe, Careers, Development and Well-being. Eurydice Report.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/teachers_in_europe_2020_chapter_6.pdf

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & Mc Keen, A. (2002). *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence.* Harvard Business Review Press.

Gornitzka, Å. (2018). Organising Soft Governance in Hard Times – The Unlikely Survival of the Open Method of Coordination in EU Education Policy. *European Papers, 3*(1), 235–255. https://doi.org/10.15166/2499–8249/211

Huitema, D., Jordan, A., & Munaretto, S. (2018). Policy experimentation: core concepts, political dynamics, governance and impacts. *Policy Sciences, 51*, 143–159. http://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-018-9321-9

Jennings, P. A., Frank, J. L., Snowberg, K. E., Coccia, M. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2013). Improving classroom learning environments by Cultivating Awareness

and Resilience in Education (CARE): results of a randomized controlled trial. *School Psychology Quarterly, 28*(4), 374–390. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000035

Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 79*, 491–525. http://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693

Kozina, A. (Ed.) (2020). *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe.* Verlag Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/open-access/11406/11406_Kozina%20ED%20-%20Social%20emotional%20and%20intercultural%20competencies%20for%20inclusive%20school%20environments%20across%20Europe.pdf

Kozina, A. (Ed.) (2024). *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives.* Waxmann. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

OECD (2020). *Teachers' well-being: a framework for data collection and analysis*, OECD Education Working Paper No. 213. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/c36fc9d3-en.pdf?expires=1695808315&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=626FF96FD5945A820D62AA5ABBA410E3

Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Oberle, E., Lawor, M. S., Abbott, D., Thomson, K., Oberlander, T. F., & Diamond, A. (2015). Enhancing cognitive and social-emotional development through a simple-to-administer mindfulness-based school program for elementary school children. A randomized controlled trial. *Developmental Psychology, 51*, 52–66.

Symeonidis, V. (2021). Introduction. In V. Symeonidis (Ed.), *Europeanisation in Teacher Education. A Comparative Case Study of Teacher Education Policies and Practices* (pp. 1–35). Routledge.

Vorhaus, J. (2010). Social and Emotional Outcomes of Learning. In P. Peterson, E. Baker & B. McGaw (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* (3rd ed., pp. 673–684). Elsevier Ltd.

Zins, J. E., Bloodworth, M. R., Weissberg, R. P., & Walberg, H. J. (2007). The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 17*(2–3), 191–210.

Chapter 1
Why Do Teachers Need to be Systemically Supported in Developing SEDA Competencies?

Insights from International Large-scale Assessment Data

Klaudija Šterman Ivančič[1]

Abstract

The chapter identifies the biggest challenges facing the teaching profession nowadays, explaining how they relate to teachers' well-being, teacher–student relationships, and positive educational student outcomes, along with the role of social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness in addressing them. We also shed light on the importance of strengthening teachers' and students' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness based on the latest results of the Teaching and Learning International Survey and the Programme for International Student Assessment in countries participating in the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden), where we examine the extent to which certain aspects of social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness (i.e., teachers' views on how society values their profession, satisfaction with the profession, teacher–student relationships, teachers' stress, self-efficacy in multicultural environments, students' sense of belonging at school, quality of teacher–student relationships, socio-emotional competencies) are supported in teachers' and students' reports. While the results vary widely between the mentioned countries, significant shortages are revealed in teachers' and students' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness in all five education systems. The results thus support the notion that social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness should be systematically supported in education, and the implementation of HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project and similar projects is extremely important for fostering students' and teachers' well-being and positive academic outcomes.

Keywords: Challenges of Teaching, Teachers' Social, Emotional, and Diversity Awareness Competencies, Programme for International Student Assessment, Teaching and Learning International Survey

1 Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

Introduction

In recent times, the discourse surrounding socio-emotional competencies and diversity awareness (SEDA competencies) in educational settings has gained ever more attention in both the research community and on the level of stakeholders. Recognising the multifaceted nature of education, different education systems are increasingly acknowledging the vital role these competencies play in fostering holistic development and preparing students and teachers for the challenges of a diverse and interconnected world.

It is therefore well recognised that SEDA competencies encompass a spectrum of skills, e.g., self-awareness, self-regulation, interpersonal skills, and social awareness, and acknowledging these competencies as integral components of a well-rounded education, which reflects a paradigm shift towards an education system that not only values academic achievement but also prioritises the cultivation of emotional intelligence and quality relationships in schools. It is also well acknowledged that embracing diversity not only promotes a more inclusive and equitable learning atmosphere but also equips students with the cultural competence they need to thrive in an interconnected world. Developing an appreciation for diverse perspectives, backgrounds and experiences prepares students to contribute positively to a more and more pluralistic society (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2019c; OECD, 2020).

In this context, teachers are often understood as individuals with a pivotal role to play in modelling SEDA competencies. Educators equipped with these skills can create supportive and inclusive classrooms that support their students' diverse needs, and serve as mentors, guiding students to develop these essential life skills.

This has recently led to SEDA competencies being increasingly included in different research, also in international large-scale assessment studies (ILSA studies), e.g., International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), to provide policymakers and educators with a holistic understanding of students' capabilities. Nevertheless, despite the established importance of SEDA competencies for students and teachers, these skills are still not specifically defined in the main public policy documents in the field of education in the European Union (Štremfel, 2020) and not systematically supported in either teacher training and education practices. With this background in mind, this chapter aims to answer the question of why teachers need systemic support in developing their SEDA competencies.

To accomplish this, in the first part of the chapter we identify the major challenges of the teaching profession and how they relate to teachers' overall effectiveness and well-being, and their regulation of workplace stress. We also identify how these aspects of teachers' well-being relate to the quality of teacher–student relationships and positive student outcomes. At the end of part one, the role of SEDA competencies in addressing these challenges on the teacher and student levels is explained.

In the second part, we shed light on the importance of strengthening SEDA competencies based on the results of ILSA studies where the results of PISA and TALIS surveys in countries participating in the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project (HAND:ET project) are used to consider the perspective of both teachers and students. We examine to what extent certain aspects of SEDA competencies (i.e., teachers' views on how society values their profession, satisfaction with the profession, teacher–student relationships, teachers' stress, collaborative school culture, self-efficacy in multicultural environments, and students' sense of belonging at school, teacher support in mathematics, quality of teacher–student relationships, socio-emotional competencies, and overall life satisfaction) are supported in these countries based on teachers' and students' reports in different education systems and complete the analysis of the results with a discussion and conclusions.

Challenges of Maintaining a Supportive Learning Environment

The rapid changes visible in all aspects of our lives today are also reflected in education systems and classrooms. Various studies involving teachers in the European context show that teachers are confronted with the impacts of such changes on a daily basis. As technology becomes increasingly integrated into education, teachers may encounter challenges in developing and maintaining digital competency, which includes the effective use of digital tools for teaching and adapting to new technologies (e.g., Basilotta-Gómez-Pablos et al., 2022; Caena & Redecker, 2019). On top of that, challenges are often linked to stronger needs for inclusive education and compliance with the increasing language and cultural diversity of students in classrooms. In addressing these diverse needs of students, teachers must be culturally sensitive and aware of different backgrounds, which encompasses adapting teaching methods to accommodate a range of cultural perspectives (Banks & McGee Banks, 2019; Parrish & Linder-VanBerschot, 2010). At the same time, teachers often face limited autonomy whereby they feel constrained by rigid curriculum requirements and standardised testing, limiting their ability to exercise creativity and tailor their teaching methods to individual student needs (e.g., Grant et al., 2020).

Teachers also face growing challenges related to the perception and valuation of their profession in society. Common challenges are associated with how the public views the teaching profession, which is sometimes undervalued compared to other professions, the low salaries of teachers where in some countries teachers may receive comparatively low salaries relative to the importance and responsibilities of their role, the lack of recognition, where teachers may feel unappreciated for having contributed to the development of students and society as a whole, along with limited support from parents and communities, which can make teachers feel isolated and undervalued (e.g., Ilgan & Ceviz, 2019; Stromquist, 2018).

All of these challenges can significantly impact teachers' motivation for teaching, their professionalism, morale, job satisfaction, overall effectiveness and well-being (e.g., Fauziah et al., 2021; Ilgan & Ceviz, 2019), and can contribute to teacher stress and burnout (e.g., Bottiani et al., 2019; Capone & Petrillo, 2020; Garcia-Carmona et al., 2019).

Different studies (e.g., McCarthy et al., 2014; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005) examined the link between teachers' stress and various aspects of their profession. Stressed teachers may find it challenging to maintain patience and composure in the classroom. This can lead to difficulties in managing student behaviour and ensuring a positive learning environment. Stress can also hinder a teacher's ability to be creative and innovative in lesson planning and instructional delivery, which may result in less engaging and dynamic teaching methods. Most importantly, teachers' stress can strain the relationships between teachers and students because stressed teachers may struggle to communicate effectively, with this affecting their ability to connect with students, understand their needs, and provide the support required.

In addition, the quality, supportive and encouraging relationships that students establish with their teachers are important for motivating them to accomplish their learning goals (e.g., Crosnoe et al., 2004; Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; Murdock & Miller, 2003; Shriver & Buffett, 2015; Wentzel, 2012). In his theoretical model of the teacher–student relationship, Pianta et al. (2003) identify the quality of the relationship as being crucial for the student's academic success, emphasising the importance of socio-emotional support from the teacher, while claiming that a teacher who is emotionally warm, accepting and available to students promotes their interest and motivation, which in turn brings about higher academic achievement.

Social-emotional support from the teacher also strengthens students' sense of connectedness and belonging at school and thereby promotes students' higher academic achievement and well-being (Harding et al., 2019; Hattie, 2012; Pianta et al., 2003; Wentzel, 2012). Alongside learning achievement, research additionally reports on the association of a sense of belonging at school with other related constructs/outcomes of education. After reviewing studies, Allen

et al. (2018) find that a sense of belonging at school is positively linked to academic adjustment, including grades and competency (Pittman & Richmond, 2007), learning motivation (Anderman, 2003; Gillen-O'Neel & Fuligni, 2013; Goodenow, 1993), more positive attitudes to learning, and learning self-efficacy (Battistich et al., 2004; Roeser et al., 1996). Research (e.g., Connell et al., 1995; Croninger & Lee, 2001; Demanet & Van Houtte, 2012; Hallinan, 2008) further shows that a sense of belonging at school is positively associated with less absenteeism, less early school leaving, and inappropriate behaviour at school, as well as students' greater participation in extracurricular activities (Fullarton, 2002; Thompson et al., 2006; Whitlock, 2006).

It may be concluded that quality teacher–student relationships which focus on social and emotional competencies are key to understanding both positive and negative learning outcomes and are a significant determinant of various aspects of students' well-being.

The latest data from PISA 2022 show that globally teacher support has deteriorated over the last decade in the perception of students. On average across OECD countries, the share of 15-year-olds reporting that students receive extra help from their teacher when needed in most or every lesson dropped by an average of three percentage points (OECD, 2023b, p. 38). In 2022, for the first time PISA considered nine pivotal aspects that contribute to the quality of students' lives: academic performance, agency and engagement, engagement with school, material and cultural well-being, openness to diversity, psychological well-being, resilience, social relationships, and study–life balance. Initial observations reveal that no single country consistently performs well across all nine dimensions and even countries that are top performers in the PISA test exhibit areas that could be improved (OECD, 2023b, pp. 65–66).

Considering the results of studies which outlined the importance of socio-emotional support in the education process when explaining different educational outcomes, and given all the challenges that teachers face in today's world, it seems imperative that teachers receive professional development in which they can strengthen their resources of SEDA competencies, i.e., resources that will support their students' well-being and simultaneously enable them to carry out the teaching profession in a satisfactory way.

The Role of Strengthening the SEDA Competencies Held by Teachers

One of the most commonly used definitions of SEDA competencies when studying their impact on the educational process is the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) wheel. The wheel defines five key

competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Durlak, 2015). Self-awareness is the ability to recognise our emotions, bodily sensations, and thoughts, and their impact on our responses. Self-management is the ability to regulate emotions, bodily sensations, thoughts, and behaviour in various situations, including stress management, detecting and using impulses constructively, motivating oneself, and setting and working towards personal and academic goals. Social awareness is the ability to take a perspective, empathy and compassion towards others from different backgrounds, giving space to a range of perspectives and recognising the influence and importance of the family, school and community. Relationship skills refer to the ability to establish and maintain constructive relationships and the will to continue even when it seems impossible to sustain a constructive relationship. This includes the ability to take both personal and social responsibility and to enter into a relationship with a personal presence, recognising that a constructive relationship requires synergy between concern for one's integrity and concern for society/community. Responsible decision-making entails a synergy of the competencies mentioned thus far, which relate to the individual, and those which relate to being in a group or a relationship (Jensen et al., 2020).

This concept of SEDA competencies was already used in the HAND IN HAND: Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies project (Kozina, 2020) where emphasis was given to strengthening the socio-emotional competencies of students and teachers and the results revealed that the socio-emotional competencies of teachers are the key element in consequently also fostering the socio-emotional competencies of students (Kozina, 2020). Further, different research results (e.g., Collie, 2017; Durlak et al., 2022; Ross & Tolan, 2018) show that teachers holding strong SEDA competencies according to the CASEL wheel can better understand and connect with their students. This leads to more positive and supportive teacher–student relationships, in turn fostering a conducive learning environment. Teachers who possess strong SEDA competencies are often more effective in managing classrooms and can create a positive and inclusive atmosphere, resulting in better behaviour management and a focus on student engagement. Such teachers are also more empathetic and understanding of students' needs and challenges, which can lead to more effective communication and personalised support for individual students.

On the other hand, strong SEDA competencies can help teachers manage stress more effectively, cope with the demands of the profession and handle challenging situations (Collie et al., 2012; Roeser et al., 2013). These teachers are also more likely to experience greater job satisfaction and overall well-being. Teachers with strong SEDA competencies are often more adept at collaborating

with colleagues and also serve as role models for students by teaching them valuable life skills and promoting emotional intelligence (Collie, 2017).

The importance of SEDA competencies has also been broadly recognised in ILSA studies in recent years. For example, in the latest PISA study framework, it is stated that "Social and emotional skills play a critical role in the development of children, nurturing their growth as well-rounded individuals" (OECD, 2023b, p. 59). Results of the most recent PISA 2022 study also show that social and emotional aspects were significantly related to student performance in mathematics. On average across OECD countries, students who were better able to control their emotions or were stress-resistant also outperformed their peers by around six points (OECD, 2023a).

In parallel with the OECD PISA survey, SEDA competencies have been increasingly represented in all other ILSA studies (e.g., TALIS, ICCS, TIMSS, PIRLS). To illuminate the importance of SEDA competencies in the educational process, the section below seeks to highlight them in terms of recent results of different ILSA studies and the countries participating in the HAND:ET project.

Teachers' SEDA Competencies in ILSA Studies

ILSA studies allow us to reliably compare different aspects of the educational process based on dependable samples and internationally comparable data. The results of these studies are often used in various important national and international educational policy strategies. Lately, the study of the SEDA competencies held by both teachers and students has also received growing attention in ILSA studies to identify the background factors of achievement. As such, we stress our reflections on the relevance of programmes like HAND:ET system with respect to the results of some ILSA studies. In the following, we describe the selection of countries to be compared, the selection of ILSA studies to be compared, and the SEDA competency indicators from the perspectives of both teachers and students.

Selection of Countries and ILSA Studies for the Comparisons

To underscore the importance of SEDA competencies with regard to ILSA studies data, three important steps were followed to select the countries and ILSA studies. In step one, we chose countries that had participated in implementing the HAND:ET project in schools (field-trial countries), i.e., Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden. In the next step, we selected recent ILSA data in which all these countries participated, and those ILSA studies that offer a wider range of SEDA competencies indicators in their student and teacher questionnaires. Given these criteria, and because we were interested in both

teachers' and students' perspectives on their own SEDA competencies, and students' perspective on teachers' SEDA competencies, for this paper, in the last step, we excluded ICCS 2022, PIRLS 2021 and TIMSS 2019 data, and selected the most recent data available from the OECD TALIS 2018 and OECD PISA 2022 studies.

Participants in TALIS and PISA

The objective of the TALIS 2018 was to obtain in each participating country and economy a representative sample of teachers for each International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level in which the country and economy was participating (OECD, 2019b). For this paper, we selected teachers from ISCED 2 level, that is, mainly teachers from primary or lower secondary schools because not all the countries we wanted to include had participated with an ISCED 3 sample of teachers and further teachers participating in HAND:ET were also selected from ISCED 2 schools. In TALIS 2018, there were representative samples of 246 ISCED 2 schools and 4,255 teachers participating in Austria, 188 schools and 3,358 teachers in Croatia, 200 schools and 3,676 teachers in Portugal, 132 schools and 2,094 teachers in Slovenia, and 180 schools and 2,782 teachers in Sweden (OECD, 2019a).

The desired base PISA 2022 target population in each country/economy consisted of 15-year-old students in grades 7 and higher, regardless of the educational institutions they were attending. In Austria, there was a representative sample of 6,151 students participating in PISA 2022, in Croatia 6,135 students, in Portugal 6,793 students, in Slovenia 6,721 students, and in Sweden 6,072 students. Except for Sweden, the majority of participating students in Austria, Croatia, Portugal and Slovenia were attending ISCED 3 educational programmes (OECD, 2023).

Selected Measures of Different Aspects of SEDA Competencies in TALIS 2018

For the purpose of this paper, we selected data on SEDA competencies from the TALIS 2018 teacher questionnaires and the PISA 2022 student background questionnaires. For TALIS 2018, the data were collected through teacher questionnaires with questionnaire topics covering several areas: Initial education and training, induction and mentoring; continuing education and training; school leadership; school culture and classroom climate; job satisfaction; attitudes to learning and teaching; learning and teaching strategies; teacher performance appraisal; the feedback and endorsements teachers receive for their work, learning and teaching in diverse settings; and teacher mobility (Japelj Pavešić, 2019). For our comparisons of various aspects of SEDA competencies

from the TALIS 2018 questionnaires, we used teachers' self-reports on separate items:

Teachers' views on how society values their profession is represented by the statement "I think that the teaching profession is valued in society", where teachers responded on a four-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly disagree; 4 – Strongly agree), and answered the question "We would like to know how you generally feel about your job. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?".

Teachers' satisfaction with the profession is represented by the statement "If I could decide again, I would still choose to work as a teacher", where teachers responded on a four-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly disagree; 4 – Strongly agree), and answered the question "We would like to know how you generally feel about your job. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?".

Teacher–student relations are represented by the statement "Most teachers are interested in what students have to say", where teachers responded on a four-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly disagree; 4 – Strongly agree), and answered the question "How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what happens in this school?".

Teachers' stress is represented by the statement "I experience stress in my work", where teachers responded on a four-point Likert scale (1 – Not at all; 4 – A lot), and answered the question "In your experience as a teacher at this school, to what extent do the following occur?".

Collaborative school culture is represented by the statement "There is a collaborative school culture which is characterised by mutual support", where teachers responded on a four-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly disagree; 4 – Strongly agree), and answered the question "How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements, as applied to this school?".

Self-efficacy in multicultural environments is represented by the statement "Adapt my teaching to the cultural diversity of students", where teachers responded on a four-point Likert scale (1 – Not at all; 4 – A lot), and answered the question "In teaching a culturally diverse class, to what extent can you do the following?".

Selected Measures of Different Aspects of SEDA Competencies in PISA 2022

In the PISA 2022 survey, after a 2-hour PISA 2022 reading, mathematics and science literacy test students completed the student questionnaire, which is used to identify the effects of different background factors on student achievement, e.g., about their family and home, learning maths at school, about how they think about their life, about their school, and their school timetable and learning time. Besides that, students in PISA 2022 also completed a well-being

questionnaire that also contained questions concerning their socio-emotional competencies. For the analysis, we used student self-reports on separate PISA scales:

The sense of belonging at school scale assessed the degree to which students feel like they belong at their school. They responded on a four-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly agree; 4 – Strongly disagree) to the following six statements: "I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school", "I make friends easily at school", "I feel like I belong at school", "I feel awkward and out of place in my school", "Other students seem to like me" and "I feel lonely at school" .

The teacher support in mathematics scale assessed the degree to which a range of situations occurred in their mathematics lessons. They responded on a four-point Likert scale (1 – Every lesson; 4 – Never or almost never) to the following four statements: "The teacher shows an interest in every student's learning", "The teacher gives extra help when students need it", "The teacher helps students with their learning", and "The teacher continues teaching until the students understand".

The quality of teacher–student relationships scale assessed the extent to which students feel like they have quality relationships with their teachers at school. They responded on a four-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly disagree; 4 – Strongly agree) to eight statements, e.g.: "The teachers at my school are respectful towards me", "If I walked into my classes upset, my teachers would be concerned about me", "If I came back to visit my school three years from now, my teachers would be excited to see me", "The teachers at my school are interested in students' well-being".

The empathy scale assessed students' agreement with statements regarding a range of behaviours indicative of empathy. They responded on a five-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree) to ten statements, e.g.: "I can sense how others feel", "I can see situations from my friends' perspectives", "I get upset if bad things happen to other people", "I understand what others want".

The emotional control scale assessed students' agreement with statements about a range of behaviours indicative of emotional control. They responded on a five-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree) to ten statements, e.g.: "I keep my emotions under control", "I stay calm even in tense situations", "I know how to control my feelings", "I have unpredictable emotions".

The stress resistance scale assessed students' agreement with statements concerning a range of behaviours indicative of stress resistance. They responded on a five-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree) to ten statements, e.g.: "I am more relaxed than most people I know", "I am able to work under pressure", "I handle stress well", "I worry about many things".

The life satisfaction scale measured students' overall satisfaction with their lives. They rated their satisfaction with life on a scale from 1–10, with the question being, "The following question asks how satisfied you feel about your life, on a scale from 0 to 10. Zero means you feel 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'completely satisfied'. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?".

Data

All the data used in this paper were extracted from the existing online available international TALIS 2018 and PISA 2022 survey databases for selected countries. In both TALIS 2018 and PISA 2022, we refer to self-reports of teachers and students on different items and scales. In TALIS 2018, we describe the proportions of teachers who agreed with a particular item on various aspects of SEDA competencies, while in PISA 2022 we report the mean values of internationally comparable indices of students' well-being and SEDA competencies. Since in this paper we are interested in comparisons with international averages on top of cross-country comparisons themselves, we also extracted the OECD country averages from the international databases in addition to the country-specific data. Alongside the item response rates and average index values, we extracted the associated standard errors of the parameters from the international databases. As certain selected countries did not achieve a sufficient student response rate on scales that form specific indices, no internationally comparable index was calculated for these countries and this is indicated by m – missing in the database.

Results

The results of the TALIS 2018 survey (Table 1) show that, on the OECD average, only 26% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the teaching profession is valued in their society. In all of the selected countries, these percentages were even lower, i.e., below the OECD average. For example, in Austria 16% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, followed by Sweden with 11%, Croatia and Portugal with 9%, and Slovenia with just 6% of teachers.

Further, 76% of teachers on the OECD average agreed or strongly agreed that if they could decide again, they would still choose to work as a teacher, in a way indicating their satisfaction with the profession. There was a similar share of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement in Croatia (75%). In Austria and Slovenia, the agreement with this statement amongst teachers was higher than the OECD average (84% in Austria, 78% in Slovenia), yet in Portugal and Sweden, the percentages of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing with this

statement were below the OECD average and relatively low (65% in Portugal, 63% in Sweden).

In the TALIS 2018 questionnaire, teachers also reported their perception of the quality of their relationships in schools. There was a relatively high percentage of teachers on the OECD average (93%) who agreed with the statement that most teachers in their schools are interested in what students have to say. Only in Sweden was this percentage above the OECD average, with 96% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. The figures for other selected countries were below the OECD average, with 91% for Portugal, 89% for Croatia and Slovenia, and 88% for Austria.

On the other hand, teachers on the OECD average report relatively high levels of very frequent stress in their work (selecting 4 on the four-point Likert scale); 18% of teachers reported experiencing a lot of stress in their work. The percentages of such teachers in the compared countries were the highest and above the OECD average in Portugal (35%), yet in all the other selected countries the figures were below the OECD average (17% in Sweden, 16% in Slovenia, 12% in Austria, 7% in Croatia).

The feeling of mutual support from one's co-workers is another important aspect of an individual's well-being. On the OECD average, 81 teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that there is a collaborative school culture characterised by mutual support. These shares were similar in Austria (83%), Sweden (80%) and Croatia (79%), and above the OECD average in Slovenia (89%). The lowest percentage of teachers reporting a collaborative school culture amongst the countries under study was in Portugal (75%).

Concerning the feeling of self-efficacy in multicultural environments, only 59% of teachers on the OECD average reported feeling able to adapt their teaching to the cultural diversity of students quite a bit or a lot. In Sweden, Austria and Slovenia, these percentages were even lower and below the OECD average (53% in Sweden, 52% in Austria, 36% in Slovenia). In comparison, 90% of teachers in Portugal reported being able to adapt their teaching to the students' cultural diversity quite a bit or a lot, while in Croatia the percentage also exceeded the OECD average (74%).

With respect to aspects of SEDA competencies from students' perspective, we derived several indices from the PISA 2022 database describing students' sense of belonging at school, their perceived support from teachers in mathematics lessons, the quality of their relationships with teachers at their school, their self-perceived empathy, emotional control, stress resistance, and life satisfaction.

The results show that in most selected countries students on average reported levels above the OECD average concerning their sense of belonging at school, with the highest values of the index of sense of belonging at schools in Croatia (.13). The lowest, significantly below-average value of the index, was in Austria (−.23).

Table 1: Aspects of SEDA competencies from teachers' perspective in TALIS 2018

	OECD Average		Austria		Croatia		Portugal		Slovenia		Sweden	
	%	*SE*	*%*	*SE*	*%*	*SE*	*%*	*SE*	*%*	*SE*	*%*	*SE*
Teachers' views on how society values their profession[1]	25.8	.2	16.1	.6	9.2	.8	9.1	.5	5.6	.5	10.7	.7
Teachers' satisfaction with the profession[2]	75.6	.2	84.2	.7	75.0	1.3	64.8	1.0	77.9	1.0	63.1	1.3
Teacher–student relations[3]	92.6	.1	88.4	.6	88.5	.9	91.0	.6	88.8	.8	95.7	.3
Teachers' stress[4]	18.4	.2	12.2	.6	7.4	.6	34.8	1.0	16.4	1.0	17.1	.9
Collaborative school culture[5]	80.6	.2	82.7	1.0	79.2	1.0	75.0	1.1	89.2	1.0	79.9	1.2
Self-efficacy in multicultural environments[6]	58.9	.3	51.9	1.0	73.8	2.6	90.0	.8	35.5	1.4	52.6	1.2

Note: % – Percentage; *SE* – Standard Error

[1] Percentages of teachers who agree or strongly agree that the teaching profession is valued in society

[2] Percentages of teachers who agree or strongly agree with the statement "If I could decide again, I would still choose to work as a teacher"

[3] Percentages of teachers who agree or strongly agree with the statement "Most teachers are interested in what students have to say"

[4] Percentages of teachers experiencing a lot of stress in their work

[5] Percentages of teachers who agree or strongly agree that there is a collaborative school culture which is characterised by mutual support

[6] Percentage of teachers who feel they can adapt their teaching to the cultural diversity of students quite a bit or a lot.

In Croatia, Austria and Slovenia, students also reported well below the OECD average teacher support in mathematics (–.21 in Croatia, –.39 in Austria, –.41 in Slovenia). The highest levels above the average of the index of teacher support in mathematics were seen in Portugal (.33) and Sweden (.19).

Students in Portugal and Sweden also reported a more positive quality of teacher–student relationships in their schools than their peers in the OECD countries with values of the index of the quality of teacher–student relationships exceeding the OECD average (.24 in Portugal, .19 in Sweden). Students in Austria also reported above the OECD average the quality of their relationships with the teachers (.10), whereas students in Croatia and Slovenia, once again, reported results below the OECD average (–.21 in Croatia and Slovenia).

In the field of self-evaluation of socio-emotional competencies, participating students in the selected countries reported above OECD average levels of empathy in Austria (.30) and Portugal (.18), and similar to the OECD average

levels of empathy in Croatia (−.03). Levels similar to the OECD average were also reported by students and Portugal (.18) and Slovenia on emotional control scales (.01 for Portugal and Slovenia), while students in Croatia reported higher levels of emotional control (.16) than their peers in OECD countries. On the scale of stress resistance, students from Croatia (.09) and Austria (.08) reported somewhat higher levels of stress resistance than their peers in OECD countries, and students from Portugal and Slovenia reported below OECD average levels (−.08 in Portugal, −.06 in Slovenia).

On the life satisfaction scale, the highest values above the OECD average were reported by students in Croatia (7.37) and Portugal (7.06), and the lowest values below the OECD average by students in Austria (6.69) and Slovenia (6.61).

Table 2: Aspects of SEDA competencies from students' perspective in PISA 2022

	OECD Average		Austria		Croatia		Portugal		Slovenia		Sweden	
	M	*SE*	*M*	*SE*	*M*	*SE*	*M*	*SE*	*M*	*SE*	*M*	*SE*
Sense of belonging at school	−.02	.00	−.23	.01	.13	.01	.08	.02	.04	.01	.09	.01
Teacher support in mathematics	−.03	.00	−.39	.03	−.21	.02	.33	.03	−.41	.02	.19	.02
Quality of student–teacher relationships	.00	.01	.10	.03	−.21	.02	.24	.03	−.21	.02	.19	.02
Empathy	.01	.00	.30	.02	−.03	.01	.18	.01	m	m	m	m
Emotional control	−.01	.00	m	m	.16	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	m	m
Stress resistance	−.02	.00	.08	.01	.09	.02	−.08	.01	−.06	.01	m	m
Life satisfaction	6.75	.01	6.69	.03	7.37	.04	7.06	.03	6.61	.03	6.91	.03

Note: M – Mean value of internationally comparable index; *SE* – Standard Error; m – missing

Discussion and Conclusions

The results show that teachers from all of the selected countries reported agreement below the OECD average with the statement that society values their profession, and that there is a very low percentage of teachers who feel that they are valued professionals. Around one-quarter of teachers in OECD countries do not feel satisfied in their profession. Among the countries compared, this proportion is similar in Croatia and even higher in Portugal and Sweden. A relatively large proportion of teachers on the OECD average report high-quality relationships with students in their school. Only around one-tenth of teachers in Austria, Croatia, Portugal and Slovenia and just 5% of teachers in

Sweden disagree. On the other hand, about one in five teachers on the OECD average report very high levels of stress in their work. In Portugal, up to 35% of teachers report this. About one-third of teachers on the OECD average and in most countries compared do not feel a collaborative school culture characterised by mutual support. Portugal had the lowest share of such teachers in the countries compared (25%). Only 60% of teachers on the OECD average also report being able to easily adapt their teaching to the cultural diversity of students. In Sweden and Austria only a solid half of teachers report this, and in Slovenia just over 30% of teachers.

In terms of students' reporting on different aspects of SEDA competencies, while the results also vary widely between the countries under study, some shortages in this area are apparent for at least two aspects of SEDA competencies compared in Austria, Croatia and Slovenia. For example, compared to the OECD average, students in Austria reported relatively low levels of a sense of belonging at school and teacher support in mathematics, in Croatia low levels of teacher support in mathematics and quality of teacher–student relationships, and in Slovenia also low levels of quality relationships with teachers at school in both mathematics and generally, and below-average levels of stress-resistance. The latter was also reported by students in Portugal, whereas students in Sweden reported above OECD average levels for all the scales compared.

Taking account of the shortages in SEDA competencies amongst teachers and students in the selected countries and given the positive effects of SEDA competencies on students' motivation, behaviour and achievement (e.g., Allen et al., 2018; Harding et al., 2019; Hattie, 2012; Kozina, 2020; Šterman Ivančič & Štremfel, 2023), as well as the identified positive effects of SEDA competencies on teachers' well-being in coping with stress and the various challenges of teaching (e.g., Collie, 2017; Durlak et al., 2022; Milatz et al., 2015; Roeser et al., 2013; Ross & Tolan, 2018), it may be concluded that strengthening SEDA competencies is a key element while designing responses to the reduced well-being of both teachers and students. This is also supported by the results of the first Hand in Hand project that showed supportive relationships in schools have a greater impact on students who show particular deficits in learning motivation, achievement and behaviour, and that one of the efficient solutions entails strengthening teachers' and students' SEDA competencies (Kozina, 2020) because better social and emotional skills are reflected in higher motivation and achievement, better mental health and prosocial behaviour, less antisocial behaviour and a more positive self-image of students. As such, the development and continuation of the HAND:ET programme was the only reasonable step forward and points to the urgent need to also develop, implement and systematically support similar programmes in different education systems in the future.

This is especially important when it is further noted that social and emotional skills are not specifically defined in the main public policy documents in the area of education in the European Union. Namely, they are only indirectly included, and the development of these skills is not yet systematically supported. Future steps should accordingly encompass a detailed analysis of all national documents and the systematic integration of teachers' SEDA competencies into all levels of the education systems (Štremfel, 2020). We aim to elaborate on this in the following chapters using the countries participating in HAND:ET as examples. Systemic support should also be provided to teachers and other school professionals so that they can build on their social and emotional skills in the course of their teaching.

The contemporary era reveals the great need to prioritise SEDA competencies in education. By so doing, educators can empower students to navigate the complexities of a diverse world, fostering not only academic success but also the development of well-rounded, empathetic individuals poised to contribute meaningfully to society. To this end, the first important step is for teachers themselves to have these competencies properly developed and supported. The ongoing discourse on these competencies signifies a collective commitment to nurturing the next generation with the skills and awareness required for success in the 21st century.

References

Allen, K., Kern, M. L., Vella-Brodrick, D., Hattie, J., & Waters, L. (2018). What schools need to know about fostering school belonging: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, *30*(1), 1–34. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-016-9389-8

Anderman, L. H. (2003). Academic and social perceptions as predictors of change in middle school students' sense of school belonging. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, *72*(1), 5–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220970309600877

Banks, J. A., & McGee Banks, C. A. (2019). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. John Wiley & Sons.

Basilotta-Gómez-Pablos, V., Matarranz, M., & Casado-Aranda, L. A. et al. (2022). Teachers' digital competencies in higher education: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 19*, 8. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00312-8

Battistich, V., Schaps, E., & Wilson, N. (2004). Effects of an elementary school intervention on students' "connectedness" to school and social adjustment during middle school. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, *24*(3), 243–262. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:JOPP.0000018048.38517.cd

Bottiani, J. H., Duran, C. A. K., Pas, E. T., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2019). Teacher stress and burnout in urban middle schools: Associations with job demands, resources,

and effective classroom practices. *Journal of School Psychology, 77*, 36–51. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2019.10.002

Caena, F., & Redecker, C. (2019). Aligning teacher competence frameworks to 21st century challenges: The case for the European digital competence framework for educators. *European Journal of Education, 54*, 356–369.

Capone, V., & Petrillo, G. (2020). Mental health in teachers: Relationships with job satisfaction, efficacy beliefs, burnout and depression. *Current Psychology, 39*, 1757–1766. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9878-7

Collie, R. J. (2017). Teachers' social and emotional competence: Links with social and emotional learning and positive workplace outcomes. In E. Frydenberg., A. J. Martin & R. J. Collie (Eds.), *Social and emotional learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific* (pp. 167–184). Springer.

Collie, R. J., Shapka, J. D., & Perry, N. E. (2012). School climate and social–emotional learning: Predicting teacher stress, job satisfaction, and teaching efficacy. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *104*(4), 1189. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029356

Connell, J. P., Halpem-Felsher, B. L., Clifford, E., Crichlow, W., & Usinger, P. (1995). Hanging in There: Behavioral, psychological, and contextual factors affecting whether African American adolescents stay in high school. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *10*(1), 41–63. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743554895101004

Croninger, R. G., & Lee, V. E. (2001). Social capital and dropping out of high school: Benefits to at-risk students of teachers' support and guidance. *Teachers College Record*, *103*(4), 548–581. https://doi.org/10.1111/0161-4681.00127

Crosnoe, R., Kirkpatrick Johnson., M., & Elder, G. H. Jr. (2004). Integrational bonding in school: The behavioral and contextual correlates of student-teacher relationships. *Sociology of Education, 77*(1), 60–81.

Demanet, J., & Van Houtte, M. (2012). School belonging and school misconduct: The differing role of teacher and peer attachment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *41*(4), 499–514. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-011-9674-2

Durlak, J. A. (Ed.). (2015). *Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice.* Guilford Publications.

Durlak, J. A., Mahoney, J. L., & Boyle, A. E. (2022). What we know, and what we need to find out about universal, school-based social and emotional learning programs for children and adolescents: A review of meta-analyses and directions for future research. *Psychological Bulletin, 148*(11–12), 765–782. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000383

Fauziah, A., Kim, M., Aye, M., Hakizimana, V., & Hur, J. (2021). Impact of the society's perception on teachers' professionalism. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn), 15*(4), 545–551. https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v15i4.20292

Fullarton, S. (2002). *Student engagement with school: Individual and school-level influences.* ACER. https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=lsay_research

García-Carmona, M., Marín, M. D., & Aguayo, R. (2019). Burnout syndrome in secondary school teachers: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal, 22*, 189–208. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-018-9471-9

Gillen-O'Neel, C., & Fuligni, A. (2013). A Longitudinal study of school belonging and academic motivation across high school. *Child Development*, *84*(2), 678–692. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01862.x

Goodenow, C. (1993). The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates. *Psychology in the Schools, 30*, 79–90.

Grant, A., Hann, T., Godwin, R., Shackelford, D., & Ames, T. (2020). A framework for graduated teacher autonomy: Linking teacher proficiency with autonomy. *The Educational Forum, 84*(2), 100–113. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2020.1700324

Gregory, A., & Weinstein, R. S. (2004). Connection and regulation at home and in school: Predicting growth in achievement for adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 19*, 405–427.

Hallinan, M. T. (2008). Teacher influences on students' attachment to school. *Sociology of Education*, *81*(3), 271–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/003804070808100303

Harding, S., Morris, R., Gunnell, D., Ford, T., Hollingworth, W., Tilling, K., Evans, R., Bell, S., Grey, J., Brockman, R., Campbell, R., Araya, R., Murphy, S., & Kidger, J. (2019). Is teachers' mental health and wellbeing associated with students' mental health and wellbeing? *Journal of Affective Disorders, 242*, 180–187. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2018.08.080

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible Learning for teachers. Maximizing impact on learning*. Routledge.

Ilgan, A., & Ceviz, H. (2019). The relationship between the perception of the society related to teaching profession and teachers' professional motivation according to teachers' views. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 25*(2), 285–338. https://doi.org/0.14527/kuey.2019.008

Japelj Pavešić, B. (2019). *Učitelji in ravnatelji, cenjeni strokovnjaki. Izsledki Mednarodne raziskave poučevanja in učenja: TALIS 2018* [Teachers and head teachers, respected experts. Findings of the teaching and learning international survey: TALIS 2018]. Pedagoški inštitut.

Jensen, H. et al. (2020). *Hand in hand: School staff training – teachers*. https://2017–20.handinhand.si/?lang=sl/

Kozina, A. (2020). *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe: Relationships matter*. Verlag Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/open-access/11406/11406_Kozina%20ED%20-%20Social%20emotional%20and%20intercultural%20competencies%20for%20inclusive%20school%20environments%20across%20Europe.pdf

McCarthy, C. J., Lineback, S., & Reiser, J. (2014). Teacher stress, emotion, and classroom management. In E. Emmer & E. J. Sabornie (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management* (pp. 301–322). Routledge.

Milatz, A., Lüftenegger, M., & Schober, B. (2015). Teachers' relationship closeness with students as a resource for teacher wellbeing: A response surface analytical approach. *Frontiers of Psychology, 6*, 1949.

Montgomery, C., & Rupp, A. A. (2005). A meta-analysis for exploring the diverse causes and effects of stress in teachers. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue Canadienne de l'éducation, 28*(3), 458–486. https://doi.org/10.2307/4126479

Murdock, T. B., & Miller, A. (2003). Teachers as sources of middle school students' motivational identity: Variable-centered and person-centered analytic approaches. *Elementary School Journal, 103*, 383–399.

OECD (2019a). *TALIS 2018 results (volume I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en

OECD (2019b). *TALIS 2018 Technical report*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/TALIS_2018_Technical_Report.pdf

OECD (2019c). *PISA 2018 Results (Volume III): What school life means for students' lives*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/acd78851-en

OECD (2020). *PISA 2018 Results (Volume VI): are students ready to thrive in an interconnected world*? OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/d5f68679-en

OECD (2023a). *PISA 2022 results (Volume I): The state of learning and equity in education*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/53f23881-en

OECD (2023b). *PISA 2022 Insights and Interpretations*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202022%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations.pdf

Parrish, P., & Linder-VanBerschot, J. A. (2010). Cultural dimensions of learning: Addressing the challenges of multicultural instruction. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 11*(2), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v11i2.809

Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B., & Stuhlman, M. (2003). Relationships between teachers and children. In W. Reynolds & G. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of Psychology* (7th ed., pp. 199–234). Wiley.

Pittman, L. D., & Richmond, A. (2007). Academic and psychological functioning in late adolescence: The importance of school belonging. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, *75*(4), 270–290. https://doi.org/10.3200/JEXE.75.4.270-292

Roeser, R. W., Midgley, C., & Urdan, T. C. (1996). Perceptions of the school psychological environment and early adolescents' psychological and behavioral functioning in school: The mediating role of goals and belonging. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *88*(3), 408–422. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.88.3.408

Roeser, R. W., Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Jha, A., Cullen, M., Wallace, L., Wilensky, R., Oberle, E., Thomson, K., Taylor, C., & Harrison, J. (2013). Mindfulness training and reductions in teacher stress and burnout: Results from two randomized, waitlist-control field trials. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 105*(3), 787–804. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032093

Ross, K. M., & Tolan, P. (2018). Social and emotional learning in adolescence: Testing the CASEL model in a normative sample. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 38*(8), 1170–1199. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431617725198

Shriver, T., & Buffett, J. (2015). The uncommon core. In J. A. Durlak, C. E. Domitrovich, R. P. Weissberg & T. P. Gullota (Eds.), *Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice* (pp. 15–16). The Guilford Press.

Stromquist, N. P. (2018). *The global status of teachers and the teaching profession*. Education International. https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/25722:the-global-status-of-teachers-and-the-teaching-profession

Šterman Ivančič, K., & Štremfel, U. (2023). *Global competences of Slovenian students: conceptual and empirical insights* [Globalne kompetence slovenskih učencev in

učenk: konceptualni in empirični vpogledi]. Pedagoški inštitut. https://www.doi.org/10.32320/978-961-270-349-3

Štremfel, U. (2020). The embeddedness of social, emotional and intercultural/transcultural learning in European and national educational policies and practices. In A. Kozina (Ed.). *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe: relationships matter* (pp. 39–58). Verlag Dr. Kovač.

Thompson, D. R., Iachan, R., Overpeck, M., Ross, J. G., & Gross, L. A. (2006). School connectedness in the health behavior in school-aged children study: The role of student, school, and school neighbourhood characteristics. *Journal of School Health*, *76*(7), 379–386. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2006.00129.x

Wentzel, K. R. (2012). Teacher-student relationship and adolescent competence at school. In T. Wubbels, P. den Brok, J. van Tartwijk & J. Levy (Eds.), *Interpersonal relationships in education: An overview of contemporary research* (pp. 19–36). Sense Publishers.

Whitlock, J. L. (2006). Youth perceptions of life at school: Contextual correlates of school connectedness in adolescence. *Applied Developmental Science*, *10*(1), 13–29. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads1001_2

Chapter 2
Policies Supporting Teachers' Social and Emotional Competencies, and Diversity Awareness on the European Union Level

Urška Štremfel[1]

Abstract

The chapter presents the embodiment of teachers' social and emotional competencies, and diversity awareness in European Union policies in a longer-term perspective. It demonstrates how teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness have slowly entered the European Union agenda ever since the European Community was set up in 1951. This path has been marked by supporting teachers' mobility (1990s), strengthening their intercultural competencies (2010s) and, finally, establishing teachers' well-being as a high political priority (2020s). The chapter shows that teachers' competencies (also those implicitly related to social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness) are treated mostly as support for students' outcomes and assuring quality and effective education and training and, to a large extent the exposure of their importance in European Union policy documents, is influenced by external factors (the economic, migrant and COVID crises). By describing past and particularly current European Union strategic priorities concerning the development of teachers' well-being and social and emotional competencies, and diversity awareness, the chapter outlines the European Union policy framework in which the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project was initiated and to whose realisation it is expected to contribute.

Keywords: European Union, Teacher Policy, Historical Development, Social and Emotional Competencies and Diversity Awareness, Well-being

Introduction

The chapter provides a review of current teacher policies and priorities on the European Union (EU) level and the embodiment of social and emotional competencies along with diversity awareness (SEDA competencies) in it. It ac-

1 Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

cordingly helps to understand why the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project (HAND:ET project) and other policy experimentation projects were initiated by the European Commission (European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), 2019)), and how their findings may contribute to further development of the field. With this purpose in mind, it does not provide an in-depth scientific discussion of the Europeanisation of teacher policy in the participating countries. Nonetheless, the in-depth insight into EU policies on teachers' SEDA competencies and well-being is important for understanding the (non-)coherence between the EU's priorities and existing national teacher policies in the countries participating in the HAND:ET project; that is, Austria (for more, see Chapter 3), Croatia (for more, see Chapter 4), Portugal (for more, see Chapter 5), Slovenia (for more, see Chapter 6) and Sweden (for more, see Chapter 7).

Several research questions are considered in the chapter: How has teachers' well-being become a high educational strategic objective of the EU in the last few decades? Which are the EU's political priorities in the field today and what is expected of member states and different stakeholders in terms of their realisation?

This chapter has a qualitative orientation and is based on content analysis of the EU's educational policy documents (mainly Council of the EU Resolutions, Communications and Recommendations, and European Commission Communications) after the European Community was established in 1951. The policy documents were selected according to their relevance to teacher policy. The keywords searched were teachers' SEDA competencies and well-being, along with the wider fields of their support (e.g., teacher education, competence frameworks, working conditions etc.).

The structure of the chapter is as follows. The first section presents the historical development of the embodiment of teacher (SEDA) education in the EU's policies in the area of education over different periods since 1951. The second section introduces the key contemporary challenges facing the teaching profession and describes the current political priorities regarding teachers' SEDA competencies and well-being. The conclusion critically reflects on these developments.

Even though the chapter holds applied added value for understanding HAND:ET project's embodiment in the EU policy framework in place today, the review is also particularly scientifically relevant. Symeonidis (2021) reported that, compared with other educational fields (e.g., students' achievement), teacher professional development in the EU has received much less research attention in scientific research. Based on a review of the literature, it may be argued that research into the development of teachers' SEDA competencies is missing. The chapter therefore fills a research gap in the field.

Teachers' Professional Development, Well-being and SEDA Competencies within the EU's Cooperation in the Area of Education

European cooperation in the field of education, including teachers' professional development, dates back to when the European Community was established. However, over the decades it has become part of two parallel processes. Placing teachers' professional development at the heart of EU cooperation in the area of education is determined by the objectives of the knowledge society (e.g., European Council, 2000) and establishing of the European Education Area (Council of the EU, 2018a) as well as the visions of achieving the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Declaration) (Council of the EU, 1999).[2] This division is also seen in policy developments where initial teacher education is perceived as part of higher education (Bologna Process), while continuous professional development relates to school and teacher policies (Symeonidis, 2021). In the sections below, we try to structure the main periods of teacher professional development policy in the EU with special emphasis being paid to the development of teachers' well-being and SEDA competencies.

Supporting Teachers' Mobility, Preparing Students for Working Life, and the Lifelong Learning Society (1950s–1990s)

EU cooperation in the field started in the area of vocational education and training identified as "capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market" (Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, 1957). Accompanying Council Decisions (Council of the European Communities, 1963) pointed to the need for teachers and instructors to be suitably prepared on the national level with the Community's assistance, when necessary.

The 1970s were marked by intensified EU cooperation in the area of education, and teachers' professional development. The *Resolution on Cooperation in the Field of Education* (The Council of the European Communities, 1974) encouraged teachers' mobility, largely by removing administrative and social

2 The Europeanising of teacher education due to the Bologna Process is evident in the integrating of teacher education into higher education (university programmes), that previously was treated more as professional than academic education (Zgaga, 2013, p. 347). The Europeanisation of teacher education is reflected in the adoption of the Bologna cycles of bachelor and master degrees and the introduction of professional competence frameworks, defining expectations for teacher quality and learning outcomes in the curricula of teacher education institutions (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018).

obstacles to their free movement and by improving the teaching of foreign languages. The Council of the European Communities (1976) exposed the importance of initial and continuous training of teachers to support young people to be more effectively prepared for working life.

The European Commission (1987) launched initiatives to promote the European dimension in schools through teacher exchanges and school partnerships. These initiatives were supported in following years by several networking activities in the frameworks of the Erasmus, Tempus and Lifelong Learning programmes.

The Memorandum of Higher Education (Commission of the European Communities, 1991; Council of the EU, 1993) proposed a strategy for the modernisation of higher education, including the training of teachers. It recognised the role of universities in teacher education and called upon fostering the joint actions of member states with respect to curricula development and new approaches to learning. *The White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment* (European Commission, 1993) highlighted the role of teachers in the new information era, the use of new technologies by teachers, and the need to develop these competencies in teacher education. *The White Paper Towards the Learning Society* (European Commission, 1995) shed light on the challenges of teaching in a time of technological advancement. Among others, it called for the recruitment of the best teachers and development of new teaching approaches and innovation to address the needs of the (new) lifelong learning society. The *Communication Towards a Europe of Knowledge* (European Commission, 1997) again emphasised the importance of teachers' mobility.

To summarise, in the first four decades, EU cooperation in the field of education was slowly strengthening. It was heavily focused on the development of vocational education and training. The topic of teachers' professional development sporadically appeared in policy documents. The teachers' role was particularly envisioned in terms of supporting students for working life, while teachers' mobility was supported to contribute to the European dimension of education. Even if not explicitly indicated, these (mobility) goals may be said to implicitly relate to the development of teachers' diversity awareness.

Teachers as Key Agents in Supporting Students' Outcomes (2000s)

The Lisbon Strategy (European Council, 2000) underscored the importance of developing teachers' information and technologies (ICT) skills, fostering their mobility and removing obstacles to it, and attracting high-quality candidates to the profession. *Strategic Framework Education and Training 2010* (Council of the EU, 2002) exposed the crucial role played by teachers in realising the first of three strategic goals; namely, to improve the quality and effectiveness of education and training in the EU. The shortage of teachers due to the ageing

teacher population was identified as a pressing issue and the need to attract and retain qualified and motivated teachers was especially emphasised. Several (general) proposals for improving teacher education were issued. *The joint report on the progress of Lisbon's strategy* (Council of the EU and European Commission, 2004) pointed out teachers as being the core agents for attaining the goals declared in Lisbon. It promoted the idea of developing common European reference frameworks and principles for teachers' competencies. The Report also proposed indicators for the professional development of teachers, which would link teacher education with the Bologna Process. *Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications* (European Commission, 2005) once again revealed teachers as the main agents for realising the EU's strategic educational goals. It listed several competencies that teachers should acquire: work with knowledge, technology and information, work with fellow human beings, and work with and in society. Even though these were quite widely defined, it may be assumed that at least implicitly they also relate to the social competencies of teachers.

The Communication on Improving the Quality of Teacher Education (European Commission, 2007) explicitly linked the quality of teachers with students' achievements. It was also acknowledged that in a constantly changing world in which students come from diverse backgrounds teachers' competencies must be constantly updated via continuous professional development. Special attention was paid to professional mentoring and guidance support in the initial years of teaching. The subsequent *Council of the EU Conclusions on improving the quality of teacher education* (Council of the EU, 2007) mentioned that for teachers, in addition to specialist knowledge, pedagogical skills are also needed, along with teaching practice during the study. The importance of quality assurance in professional teachers' development was stressed. *The Council of the EU Conclusions on preparing young people for the 21st century* (Council of the EU, 2008) expressed the need to promote and enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession, including a review of national recruitment, placement and retention policies, and the quality professional development of school leaders. *Council Conclusions on the Professional Development of Teachers and School Leaders* (Council of the EU, 2009a) divided teacher education into three stages: initial, induction and continuous. It was pointed out that induction should offer teachers both personal and professional support. The former can at least implicitly be understood as social and emotional support contributing to the development of teachers' social and emotional competencies.

It may be concluded that in the 2000s quality teachers were recognised as an important factor in students' achievement. The shortage of teachers was already seen as a pressing issue. As regards teachers' SEDA competencies, they may be very implicitly understood in terms of the ability to work with human beings, with and in society (social competencies), and to support students from

different backgrounds (diversity awareness). The need for personal (social and emotional) support for early career teachers was at least implicitly emphasised. However, one can confirm Downes' (2018) findings that the social and emotional dimension of education was relatively neglected in the European policy context up until 2010.

Teachers as Important Agents in Addressing the EU's Challenges (2010s)

Five main objectives were established in the *Europe 2020 strategy* (European Commission, 2010), with one being linked to Education. This objective states that:

> *In the period up to 2020, the main objective of European cooperation must be to support the development of education systems and training in the member states to ensure: a) personal, social and professional fulfilment for all citizens; b) sustainable economic prosperity and employability, while promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue.*

The SEDA dimension of education was therefore heavily stressed.

The Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) (Council of the EU, 2009b) listed the mobility of teachers as an essential element of lifelong learning and an important means for enhancing their employability and adaptability. It was noted that for improving the quality and efficiency of education and training (Strategic goal 2) quality teaching, adequate initial and continuous professional development, early career support for new teachers, and making teaching an attractive career choice are necessary.

The *Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving* (Council of the EU, 2011) emphasises the need to support and empower teachers through initial education and continuous professional development, particularly for their work with pupils at risk, managing diversity in the classroom, and resolving challenging teaching situations. The European Commission (2013) recognised that poor relationships between pupils and teachers can contribute to early school leaving. It highlights the importance of supporting teachers in managing diversity and acknowledges that a whole-school approach fosters and supports positive and caring relationships among teachers, school staff, and pupils. It states that a strong and well-developed system of emotional support in schools is essential, especially for those at risk of early school leaving. The European Commission (2015), in its policy messages regarding the whole-school approach to tackling early school leaving, recognised that the role of the teacher is broadening and becoming more demanding in response to new challenges. It argues that teachers' relational and communication expertise, diversity management strategies, relationship-building, and conflict resolution

competencies should be reinforced and that the emotional well-being of teachers and other staff should also be prioritised.

The communication *Rethinking Education: Investing in Skills for Better Socio-economic Outcomes* (European Commission, 2012) provided several, mostly general, recommendations to member states for improving the recruitment, initial education, induction, and continuous professional development of teachers, principals and teacher educators. Among others, it offered a proposal for defining the competencies and qualities required of teachers in terms of learning outcomes (competence frameworks). Once again, the need for coherent personal, social and professional support for early-career teachers was highlighted. It was stated that continuous professional development should not only be treated as an integral part of teachers' activities but also be included in schools' development plans. For the first time, considerable attention was devoted to teacher educators. The proposal inter alia stated that explicit profiles of their competencies should be defined.

Conclusions on Effective Teacher Education (Council of the EU, 2014) referred to the importance of developing teachers' transversal competencies. Attention to developing effective ways of supporting diverse groups of learners was emphasised. As a solution to the recognised problem that new teachers are leaving the profession prematurely, greater consideration of teachers' personal and professional well-being in initial education and initial mentoring support was proposed. It may be argued that here the issue of teachers' well-being was explicitly mentioned for the first time in the EU's policy documents.

In the *Declaration on Promoting Citizenship and Common Values of Freedom, Tolerance and Non-discrimination through Education* (Council of the EU, 2015), the need to develop teachers' intercultural competencies was stressed as well as their abilities to support the European identity and social and intercultural competencies of their students. The C*ommunication Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture* (European Commission, 2017) exposed that more (policy) support for teachers' mobility programmes is needed. *Conclusions on school development and excellent teaching* (Council of the EU, 2017) acknowledged the need to "invest in teachers as powerful determinants of student achievement and to support them in taking responsibility and achieving a better balance between professional autonomy and accountability". This can be implicitly understood as part of responsible decision-making (an element of emotional competence in the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework on which the HAND:ET system is built (see Kozina, 2024). The document also listed several other general recommendations regarding the teaching profession that do not explicitly or implicitly relate to teachers' well-being and SEDA competencies.

Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching (Council of the EU, 2018b) stated that

"teachers should be supported and empowered through measures to create an open learning culture and environment and deal with diverse learning groups to teach civic competences, transmit Europe's shared heritage, promote common values and act as role models for the learners". It called for the promotion of a European dimension of teaching and a further improvement in training for teachers on citizenship and diversity and responding to the diverse needs of learners. *Council conclusions on moving towards a vision of a European Education Area* (Council of the EU, 2018a) also called for strengthened EU cooperation in the teacher professional development field, yet without referring to teachers' well-being and/or SEDA competencies. *Recommendation on key competencies for lifelong learning* (Council of the EU, 2018c) and the accompanying *European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence* (Sala et al., 2020) introduces personal, social and learning-to-learn competence as one of eight key competencies. Although support for educational staff is indicated as necessary for implementing key competencies of students, teachers' SEDA competencies are not explicitly mentioned in this regard. However, it can be argued that for students' personal development (self-regulation, flexibility, well-being) and social development (empathy, communication, collaboration), teachers' SEDA competencies are essential.

To summarise, the 2010s were marked by growing EU cooperation in the field of education. This is also evident in the increasing number of educational policy documents accepted on the highest political level. These accepted policy documents exclusively focused on teachers (e.g., Council of the EU, 2014, 2017) can be viewed as a sign that teachers and their professional development were becoming high on the EU's educational policy agenda. Two external drivers (the economic crisis at the start of the decade and the terrorist attacks in 2015) considerably affected the education sector, as well as teachers' professional development in terms of highlighting teachers' contribution to efficient education and the promotion of common EU values, including diversity awareness. For the first time, the need to protect and support (early) teachers' professional and personal well-being was recognised. Further, the importance of teachers' relational competencies was emphasised as important for students' social and emotional development in terms of the prevention of early school leaving (European Commission, 2013).[3] This rising importance of teachers' professional development in the EU's policy documents is also accompanied by a comparative report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018) as well as a pol-

3 Downes (2018) states that early school leaving as a headline target for the EU 2020 strategy led to increased scrutiny of teachers' competencies and supporting their professional development; for example, their conflict resolution skills and diversity awareness. This is part of a wider emotional-relational turn for early school leaving and offers a social inclusion rationale for the importance of social and emotional education.

icy guide (European Commission, 2020) on teacher professional development and several other Education and Training Working Group outcomes (European Commission, 2024).

Teachers' Well-being as a High Political Priority (2020s)

The Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future (2020) acknowledged that "continuous innovations and challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic, have an effect not only on the competencies required but also on teachers' and trainers' wellbeing and the attractiveness of the teaching profession". It emphasised the teachers' responsibility not simply for students' academic achievement, but also for fostering their social responsibility, and civic engagement, conveying human values, and supporting their personal growth and well-being. It recommends policy actions to support teachers' personal and professional well-being, motivation and feeling of being valued. Their well-being was recognised as an important factor in their job satisfaction, enthusiasm for work, the attractiveness of the profession, quality of their performance and, consequently, also the achievements of learners. The factors of teachers' well-being were also acknowledged, including "working environment, working conditions, available peer and institutional support, relationships with learners, parents, peers and institution leaders, and respect and appreciation given by the wider community", and a positive school climate. It was exposed that a lack of these factors may lead to teachers' physical and emotional exhaustion, stress and burnout, in turn affecting their mental and physical health.

In the *Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond* (2021–2030) (Council of the EU, 2021a), enhancing competencies and motivation in the educational profession was mentioned as one of five strategic priorities. It was highlighted that attention needs to be paid more than ever to the well-being of teachers, which is an important factor for ensuring the quality of education as it not only affects teacher satisfaction but the quality of teaching as well. Due to shortages and the ageing of teachers, the requirement to make the teaching profession more attractive and its revalorisation were pointed out. To support realisation of the strategic priority, 12 specific issues and actions were recommended to be completed by 2025:

- strengthening the recruitment and selection of the most suitable candidates for the teaching profession;
- raising the attractiveness and status of the teaching profession;
- exploring the possibility of developing European guidance for the development of national career frameworks and lifelong guidance;
- investigating the possibility of developing teacher competency frameworks;

- supporting initial education, induction and continuous professional development, especially to deal with the greater diversity of learners and their specific needs etc.
- creating networks of teachers' education institutions through the proposed Erasmus Teacher Academies;
- supporting the promotion of excellence in teaching on all levels, including exploring new ways of assessing the quality of teacher training;
- supporting teachers and trainers in managing linguistic and cultural diversity in education and training institutions;
- exploring the possibility of developing a policy framework for raising the number and quality of teachers' learning mobility;
- developing measures and establishing mechanisms to improve working conditions and to address occupational stress so as to foster the well-being of teachers;
- striving to reduce gender imbalances; and
- ensuring that teacher education prepares teachers for their key role in enhancing the well-being and mental health of all learners.

The extent to which these have already been addressed in the EU member states participating in the HAND:ET project (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden) is described in Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this book. Chapter 9 indicates how the HAND:ET project findings can provide support with their realisation.

Council Recommendation on blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education (Council of the EU, 2021b) as a direct response to the COVID crisis pointed to the need to support teachers and trainers with a stronger focus on the well-being and quality of professional life to mitigate stress and prevent burnout. Several measures were proposed in this respect: facilitating access to qualified mental health and support professionals and services; promoting the development and/or organisation of peer support to mitigate stress; and providing enhanced opportunities for training in resilience/mental well-being in initial teacher education and continued professional development programmes.

Recommendations on Pathways to School Success (Council of the EU, 2022) tackled the issue of early school leaving and exposed the importance of providing teachers with adequate support and time to address educational inequality, underachievement and disengagement. As support measures for the well-being of teachers, suitable working conditions, professional autonomy, active involvement in school management, high quality initial and continuous professional development together with access to support and mental health professionals and services, collaboration and peer support were indicated. A whole-school approach, involving all members of the school community and a wide range of stakeholders, including specialist emotional counsellors/therapists,

is recognized as important in promoting students' well-being and preventing early school leaving.

The great salience of the topic in the last few years is further shown by the involvement of a section on teachers' professional development in the Education and Training Monitor (European Commission, 2023).

The topic of teachers' SEDA competencies is also discussed in working groups in the European Education Area strategic framework. The Working Group on equality and values in education and training published an issue paper *Tackling different forms of discrimination in and through education and training* (European Commission, 2023). This paper recognised that "teachers and educators are often unaware of their own racial biases and their impact on students", and awareness raising and support for their diversity awareness is hence needed.

It is evident from the recent policy documents accepted since 2020 that teachers' well-being is high on the EU's policy agenda. As mentioned, this can be understood as a response to the current challenges in the field (lack of teachers, ageing teacher population, stress and burnout) reported to a great extent by teachers themselves in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2019, 2020)) (for more, see Chapter 1). HAND:ET project addressed these issues and sought to contribute to the realisation of strategic priorities in the area by policy experimentation on the development of teachers' SEDA competencies (see Kozina, 2024).

Conclusions

The review of the EU's policy documents in the field of education in a longer perspective provides several interesting and important insights with regard to the development of the EU's strategic priorities in the area of teacher professional development. By putting teachers' SEDA competencies, well-being, stress and burnout in the centre, it addresses specific topics which, when compared with the development of general teacher education policy in the EU (e.g., Symeonidis, 2021), have been addressed only to a limited extent. The review reveals that even though the policy developments in the first decade of the millennium strengthened EU cooperation in the field of education (European Council, 2000), they have also been scientifically discussed in terms of forecasting the "European teacher education policy community" (Hudson & Zgaga, 2008), the "European Teacher Education Area" (Gassner et al., 2010) and the "European Teacher" (Schratz, 2014), and it is clear that teacher professional development has only appeared on the EU agenda slowly. For a long time (1950s to 1990s), EU cooperation was focused on supporting teachers' mobility,

preparing students for working life, and the lifelong learning society (1950s to 1990s). In the 2000s, the important role of teachers in supporting students' outcomes was strongly emphasised. Later (in the 2010s), teachers were largely treated as important agents in addressing the EU's challenges appearing in that decade (e.g., the economic, migrant and COVID crises).[4] Only in the last few years (since 2021) has teachers' well-being been recognised as a high political priority.

Teachers' social and emotional competencies have been less explicitly exposed, mainly in terms of supporting students' personal and social development as well as academic achievements. Teachers' SEDA competencies and well-being have thus long been treated as a means to other ends (e.g., Belfield et al., 2015) and not an end in itself. Yet, the question of whether this orientation (teachers' supporting others and not themselves) has caused teachers' low well-being, exhaustion and burnout is not reflected in the policy discussions on the EU level, at least not in the identified policy documents. Searching for a solution clearly needs a much deeper investigation of the roots of the policy problem. The lack of teachers' SEDA competencies can only be one of them. It seems that several other questions have not yet been sufficiently addressed. For example, how teachers' well-being has been affected by performativity (pressures on students to make high academic achievements) (e.g., Ball, 2003; Skinner et al., 2021), low appreciation of the teaching profession in society (e.g., OECD, 2019, 2020), and the low perception of the policy support provided (e.g., Casley-Hayford et al., 2022)

The review also reveals that the problem of teacher shortages in the EU was detected already more than 20 years ago (e.g., Council of the EU, 2002). Still, the well-being of teachers as a promising solution to this problem was identified only in the last few years (e.g., Council of the EU, 2021). It may be argued that addressing policy problems as they arise is much more effective than after they have already become widespread (e.g., Cairney et al., 2016).

Several initiatives have in quite a general manner been repeating in the documents over the last 20 years (e.g., quality initial and continuous professional development). In-depth evaluations of the accomplishment of these goals have been almost missing. As regards SEDA competencies, it can be argued that teachers' diversity awareness has been more or less explicitly addressed (teachers' mobility, intercultural competencies, supporting students from different backgrounds etc.) by different EU initiatives over a longer period. However, despite these longer-term initiatives, according to TALIS data (OECD, 2019, 2020) teachers and students still report challenges in the field (for more, see Chapter 1). This may raise questions about the effectiveness of the policy mea-

4 For more details on the EU governance in the crisis's framework, see Nordin (2014a, b).

sures thus far employed, as well as the planning of future ones. Although the governance of goals (e.g., Grek, 2009) and governance of comparisons (e.g., Alexiadou, 2007) are seen as powerful tools for enhancing national reforms, it should additionally be noted that SEDA competencies are a sensitive field, also in terms of differences in national cultural contexts, which may question the relevance of introducing of international benchmarks and indicators in the field.

Given that teacher professional development, particularly in the field of teachers' SEDA competencies and well-being, was for a long time not a priority area of the common EU cooperation in the area of education, one cannot expect the national education policies to be aligned with current EU policy priorities in the field. The extent to which the national policies in the countries participating in the HAND:ET project correspond to them is presented in Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this book.

References

Alexiadou, N. (2007). The Europeanisation of education policy – changing governance and "new modes of coordination". *Research in Comparative and International Education, 2*(2), 102–116. https://doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2007.2.2.10

Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy 18*(2), 215–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093022000043065

Belfield, C., Bowden, B., Klapp, A., Levin, H., Shand, R., & Zander, S. (2015). *The economic value of social and emotional learning*. Center for benefit-cost studies in education. Teachers College: Columbia University.

Cairney, P., Oliver, K., & Wellstead, A. (2016). To Bridge the Divide between Evidence and Policy: Reduce Ambiguity as Much as Uncertainty. *Public Administration Review 76*(3), 399–402. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.1255

Casely-Hayford, J., Björklund, C., Bergström, G., Lindqvist, P., & Kwak, L. (2022). What makes teachers stay? A cross-sectional exploration of the individual and contextual factors associated with teacher retention in Sweden. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 113*, Article 103664. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103664

Commission of the European Communities (1991). *Memorandum on Higher Education in European Community*. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000171434

Council of the European Communities (1963). *Council Decision of 2 April 1963 laying down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy*. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/7bc95c31-a382-403f-8c69-d9733cb35247/language-en

Council of the European Communities (1974). *Resolution of the Ministers of Education, meeting within the Council, of 6 June 1974 on cooperation in the field of education*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:41974X0820&from=SV

Council of the European Communities (1976). *Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, of 12 July 1982 concerning measures to be taken to improve the preparation of young people for work and to facilitate their transition from education to working life.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:41982X0728:EN:HTML

Council of the EU (1993). *Conclusions of the Council and of the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council of 11 June 1993 on furthering an open European space for cooperation within higher education.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX%3A41993X0708

Council of the EU (1999). *The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999. Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education.* https://ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/Ministerial_conferences/02/8/1999_Bologna_Declaration_English_553028.pdf

Council of the EU (2002). *Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of Education and training systems in Europe* (2002/C142/01). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2002:142:0001:0022:EN:PDF

Council of the EU (2007). *Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 15 November 2007, on improving the quality of teacher education* (2007/C300/07). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:300:0006:0009:en:PDF

Council of the EU (2008). *Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 21 November 2008 on preparing young people for the 21st century: an agenda for European cooperation on schools* (2008/C319/08). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52008XG1213(05)

Council of the EU (2009a). *Council conclusions of 26 November 2009 on the professional development of teachers and school leaders* (2009/C302/04). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:302:0006:0009:EN:PDF

Council of the EU (2009b). *Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)* (2009/C119/02). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528(01)

Council of the EU (2011). *Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving* (2011/C 191/01). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011H0701(01)

Council of the EU (2014). *Conclusions on effective teacher education. Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting, Brussels, 20 May 2014* (2014/C183/05). https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142690.pdf

Council of the EU (2015). *Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education.* https://eu.daad.de/medien/eu.daad.de.2016/dokumente/service/auswertung-und-statistik/paris_declaration_2015_en.pdf

Council of the EU (2017). *Council Conclusions on school development and excellent teaching* (2017/C421/03). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017XG1208(01)

Council of the EU (2018a). *Council conclusions on moving towards a vision of a European Education Area* (2018/C195/04). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018XG0607(01)&rid=6

Council of the EU (2018b). *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching* (2018/C195/01). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0607(01)

Council of the EU (2018c). *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning* (2018/C189/01). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01)

Council of the EU (2020). *Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future* (2020/C193/04). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2020.193.01.0011.01.ENG

Council of the EU (2021a). *Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030)* (2021/C66/01). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)

Council of the EU (2021b). *Council Recommendation of 29 November 2021 on blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education* (2021/C504/03). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021H1214(01)

Council of the EU (2022). *Council Recommendation of 28 November 2022 on Pathways to School Success and replacing the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving* (2022/C469/01). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H1209(01)

Council of the EU and European Commission (2004). *"Education and Training 2010" The success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms. Joint interim report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe.* https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/59381b9f-3a72-4bca-9b8f-1f9029644152/language-en

Downes, P. (2018). Beyond the 'diminshed self': Challenging an array of objections to emotional well-being in education. *Journal of Emotional Education, 10*(1), 145–163.

EACEA, European Education and Culture Executive Agency (2019). *European Policy Experimentations in the field of Education and Training led by high-level public authorities.* https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20210122045332mp_/ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/european-policy-experimentations-in-the-fields-of-education-and-training-led-by-high-level-public-authorities-2020_en

European Commission (1993). *Growth, competitiveness, employment. The challenges and ways forward into the 21st century: White paper.* https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0d563bc1-f17e-48ab-bb2a-9dd9a31d5004

European Commission (1995). *White paper on education and training – Teaching and Learning – Towards the Learning Society.* https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d0a8aa7a-5311-4eee-904c-98fa541108d8/language-en

European Commission (1997). *Commission Communication of 12 November 1997: Towards a Europe of knowledge.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=URISERV%3Ac11040)

European Commission (2005). *The Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications.* Brussels: Directorate-General for Education and Culture. http://eclipse.lett.unitn.it/download/teacher%20principles_en.pdf

European Commission (2007). *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Improving the Quality of Teacher Education.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0392&from=LV

European Commission (2010). *Communication from the Commission, Europe 2020, a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:en:PDF

European Commission (2012). *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0669

European Commission (2013). *Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support. Final Report of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving.* https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/early-school-leaving-group2013-report_en.pdf

European Commission (2015). *A whole school approach to tackling early school leaving, Policy messages.* https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/early-school-leaving-group2015-policy-messages_en.pdf

European Commission (2017). *Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture The European Commission's contribution to the Leaders' meeting in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0673

European Commission (2020). *Supporting teacher and school leader careers: A Policy Guide.* https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6e4c89eb-7a0b-11ea-b75f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

European Commission (2023). *Tackling different forms of discrimination in and through education and training.* Working group on equality and values in education and training (2021–2025): issue paper. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8d28535a-2cef-11ee-95a2-01aa75ed71a1

European Commission (2024). *The teaching professions.* https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/teachers-trainers-and-school-leaders/teaching-professions

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2018). *Teaching Careers in Europe: Access Progression and Support.* Eurydice Report. Publications Office of the European Union. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/teaching-careers-europe-access-progression-and-support_en

European Council (2000). *Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000 Presidency Conclusions.* https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm

Hudson, B., & Zgaga, P. (2008). *Teacher Education Policy in Europe: A Voice of Higher Education Institutions.* University of Umea.

Gassner, O., Kerger, L., & Schratz, M. (Eds.). (2010). *The First Ten Years After Bologna.* Efitura Universitai din Bucuresti.

Kozina, A. (2024). *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 2: Experimentation Perspectives.* Waxmann. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Nordin, A. (2014a). Europeanisation in national educational reforms – horizontal and vertical translations. In A. Nordin & D. Sundberg (Eds.), *Transnational policy-flows in European education – the making and governing of knowledge in the education policy field* (pp. 141–158). Symposium Books.

Nordin, A. (2014b). Crisis as discursive legitimation strategy in educational reforms: A critical policy analysis. *Education Inquiry, 5*(1), 109–126. https://doi.org/10.3402/edui.v5.24047

OECD (2019). *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners.* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en

OECD (2020). *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals.* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/19cf08df-en

Sala, A., Punie, Y., Garkov, V., & Cabrera Giraldez, M. (2020). *LifeComp: The European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence.* Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. https://doi.org/10.2760/302967

Schratz, M. (2014). The European teacher: Transnational perspectives in teacher education policy and practice. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal, 4*(4), 11–27. https://doi.org/10.25656/01:10057

Skinner, B., Leavey, G., & Rothi, D. (2021). Managerialism and teacher professional identity: impact on well-being among teachers in the UK. *Educational Review, 73*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1556205

Symeonidis, V. (2021). Introduction. In V. Symeonidis (Ed.), *Europeanisation in Teacher Education. A Comparative Case Study of Teacher Education Policies and Practices* (pp. 1–35). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003013969

Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (1957). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teec/sign

Zgaga, P. (2013). The future of European teacher education in the heavy seas of higher education. *Teacher Development 17*(3), 347–361. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2013.813750

Chapter 3
Perspectives from Austria

Valerie Fredericks[1, 2], Christina Odescalchi[1], Yvonne Fasching[1, 2], Marlene Williere[1], Fabian Aufreiter[1], Agnes Söllradl[1], Barbara Gasteiger-Klicpera[1, 2] & Lisa Paleczek[1, 2]

Abstract

The aim of this chapter is to describe the importance attributed to primary and lower secondary teachers' social-emotional competencies and diversity awareness within the Austrian educational system. To understand Austria's school and teacher education system, an overview is provided. Based on document analysis and a review of all current curricula for pre-service and catalogues for in-service teacher education on the primary and lower secondary levels, we describe: (1) the support given for Austrian teachers to develop social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness in pre- and in-service education as well as through other policy measures; (2) the assessment of teacher social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness; (3) other initiatives or projects addressing them; and (4) current political debates or reforms in this field. The results show that while social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness play a role in pre-service teacher education, the emphasis is more on fostering these skills in future students and developing teaching methodologies and classroom management techniques. In-service teacher education acknowledges the importance of teachers' mental and emotional well-being in their profession. However, most offers (this applies to other initiatives and projects as well) do not focus on the fundamental development or promotion of teacher social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness. Overall, what is lacking is a systematic framework and an overarching concept that recognise the importance of social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness and give possibilities concerning how and for what purpose they can be specifically and explicitly promoted. Although teachers' health in general has been assessed, Austrian data focusing on teacher social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness is missing. Ongoing policy debates in the field are influenced by the teacher shortage and focus on lateral entrants.

Keywords: Teacher Well-being, Social-emotional Competencies, Diversity Awareness, Education Policy, Education System

1 University of Graz, Austria

2 Research Center for Inclusive Education, Graz, Austria

Introduction

This chapter considers the significance attributed to Austrian primary and lower secondary school teachers' social-emotional (SE) competencies and diversity awareness (DA), hereinafter referred to as SEDA competencies.

Like their European colleagues, Austrian teachers face new professional challenges such as dealing with increasingly diverse classrooms while having to respond professionally, competently, and effectively (Nishina et al., 2019). The European Commission (2021) stresses the need to support teachers and enhance their well-being. Offers in the area of teachers' continuous professional development must address teachers' needs and acknowledge the changing educational landscape, focus on promoting teachers' SE competencies, and foster collaboration.

Pre- and in-service teacher education varies across Europe as do the challenges teachers encounter in daily life in the classroom. To consider these specific characteristics, this chapter provides insight into the Austrian context and describes the importance ascribed to teacher SEDA competencies. This involves examining the extent to which the SEDA competencies of teachers are: (1) considered and addressed in pre-service teacher education; (2) considered and addressed in in-service teacher education; (3) promoted or addressed via other policy measures; (4) assessed and how the assessment results are considered; (5) part of other Austrian projects or initiatives; and (6) a current topic of political discussion in Austria.

To fully understand the results presented in this chapter, it is necessary to take a closer look at the education system in Austria. The next section provides an overview of the Austrian school system, and past and present pre-service teacher education for International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 1 and 2 levels.[3] The aim was to capture and present the education system in its entirety. However, there are regional differences in Austria, e.g., different emphases in curricula for pre-service teacher education in the four so-called "development alliances" ("Entwicklungsverbünde") formed by universities and University Colleges of Teacher Education ("Pädagogische Hochschulen") of several federal states. The regional examples we discuss can thus be seen as broadly representative of Austria as a whole, although it should be noted that not every detail is transferable to all Austrian federal states.

3 ISCED is a globally recognised system for categorising educational programmes and associated qualifications based on their levels and subject areas. ISCED 1 stands for the primary education and ISCED 2 for the lower secondary education level (European Commission, 2023).

Teachers' Professional Development in Austria

The Austrian compulsory school system (ISCED levels 1 and 2) comprises 10 years of mandatory education. After 3 years of kindergarten (ages 3 to 6), with the final year being compulsory, all students are obliged to attend school for at least 9 years. They spend their first 4 years in primary school ("Volksschule"; VS), usually taught by a single teacher in all subjects (excluding handicraft and religious education) (Paleczek et al., 2015).

After completing VS, students must choose between academic secondary schools ("Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schulen"; AHS) and compulsory secondary schools ("Mittelschulen"; MS) for their further school career. To be admitted to AHS, one must present good grades from the final year of VS, or take an entrance exam (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF), 2024a)). AHS offer 8 years of education (ISCED 2 and 3) and end with a final exam, the "Matura", which entitles graduates to pursue studies at university. MS offers 4 years of education (ISCED 2) and prepares students for the transition to further middle and higher level schools, the technical school ("Polytechnische Schule"; Poly), or the professional world (BMBWF, 2024e).

After MS, students can either complete their ninth compulsory year in Poly or continue at AHS (again, they need to present good grades to do so), an upper secondary academic school ("Oberstufenrealgymnasium"; ORG), or a middle or higher vocational school ("Berufsbildende Mittlere oder Höhere Schule"; BMS/BHS). In these four school types, students can either just finish the ninth year of compulsory schooling or finish 12 to 13 years with the Matura and the associated eligibility for university studies. BMS/BHS also qualify students for various professional activities (business and commerce, gastronomy, information and communication technology, engineering etc.) (OeAD, 2023).

Pre-service Teacher Education in Austria

To become a teacher in Austria, a teaching degree ("Lehramtsstudium") must be completed. A teaching qualification ("Lehramt") is the basic qualification to be entitled to work as a teacher (Higher Education Act (HG), 2005/2024-01-12).

Historical Overview of Pre-service Teacher Education in Austria

The Austrian school system originated in a 1774 educational reform under Maria Theresia with public state schools and 6 years of compulsory education that were expanded to 8 years in 1869 (BMBWF, 2024d). In 1927, in addition to

the secondary school ("Mittelschule"; MS[4] (Schnell, 1974)) that provided 8 years of education (ISCED 2 and 3) and ended with admission to university studies, the compulsory secondary school ("Hauptschule"; HS[5]) was introduced, providing compulsory education on the lower secondary level (ISCED 2) (Austrian National Library, 2022). In 1962, further reforms and a new school law (School Organisation Act, 1962/2024-01-12) were introduced. AHS replaced MS, compulsory education was extended to 9 years and teacher training was reshaped (BMBWF, 2024d). In addition to the universities that provided the professional education of AHS teachers (characterised by the dominance of subject-specific training), separate, semi-university educational institutions – the "Pedagogical Academies" ("Pädagogische Akademien"; Pädak) – were formed as 4-semester academies for VS (ISCED 1) teachers. Their education focused on pedagogy and didactics, with practical training being a crucial component (Grimm, 2000). There was no regulated training for HS or special education teachers – to be allowed to teach, they had to pass an examination and could participate in special preparatory courses for this purpose (Schnell, 1974). In 1975, the Pädak were expanded into 6-semester-academies for VS (ISCED 1), HS (ISCED 2) and special education teachers. Teacher education at Pädak did not end with an academic degree (Grimm, 2000).

In 2005, the "Higher Education Act" ("Hochschulgesetz"; HG) (HG, 2005/2024-01-12) transformed Pädak into "University Colleges of Teacher Education" ("Pädagogische Hochschulen"; PH). In contrast to the universities, which were given extensive autonomy by the "Federal Law on the Organisation of Universities and their Studies" ("Universitätsgesetz", UG) (UG, 2002/2024-01-12), the PH remained subordinate services of the BMBWF) with very limited legal capacity (Austrian Science Council, 2013).

Hence, before 2005, Austrian teachers on the ISCED 1 and partly on the ISCED 2 levels did not complete their education with a university degree. These teachers can obtain the title "Bachelor of Education" (BEd) by completing a part-time supplementary study programme for a post-secondary qualification (BMBWF, 2018).

---

4 It should be noted that the MS (secondary school) here is not the same as the MS (compulsory secondary school) described in a section above. Between 1927 and 1962, MS was used as an umbrella term that included all school types for academic education on the ISCED 2 and 3 levels (Schnell, 1974).

5 The term HS was used for compulsory secondary schools until 2008. Between 2008 and 2016, HS were transformed into "New Secondary Schools" ("Neue Mittelschulen"; NMS) with the aim of standardising education on the ISCED 2 level for all students (Land Oberösterreich, 2024). Yet, as part of the "Pedagogical Package" ("Pädagogik-Paket") of 2018, the NMS were reshaped and named compulsory secondary schools ("Mittelschulen"; MS), which, as mentioned, are different from AHS (BMBWF, 2024e).

In 2015/2016, the "New Teacher Education Scheme" ("PädagogInnenbildung neu") was implemented, bringing considerable changes to teacher education. The central point was implementing the Bologna system with the differentiation into bachelor's and master's programmes. In addition, the difference in teacher education between teachers for MS and AHS was abolished (BMBWF, 2024g). Since then, all ISCED 2 general education[6] teachers are educated in joint programmes covered by universities and PH. The teacher education of ISCED 1 teachers remained at the PH. This change called for the collaboration of PH and universities to provide a common standard for teacher education on the ISCED 2 general education level, particularly for master's courses. Subsequently, all teachers, including ISCED 1 teachers, need a master's degree and must complete it within the first 5 years of entering the teaching profession (BMBWF, 2024g).

This means that when analysing the situation in Austria one must keep in mind that teachers currently teaching on the ISCED 1 and 2 general education levels took different education paths to become a teacher.

Further, the "Public Sector Employment Law Amendment – Pedagogical Service" (2013) was introduced in 2013, with a transition period for implementing it between 2013 and 2018. This amendment set new regulations concerning employment contracts, salaries, and professional obligations of teachers. All teachers who commenced their teaching careers before 2013 (also some who started working during the transition period) hold different employment contracts to those to whom the amendment applies.

Requirements for Becoming a Teacher in Austria

The requirements for general admission to a teaching degree study programme in Austria are defined in the Higher Education Act as: (1) the general university entrance qualification; (2) the special university entrance qualification for the chosen study programme; (3) knowledge of the German language required to practise the respective profession; and (4) being suitable for the study programme and the respective professional activity. To achieve the teaching qualification for the ISCED 1 or 2 general education levels, a bachelor's and a master's degree must be completed (HG, 2005/2024-01-12).

Additional formal requirements for teacher education are provided in the curricula of the corresponding study programmes of PH and the universities

6 In Austria, a distinction is made between the ISCED 2 level for general education (for teaching in MS, AHS, ORG, Poly, and the general education subjects in BMS and BHS) and the ISCED 2 level for vocational education (for subject-specific teaching in BMH and BHS, vocational schools, and adult education). The education for the teaching profession on the ISCED 2 level for vocational education, like the education for the teaching profession on the ISCED 1 level, still takes place exclusively at PH (BMBWF, 2024b).

(HG, 2005/2024-01-12), as may be shown with the example of the curriculum for the bachelor's programme for the teaching profession on ISCED 1 level of the PH Styria (PH Styria, 2019).

Together with four universities and three other PH[7] from the Austrian provinces of Styria, Carinthia and Burgenland, the PH Styria forms the "Southeast Development Alliance" ("Entwicklungsverbund Süd-Ost"; ESO), one of four development alliances of PH and universities in Austria. These alliances were founded upon the BMBWF's suggestion to implement a joint training programme for teacher education (Southeast Development Alliance, 2015).

To be suitable to enter the bachelor's degree programmes to become an ISCED 1 teacher within the ESO, applicants must pass aptitude assessments in the areas of: (1) personal and performance-related aptitude; (2) subject-related and artistic aptitude; and (3) pedagogical aptitude (PH Styria, 2019). The admission procedures at PH within the ESO are structured in three consecutive stages: (1) an online self-assessment; (2) a computer-based aptitude assessment on personal resources that enable successful management of both interpersonal and intrapersonal challenges, including emotional competencies as well as communication, health and recovery behaviours; and (3) a face-to-face assessment (PH Styria, 2024a).

In the *online self-assessment*, applicants have the opportunity to self-reflect and clarify whether the teacher training programme and the teaching profession meet their expectations. Although the assessment is mandatory, it does not have the character of an examination; it is conducted anonymously, and the result is only known by the respective applicant. The *computer-based aptitude assessment* focuses on testing existing cognitive, emotional, and linguistic resources and skills for the teaching profession. The *face-to-face assessment* is an interview lasting around 15 minutes in which characteristics relevant to career and academic success, such as communication, social and emotional resources, are discussed (PH Styria, 2024a).

In-service Teacher Education in Austria

Since 2019, all newly appointed teachers (ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 general education) have to undertake 15 hours of continuous professional development per year in their teaching free time (Public Sector Law Amendment 2013 - Pedagogical Service, 2013). Before that, these 15 hours of continuous professional

7 University of Graz, Graz University of Technology, Graz University of Music and Performing Arts, University of Klagenfurt, Private PH Augustinum, and PH Burgenland and Carinthia

development per year could be attended during teaching time (Central Committee for Compulsory General Education Schools in Carinthia, 2022). No data could be found on whether this change has influenced how much commitment Austrian teachers put into their continuous professional development, yet it has made it more difficult for them to organise their participation, especially in more extensive continuous professional development offers.

In-service teacher education in Austria is coordinated nationwide and performed by the PH. They collaborate with the BMBWF when planning and coordinating continuous professional development offers. Teachers can registrate via the PH online catalogue every year during May (for the winter semester) and during November (summer semester) (BMBWF, 2024c).

Circular 21/2011 issued by BMBWF (2023) on the quality of in-service teacher education addresses quality standards for continuous professional development. A sustainable offer is required that supports teachers and schools and is oriented to "current needs and research".

Aim and Research Questions

This chapter aims to evaluate the significance attributed to the SEDA competencies of Austrian teachers (ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 general education). For that purpose, we formulated six research questions for the Austrian context:

1) How are teacher SEDA competencies supported in pre-service teacher education?
2) How are teacher SEDA competencies supported in in-service teacher education?
3) Which other policy measures support teacher SEDA competencies?
4) How are teacher SEDA competencies assessed and how are assessment results considered?
5) Which other initiatives or projects address teacher SEDA competencies?
6) Which policy debates or reforms in the field of teacher SEDA competencies are currently underway?

Procedures and Instruments

At the beginning of 2022, the University of Graz, as a partner in the Erasmus+ project "HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity- Related Career Challenges" (Educational Research Institute, 2024), completed two policy questionnaires regarding the sig-

nificance of SEDA competencies in the Austrian school and education system following a document analysis. The responses given in those questionnaires have been revised and updated for the present chapter.

In addition, to answer the first two research questions concerning the significance of the SEDA competencies held by Austrian teachers in pre-service and in-service teacher education, all current curricula ($N = 31$) for bachelor's and master's programmes leading to teaching qualifications for the ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 general education levels as well as all current continuous professional development catalogues ($N = 23$) of Austrian public and private PH were reviewed for specific keywords. In these documents, searches for (1) "sozial." ("social."), (2) "emotional.", (3) "divers.", (4) "interkult." ("intercult."), and (5) "heterogen." were performed. The relevant text passages were then qualitatively analysed to determine if and to what extent they referred to teacher SEDA competencies.

Results

Teacher SEDA Competencies in Pre-service Teacher Education

SEDA Competencies in ISCED 1 Teacher Education

Pre-service teachers must choose a focus from the range of courses offered by the respective PH (BMBWF, 2024g). For instance, students at the PH Styria can decide on one of several focus areas, four of which are directly or indirectly related to SEDA competencies: (1) "Inclusive Pedagogy Focusing on Disability"; (2) "Linguistic Education and Diversity"; (3) "Health Education in Motion"; and (4) "Brave and Fair: Developing Personality and Strengthening Community" (PH Styria, 2024b). Pedagogical-practical studies (practice and accompanying courses) are integrated into all areas and throughout the entire course (BMBWF, 2024g).

In the present curricula ($N = 23$) for ISCED 1 bachelor's and master's programmes from all 14 public and private PH, all courses are assigned to specific modules. The descriptions of these modules were reviewed for the keywords described above. It was then determined whether the search results were related to pre-service teachers (and not, e.g., pointing to the competencies of their future students). All other search results were discarded. *Table 1* provides information on the number of modules the remaining results led to, the number of curricula in which these modules were found, and the number of curricula without relevant modules.

After qualitative analysis, the remaining search results led to 128 relevant out of 1,624 modules in total. These relevant modules at least indirectly con-

Table 1: Modules Related to Teacher SEDA Competencies in Austrian Teacher Education for ISCED 1 (23 Curricula; 1,624 Modules in Total).

Keyword	Relevant Modules	Curricula with Relevant Modules	Curricula without Relevant Modules
sozial.	55	16	7
divers.	37	11	12
interkult.	19	10	13
heterogen.	12	6	17
emotional.	5	4	19

cerned teacher SEDA competencies. Their contents mostly emphasised improving school collaboration with students, parents, and other teachers. Examples are the module "Communication and Community" (PH Salzburg Stefan Zweig, 2023) which underscores the importance of communication skills and community-building in the context of ISCED 1 education as well as the importance of social development in the learning process; or the module "Subject-Specific Specialisation in Primary Education and Didactics in Inclusive Learning Settings" (PH Vienna, 2019) which offers specialised training in inclusive pedagogy and didactics, and allows pre-service teachers to engage deeply with inclusive learning environments and develop practical skills to support diversity.

In summary, teacher SEDA competencies are not a separate category or concept in the study programmes on offer. SEDA competencies are namely not specifically mentioned in associated courses and training objectives. SE skills are nevertheless repeatedly mentioned. Particular SE competencies appear to be expected of graduates or they are described as being connected with certain pedagogical areas. Yet, the focus tends to be more on fostering them in future students than on developing them in the pre-service teachers themselves. Moreover, while diversity awareness as a term is not expressly mentioned in pre-service teacher education, student diversity is repeatedly mentioned. On various occasions, it is stated that pre-service teachers are expected to be able to deal well with diversity in the future or to see it as an opportunity rather than a challenge.

SEDA Competencies in ISCED 2 General Education Teacher Education

A teaching degree in ISCED 2 general education is obtained for two teaching subjects or for one teaching subject combined with a specialisation (e.g., inclusive education). Educational science and a large proportion of pedagogical practice are part of the study programmes (BMBWF, 2024 g).

In the current curricula for ISCED 2 general education ($N = 8$), the search results remaining after qualitative analysis led to 88 relevant modules out of

Table 2: Courses Related to Teacher SEDA Competencies in Austrian Teacher Education for ISCED 2 General Education (8 Curricula; 1,545 Modules in Total)

Keyword	Relevant Modules	Curricula with Relevant Modules	Curricula without Relevant Modules
sozial.	24	8	0
divers.	16	7	1
interkult.	33	5	3
heterogen.	14	8	0
emotional.	1	1	7

1,545 modules in total. The relevant modules at least indirectly concerned teacher SEDA competencies. *Table 2* shows the number of relevant modules along with the number of curricula in which these modules were found and in which no relevant modules were found. One relevant example is the module "IPQ/Promoting the Social and Emotional Area" (PH Styria, 2021). It forms part of the curriculum for the bachelor's degree in ISCED 2 general education of the ESO (Southeast Development Alliance, 2015) and stresses the importance of promoting emotional and social well-being in educational settings. Another example is found in the module "Designing Inclusive Educational Processes" in the general curriculum for the master's degree in ISCED 2 general education of the "North-East Development Alliance" ("Entwicklungsverbund Nord-Ost"; ENO) (University of Vienna, 2022). This module underscores the significance of inclusive education and equips pre-service teachers with strategies to effectively address diverse learning needs.

While examining the curricula for ISCED 2 general education teachers, it was apparent that the emphasis is on equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively meet the challenges of the classroom environment. The focus lies more on improving teaching methods or classroom management techniques to create a conducive learning environment than on developing teachers' SE competencies to improve their own personality or well-being.

Teacher SEDA Competencies in In-service Teacher Education

Alongside the curricula for pre-service teacher education, the various University Colleges for Teacher Education provided 23 catalogues containing a total of 7,645 offers on continuous professional development for teachers in the 2023/2024 school year. Many of these offers go beyond the pedagogical realm. They recognise the importance of teachers' mental and emotional well-being in the teaching profession and include workshops, seminars and training sessions designed to address teacher psychosocial health. Topics range from stress man-

Table 3: Relevant Courses Related to Teacher SEDA Competencies in 23 Austrian Continuous Professional Development Catalogues (7,645 Courses in Total)

Keyword	Relevant Courses	Catalogues with Relevant Courses	Catalogues without Relevant Courses
sozial.	21	10	13
divers.	12	6	17
interkult.	9	7	16
emotional.	7	4	19
heterogen.	2	2	21

agement and work-life balance to coping strategies for handling challenging situations in the classroom.

After qualitative analysis, the remaining search results led to 51 relevant courses (out of 7,645) at least indirectly concerned with teacher SEDA competencies. *Table 3* presents the number of these courses, along with the number of catalogues in which these courses were found and in which there were no relevant courses.

An example from the continuous professional development catalogue of the Private PH (PPH) of the Diocese of Linz is "Balance Skills – Exercise Toolbox for Emotional Serenity in Everyday School Life" (PPH of the Diocese of Linz, 2024), which aims to provide teachers with practical exercises and tools to cultivate emotional resilience and serenity in the day-to-day challenges of school life. Another course from the catalogue is "The Alternative Outdoor Weekend | Self-Sufficiency | Hiking | Outdoor Adventure Games | Gemeindealpe Mitterbach" (PH Lower Austria, 2024). This course offers a learning experience combining outdoor activities, self-sufficiency skills, hiking, and interactive outdoor adventure games.

In summary, the courses identified directly and indirectly target teacher SEDA competencies. Many aim to empower the in-service teachers while handling their daily school responsibilities and challenges. Moreover, specific programmes focus on enhancing their psychosocial well-being. Such programmes refer to both the personal and professional development of teachers, highlighting the importance of providing them with support to add to their overall effectiveness in the educational environment.

Other Teacher Training and Support Offers

The initiative "Give – Servicepoint for Health Promotion in Austrian Schools" is a platform offered by the BMBWF in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care, and Consumer Protection ("Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz"; BMSGPK) and the

Austrian Youth Red Cross. While it refers to teacher SEDA competencies in an overarching sense, it does not go into detail (BMBWF et al., 2024). Still, the topics "teacher health" or "stress" are focus topics. The platform connects a range of free-of-charge, health-related information, materials, activities, workshops, and seminars. In addition, links, lists of, or references to organisations and recommendations for books and materials are provided, along with an overview of health-promoting offers for schools, and contacts to qualified experts and organisations that support activities and initiatives for health promotion in schools (and other educational institutions). Over 200 organisations from all Austrian provinces are included in the database (BMBWF et al., 2024).

Other Policy Measures Supporting Teacher SEDA Competencies in Austria

In this subsection, four political measures suitable for promoting teacher SEDA competencies are introduced: (1) supervision; (2) flexible career paths (sabbatical); (3) the "Handbook on Health Promotion for Teachers" (Healthy School Service Centre, 2020b) and the "Handbook on Burnout Prevention for Teachers" (Healthy School Service Centre, 2020a); and (4) the "Consortium School:Support" (School Psychology Support Association Styria, 2024). We selected the presented initiatives as examples of offers that either cover all of Austria or entire Austrian federal provinces. However, we cannot claim that the overview is exhaustive.

Supervision can be defined as counselling in a professional context intended to support those seeking advice (in individual or group settings) in social self-reflection and seeking to improve their ability to act, to be able to review the effectiveness of their own professional actions, and to increase their job satisfaction (Möller & Kotte, 2015). Even though supervision in the school context does not have the fundamental purpose of promoting teacher SEDA competencies, it may be assumed that these are at least indirectly addressed by the reflective approach.

Supervisions for teachers are organised via the coordinators for supervision offers at PH or the "Austrian Association for Supervision and Coaching" (2024) and, according to the BMBWF's website, are usually free-of-charge for teachers or their schools (BMBWF, 2024i). By way of an example, the webpage of the province of Styria provides a list of supervision and counselling opportunities for teachers and schools. However, the list was last updated in 2021 and some of its offers must be paid for or the users (or their schools) have to become members of the offering organisation and pay a membership fee (Province of Styria, 2021). One of these organisations is the association "BfP – Counselling

for Pedagogues Styria" (BfP – Counselling for Teachers and Elementary Pedagogues, 2023). The services offered by BfP range from individual counselling and supervision to group counselling, team building, and seminars/workshops on various topics.

All public employees are allowed to use the sabbatical model. By opting for the "4-year framework period" model, a person works for 3 years and takes 1 year off, while receiving 75% of their salary over the entire period. They are also covered by health and pension insurance during the year off and retain all time-dependent rights (finfo.at, 2024). Again, while this offer might not focus directly on support for teacher SEDA competencies, they are at least addressed indirectly by the provision of an opportunity to take a break from the stresses of everyday working life and to focus on one's personal development and well-being.

The "Handbook on Health Promotion for Teachers" (Healthy School Service Centre, 2020b) and the "Handbook on Burnout Prevention for Teachers" (Healthy School Service Centre, 2020a) were published by the Austrian Insurance Institute for Public Employees, Railways and Mining ("Versicherungsanstalt öffentlich Bediensteter, Eisenbahnen und Bergbau"; BVAEB) (BVAEB, 2024a) and the Austrian Association of Social Insurance Institutions (2024) as part of the initiative "Healthy Workplace School" (BVAEB, 2024b) that has been developed in response to the results of the "Teacher Health Survey" (Hofmann et al., 2012) (see next section). In both handbooks, positive mental feelings, especially positive self-esteem, are described as being central to health promotion. Strategies on how to work on personal social-emotional competencies or diversity awareness are not explicitly mentioned, albeit self-awareness and accurate perception of one's own needs are defined as valuable skills that can be trained with mindfulness and relaxation exercises. To better cope with demands and stressors at school, problem-solving stress management is advised. Behavioural strategies recommended include self-management, time management and the development of communicative and social skills. Emotion-oriented stress management as a strategy to reduce personal stress reactions is mentioned, with methods recommended including meditation as a relaxation exercise and mindfulness exercises (Healthy School Service Centre, 2020a, 2020b).

No data could be found on how many teachers or schools take up the offers of supervision, how many teachers use the sabbatical model, or how intensively the described handbooks are used or downloaded.

The "Consortium School:Support" wants to contribute to teacher health and support teachers in the optimal fulfilment of their educational mission. Members of the consortium include the Board of Education of Styria (2023), the BVAEB (2024a), the PH Styria (2024c) and the Private PH Augustinum (PPH Augustinum, 2024). The Consortium School:Support aims to (1) contribute to

the maintenance and optimisation of teachers' subjective well-being, job satisfaction and ability to act in order to retain their competence in the school system for as long as possible; and (2) creating or further developing health-promotion and thus learning- and performance-friendly framework conditions in the school setting. According to the website, members meet twice a year to communicate the current offers and resources of the institutions. Based on the meeting outcomes, projects or interventions that help promote the health of Styrian teachers are developed. However, there are presently (January 2024) no specific offers from the Consortium School:Support published. The last entry to advertise an event relates to a symposium on the topic "School of the Future", already held in April 2023 (School Psychology Support Association Styria, 2024).

Austrian Assessment of Teacher SEDA Competencies and Result Consideration

No examples of the systematic or regular assessment of SEDA competencies of Austrian teachers were found. One study that included teachers' behaviours while dealing with stress or other health-related challenges is the "Teacher Health Survey" (Hofmann et al., 2012) conducted as part of the WHO study "Health Behaviour in School-aged Children" (HBSC) (BMSGPK, 2023), the largest survey in Europe concerning the health and health-related behaviours of children and adolescents. Austrian ISCED 2 and 3 teachers ($N = 3{,}753$) were asked about their perceived health status (including emotional stress), with 24.6% of the teachers reporting high emotional exhaustion, being considered to be at risk of burnout. Around 35% of teachers with over 20 years of professional experience felt overburdened by their work, for younger teachers the figure was about 25%. Self-efficacy (the inner conviction regarding one's own ability to find solutions) was quite well developed among most teachers (Hofmann et al., 2012).

In reaction to these results and referring to the effectiveness of health promotion in the workplace, the BVAEB developed the initiative "Healthy Workplace School" (BVAEB, 2024b) aiming to support schools in promoting the health of their employees. Schools can register for a network partnership and are subsequently provided with health-oriented information (newsletters, events, offers for continuous professional development etc.). By signing up for a silver or gold partnership, schools receive support in initiating a personalised health promotion project in their workplace, which is evaluated after 3 years with the support of the BVAEB. The two handbooks for teachers (on health promotion and burnout prevention) described above were also published as

part of this initiative that is supported with funding from the "Health Promotion Funds" of the Austrian Federal Provinces. Data on how many schools or teachers enter a network partnership or use the initiative's services could not be found.

In 2021, the "Quality Management System" (QMS) for schools was introduced to all Austrian schools. It focuses on pedagogical quality management and intends to drive school development processes in a targeted, systematic, and evidence-based manner. It involves three perspectives: (1) school leadership; (2) instructional teams; and (3) individual teachers. The purpose is to strengthen collaboration among teachers, while promoting professional development and mutual support, fostering a culture of quality, and encouraging attitudes and ways of thinking oriented to quality and development (BMBWF, 2024h).

The implementation and design of the QMS is aligned with the "Quality Framework" ("Qualitätsrahmen"; QR) for schools and should provide a common understanding of school quality on all levels of the education system. QR for schools in Austria serves as a basic guideline and orientation tool for the development of schools and teaching. It was created to meet the diverse expectations of different stakeholders in the education system and intends to establish a common understanding of the essential characteristics of school quality and to provide the best conditions for teaching and learning (BMBWF, 2024h).

QMS views individual teachers as key participants in quality management and equips them with specific tools, e.g., the "Individual Profile", where each teacher describes their personal professional goals and values. This process seeks to boost teacher confidence and facilitate communication and collaboration with colleagues, students, parents, external partners, etc. In addition, the personal goals and values act as the basis for individual professional development initiatives outlined on a project sheet (BMBWF, 2024h).

Initiatives and Projects of Universities and PH Addressing Teacher SEDA Competencies

Between 2016 and 2018, the "Clerical University College of Teacher Education Vienna/Krems" ("Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems"; KPH Wien/Krems) (2024) participated in the Erasmus+ project "READY – Religious Education and Diversity". It shared experiences of teacher education in Austria, Great Britain, Germany, Scotland, and Sweden. The partners developed educational modules on "Religion and Diversity" and systematically evaluated local model Religious Education (RE) lessons (Kliemann, 2017). One conclusion was that diversity competency, communication competency and re-

flection competency were pointed out as key qualifications for teachers, being necessary for a future-oriented handling of diversity in RE lessons. These competencies must be trained in the pre-service teacher education through diverse and multicultural practical experiences from the outset (Ivkovits, 2019).

Further initiatives or projects that could be found did not explicitly refer to the promotion of SEDA competencies among teachers. Like with pre- and in-service teacher education, the social-emotional skills of students were addressed instead of those of teachers. Diversity awareness was usually assumed in the sense that the focus lay on the next step: the concrete handling of diversity. In the following, we briefly present two university projects as examples.

Between 2017 and 2020, the Austrian institutions University of Graz and "Schönau Primary School" (VS Schönau, 2024) participated in the Erasmus+ project "Re_HaRe"[8] – together with organisations from seven other European countries (Re_HaRe – Reaching the 'Hard to Reach', 2022). Aims of the project included responding to learner diversity in inclusive ways via the active participation of children, and to enhance the access, participation, and learning performance of all children, ensuring that no child is marginalised. Students and teachers worked together to develop inclusive lessons and to reach out to all students, irrespective of their diversity (Gasteiger-Klicpera et al., 2020).

In the period 2018 to 2021, the University of Vienna (2021) participated in the TEP Erasmus+ project "Preconditions of Transformation of Education Process in Different Educational Contexts" by Applying Inclusive Education Strategies. The project implemented the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) model (CAST, 2024) at partner schools and investigated whether fewer barriers made learning easier for children. An international and national exchange , concerned with the development of teaching and learning methods was created. A handbook for teachers (Baesch et al., 2020) was developed that, among others, offers strategies and materials for self-regulation and self-reflection to enable the pupils to control their own learning process.

Ongoing Policy Debates and Reforms in the Field

In Austria, a shortage of teachers fuelled by a large wave of retirements will significantly intensify in the coming years. New teachers in Austria find it challenging to enter the profession, while many newcomers soon leave after being initially overwhelmed and lacking support. There are no clear guidelines for addressing challenges like increasing classroom diversity; the difficulty of

8 Reaching the Hard to Reach: Inclusive Responses to Diversity through Child–Teacher Dialogue

initially securing a position, the dual workload of work and study given the obligation to complete a master's degree in the first 5 years of being in the profession, and the extended training period that lacks practical application further deter newcomers (Republic of Austria Parliamentary Administration, 2024).

To alleviate this shortage, an alternative entry path is available for individuals holding a bachelor's degree, successfully complete an aptitude assessment, and possess 3 years of relevant professional experience in the field (in cases of severe shortage, only 1.5 years is required). Moreover, individuals entering through this route must complete the "Ingress" university course at a PH within 8 years of becoming employed (BMBWF, 2024f).

This model for lateral entry was introduced in 2021 after the previous one from 2017 did not bring the desired results (Assessment COO_2026_100_2_901164, 2021). Lateral entry is impossible for the ISCED 1 level or special education (BMBWF, 2024f). All newly entering teaching staff are required to complete a 5-day introductory event at a PH, with an additional 5 days for individuals who have not completed a teacher training programme (Public Sector Employment Law Amendment, 2022). Both groups, those with a teaching degree and lateral entrants, undergo a 1-year induction phase, during which they are mentored, according to section 39 of the "Federal Law of March 17, 1948 on the Service and Remuneration Rights for Federal Contractual Employees" ("Vertragsbedienstetengesetz", VBG) (VBG, 1948/2024-01-12).

Discussion

In 2017, the European Commission and the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture summarised the results of an explorative study, "Preparing Teachers for Diversity" (European Commission, 2017), using European and international literature research, data from interviews conducted in 37 countries (including Austria) as well as a comparative analysis of "illustrative case studies". The study explored how diversity is considered in national education policy, and how teacher education addresses diversity. Existing policies and initiatives were also examined regarding their effectiveness and factors as well as conditions that had led to the successful implementation of diversity-related practices. The results showed that even though many European countries, including Austria, recognised the benefits of cultural, linguistic, religious, and social diversity, education systems still tended to focus more on deficit-based approaches on both a policy and an institutional level. Further, there was a lack of clarity concerning diversity-related concepts and definitions (European Commission, 2017).

The results of the present chapter paint a similar picture with respect to the way in which SEDA competencies are addressed overall in the Austrian education system.

In Austrian pre-service teacher education, SEDA competencies are neither explicitly addressed nor outlined. The emphasis is more on the implicit understanding of the importance of teacher SE skills, often highlighting their role in fostering these skills in their future students. The ability to handle diversity and see it as an opportunity rather than a challenge is frequently stressed. The overall focus appears to be on providing teachers with essential teaching and classroom management techniques to establish an efficient learning environment rather than directly cultivating or addressing their personal SEDA competencies.

As regards offers for in-service teachers, Austrian continuous professional development catalogues acknowledge the importance of teachers' mental and emotional well-being in their profession. Many offers address psychosocial health, covering topics such as stress management, work-life balance, and strategies for handling challenging classroom situations. Nonetheless, the focus is not on the fundamental development or promotion of teacher SEDA competencies. Overall, a systematic approach is lacking, one that would enable interested teachers to examine their SEDA competencies within a universally applicable framework and actively seek opportunities for their further promotion and development.

Whether the BMBWF (2023) circular 21/2011, which calls for a comprehensive education programme for pre- and in-service teachers oriented to "current needs and research", is adequately addressed by this approach is questionable. The significance of teacher SEDA competencies is undisputed in the literature. First, it is acknowledged that a good relationship between students and teachers, which particularly requires teacher SEDA competencies, is crucial for teaching and learning success (Hattie, 2023). In addition, these competencies play an important role in promoting and maintaining one's own well-being and dealing with challenging situations or stress in professional life (Nielsen et al., 2019; OECD, 2015).

When looking at public and private initiatives outside the pre- and in-service teacher education, a similar picture emerges concerning the political and societal recognition of the importance of SEDA competencies or systematic approaches to specifically support them. On one hand, there are several programmes and initiatives aimed at promoting teacher (mental) health, such as the presented initiatives "Give" (BMBWF et al., 2024), "Consortium School:Support" (School Psychology Support Association Styria, 2024) or the initiative "Healthy Workplace School" (BVAEB, 2024b). There are also offerings like the opportunity for supervision or sabbaticals for teachers. The QMS, which Austrian schools have been required to implement since 2021, includes

the "Individual Profile" tool, concentrating on teacher SEDA competencies insofar as it is intended to promote the individual professional development of teachers, encompassing their SEDA competencies through personal development and the conscious realisation of one's own values and goals (BMBWF, 2024h). Yet, once again, there is a lack of a systematic framework and an overarching concept that recognise the importance of SEDA competencies overall and give possibilities regarding how and for what purpose they can be specifically and explicitly promoted.

The SEDA competencies of teachers in Austria are not systematically assessed. Although the presented "Teacher Health Survey" (Hofmann et al., 2012) included some aspects of these competencies, it clearly focused on overall teacher health and the question of professional workload and stress. Current political debates concentrate on the issue of the prevailing teacher shortage and ways to address it. It may be assumed that the need to find individuals willing to change career for the teaching profession will not prioritise any further narrowing of the selection process by extensively assessing the SEDA competencies of those interested and using them as a basis for deciding on whether an applicant is suitable for the teaching profession.

Conclusion

In the Austrian education system, teachers can find opportunities to work on and develop their SEDA competencies as part of pre- and in-service teacher education, or through public and private initiatives or projects. However, interested teachers must actively search for suitable programmes themselves. Official and systematic promotion and support are missing, as is the clear recognition of the importance of teacher SEDA competencies. Since these are vital for the relationship between teachers and students, as well as colleagues, and play an important role in teachers' health, well-being and coping with stress and challenging situations, there is a strong need to put more energy and commitment into the promotion of teacher SEDA competencies and to improve the corresponding framework conditions in the education system.

References

Assessment COO 2026 100 2 901164 [Begutachtung COO 2026 100 2 901164] (2021). https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/RegV/REGV_COO_2026_100_2_1851398/COO_2026_100_2_1865646.pdf

Association of Social Insurance Institutions [Dachverband der Sozialversicherungsträger] (2024). *Austrian Social Insurance* [Österreichische Sozialver-

sicherung]. https://www.sozialversicherung.at/cdscontent/?contentid=10007.821628

Austrian Association for Supervision and Coaching [Österreichische Vereinigung für Supervision und Coaching] (2024). *ÖVS*. https://www.oevs.or.at

Austrian National Library [Österreichische Nationalbibliothek] (2022). *Federal Law of 2nd August, 1927 on the Regulation of Secondary Schools: Secondary Schools Act* [Bundesgesetz vom 2. August 1927, betreffend die Regelung des Mittelschulwesens: Mittelschulgesetz]. https://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=bgb&datum=19270004&seite=00001037

Austrian Science Council [Österreichischer Wissenschaftsrat] (Ed.) (2013). *LEARNING TO TEACH – the FUTURE of TEACHER EDUCATION* [LEHREN LERNEN – die ZUKUNFT der LEHRERBILDUNG]. Tagungsband-2012-Lehrerbildung_inkl_Cover.pdf (wissenschaftsrat.ac.at)

Baesch, S., Grath Johanna, J., Krischke, K., Messenbock, G., & Wagner, B. (2020). *Experiences from Austria: Practices of UDL-Infused, Inclusive School Development in Secondary School: The Learning Environment at Schulzentrum Donaustadt. Our School and Secondary Education in Austria.* https://tep.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_tep/TEP_teacher_booklet_Austria.pdf

BfP – Counselling for Teachers and Elementary Pedagogues [Beratung für LehrerInnen und ElementarpädagogInnen] (2023). *BfP – Counselling for Pedagogues Styria* [BfP – Beratung für PädagogInnen Steiermark]. https://bfp-stmk.at

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2018). *Postqualification* [Nachqualifizierung.at]. https://www.nachqualifizierung.at

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2024a). *Admission to an Academic Secondary School* [Aufnahme in eine allgemeinbildende höhere Schule]. https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/beratung/schulinfo/aufnahme_ahs.html

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2024b). *Vocational Training – Teacher Education* [Berufsbildung – Ausbildung der Lehrpersonen]. https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/fpp/ausb/bb.html

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2024c). *Further Education and Training for Teachers at General Education Schools* [Fort- und Weiterbildung von Pädagoginnen und Pädagogen an allgemeinbildenden Schulen]. https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/fpp/lfwb/abs.html

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2024d). *History of the Austrian School System* [Geschichte des österreichischen Schulwesens]. https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulsystem/sw_oest.html

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2024e). *Compulsory Secondary*

School [Mittelschule]. https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulsystem/sa/ms.html

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2024f). *Opportunities for Lateral Entry into the Teaching Profession* [Möglichkeiten für einen Quereinstieg in den Pädagog/innenberuf]. https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/fpp/ausb/quereinstieg.html

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2024g). *New Teacher Education Scheme* [PädagogInnenbildung neu]. https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/fpp/ausb/pbneu.html

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2024h). *QMS – Quality Management for Schools* [Qualitätsmanagement für Schulen]. https://www.qms.at

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2023). *Quality of In-service Teacher Education and Training at University Colleges of Teacher Education* [Qualität der Lehrer/innen-Fort- und Weiterbildung an den Pädagogischen Hochschulen]. https://rundschreiben.bmbwf.gv.at/rundschreiben/?id=608

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] (2024i). *Supervisors for Teaching and School Leading Teams* [Supervisor/innen fur Lehrer/innenteams und Leitungsteams]. https://www.schulpsychologie.at/fileadmin/upload/kokoko/SupervisorInnen_f._LehrerInnenteams_u._Leitungsteams.pdf

BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung] BMSGPK (Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection) [Bundesministerium fur Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz], & Austrian Youth Red Cross [Österreichisches Jugendrotkreuz] (2024). *GIVE – Servicepoint for Health Promotion in Austrian Schools* [GIVE – Servicestelle fur Gesundheitsförderung an Österreichs Schulen]. https://www.give.or.at

BMSGPK (Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection) [Bundesministerium fur Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz] (2023). *HBSC*. https://www.sozialministerium.at/Themen/Gesundheit/Kinder-und-Jugendgesundheit/HBSC.html

Board of Education of Styria [Bildungsdirektion Steiermark] (2023). *Bildungsdirektion Steiermark*. https://www.bildung-stmk.gv.at/

BVAEB (Insurance Institute for Public Employees, Railways and Mining) [Versicherungsanstalt öffentlich Bediensteter, Eisenbahnen und Bergbau] (2024a). *bvaeb – Versicherungsanstalt öffentlich Bediensteter, Eisenbahnen und Bergbau.* https://www.bvaeb.at/cdscontent/?contentid=10007.852277&portal=bvaebbportal

BVAEB (Insurance Institute for Public Employees, Railways and Mining) [Versicherungsanstalt öffentlich Bediensteter, Eisenbahnen und Bergbau] (2024b). *Health Promotion in the School Workplace* [Gesundheitsförderung am Arbeitsplatz Schule]. https://www.bvaeb.at/cdscontent/?contentid=10007.840623&portal=bvaebbportal&portalTargetGroup=esv_content_sibling_a

CAST (2024). *About Universal Design for Learning*. https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl?_gl=1*1k6v9dh*_ga*MjkzNDI5ODk5LjE3MDAwNDYzMzU.*_ga_C7LXP5M74W*MTcwMDA0NjMzNC4xLjAuMTcwMDA0NjMzNC4wLjAuMA

Central Committee for Compulsory General Education Schools in Carinthia [Zentralausschuss fur allgemeinbildende Pflichtschulen in Kärnten] (2022). *Comparison of "old" and "new" employment law* [Gegenüberstellung Dienstrecht "alt" und Dienstrecht "neu"]. https://za.ksn.at/images/pdf/DR_Gegenberstellung_Ktn_2021_01.pdf

Educational Research Institute (2024). *HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges*. https://handinhand.si/en/home2/

European Commission (2017). *Preparing teachers for diversity: the role of initial teacher education*. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b347bf7d-1db1-11e7-aeb3-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2021). *Teachers in Europe. Careers, Development and Well-being*. Eurydice report. Publications Office of the European Union. https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/teachers_in_europe_2020.pdf

European Commission (2023). *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)*. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=International_Standard_Classification_of_Education_(ISCED)#Implementation_of_ISCED_2011_.28levels_of_education.29

finfo.at (2024). *Sabbatical in Austria 2024 – Models for teachers, civil servants and employees* [Sabbatical in Österreich 2024 – Modelle für Lehrer, Beamte und Angestellte]. https://www.finfo.at/ratgeber/sabbatical

Gasteiger-Klicpera, B., Bešić, E., & Paleczek, L. (2020). *Reaching the 'hard to reach': Inclusive responses to diversity through child-teacher dialogue. Guidance document for monitoring teachers' thinking and practices*. https://rehare533167368.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/guidance-document-monitoring-teachers-thinking-rehare-final-pages_english.pdf

Grimm, G. (2000). University Teacher Training in Austria. On the Genesis of the Accompanying Pedagogical Study Programme for Secondary School Teachers from 1848 to the Present Day [Universitäre Lehrerbildung in Österreich. Zur Genese des pädagogischen Begleitstudiums für Lehrer an höheren Schulen von 1848 bis zur Gegenwart]. *Advance online publication*. https://doi.org/10.25656/01:2901

Hattie, J. (2023). *Visible Learning: The Sequel*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003380542

Healthy School Service Centre [Servicestelle Gesunde Schule] (2020a). *Burnout Prevention for Teachers* [Burnout-Prävention für Lehrerinnen und Lehrer]. Association of Social Insurance Institutions [Dachverband der Sozialversicherungsträger]. https://www.gesundheitskasse.at/cdscontent/load?contentid=10008.731009&version=1578901301

Healthy School Service Centre [Servicestelle Gesunde Schule] (2020b). *Health Promotion for Teachers* [Gesundheitsförderung für Lehrerinnen und Lehrer].

Association of Social Insurance Institutions [Dachverband der Sozialversicherungsträger]. https://www.gesundheitskasse.at/cdscontent/load?contentid=10008.731016&version=1578901306

HG (Federal Law on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education, "Higher Education Act") [Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Pädagogischen Hochschulen und ihre Studien, "Hochschulgesetz"] (2005). https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/20004626/HG%2c%20Fassung%20vom%2030.09.2021.pdf?FassungVom=2021-09-30

Hofmann, F., Griebler, R., Ramelow, D., Unterweger, K., Griebler, U., Felder-Puig, R., & Dur, W. (2012). *Health and Health Behaviour of Austrian Teachers: Results of the 2010 Teacher Survey* [Gesundheit und Gesundheitsverhalten von Österreichs Lehrer/innen: Ergebnisse der Lehrer/innenbefragung 2010]. http://www.elterngesundheit.at/pdf/Wissenschaft/LBIHPR/2012_FH_LehrerInnenbericht.pdf

Ivkovits, H. (2019). Are you READY?, *Österr. Religionspädagogisches Forum, 27*(2), 114–128. https://doi.org/10.25364/10.27:2019.2.8

Kliemann, P. (2017). Internationally Networked Religious Education Teacher Training: READY? [International vernetzte Religionslehrerbildung: READY?]. *Theo-Web. Zeitschrift für Religionspaedagogik, 16*(2), 93–97. https://www.theo-web.de/ausgaben/2017/16-jahrgang-2017-heft-2/news/international-vernetzte-religionslehrerbildung-ready

KPH Wien/Krems (Clerical University College of Teacher Education Vienna/Krems) [Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems] (2024). *KPH – Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems*. https://kphvie.ac.at/

Möller, H., & Kotte, S. (2015). Supervision. *PiD – Psychotherapie im Dialog, 16*(01), 16–24. https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0040-100284

Nielsen, B. L., Laursen, H. D., Reol, L. A., Jensen, H., Kozina, A., Vidmar, M., Rasmusson, M., Denk, A., Roczen, N., Jurko, S., Ojsteršek, A., & Marušić, I. (2019). Social, emotional and intercultural competencies. A literature review with a particular focus on the school staff. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 42*(3), 410–428. https://doi-org.nukweb.nuk.uni-lj.si/10.1080/02619768.2019.1604670

Nishina, A., Lewis, J. A., Bellmore, A., & Witkow, M. R. (2019). Ethnic Diversity and Inclusive School Environments. *Educational Psychologist, 54*(4), 306–321. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1633923

OeAD (Agency for Education and Internationalisation) [Agentur für Bildung und Internationalisierung] (2023). *The Austrian Education System*. https://www.bildungssystem.at/en/

OECD (2015). *Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills. OECD Skills Studies*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264226159-en

Paleczek, L., Krammer, M., Ederer, E., & Klicpera, B. G. (2015). Inclusion of children identified as having special educational needs (SEN) within the Austrian compulsory educational system. *Da Investigacao as Praticas, 5*(2), 20–43. https://doi.org/10.25757/INVEP.V5I2.79

PH Lower Austria (University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria) [Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich] (2024). *Courses | The Alternative Outdoor Weekend | Self-Sufficiency | Hiking | Outdoor Adventure Games | Gemeindealpe Mitterbach* [Lehrveranstaltungen | Das alternative Outdoorwochenende

| Selbstversorgung | Wandern | Outdoorerlebnisspiele | Gemeindealpe Mitterbach]. https://www.ph-online.ac.at/ph-noe/ee/ui/ca2/app/desktop/#/slc.tm.cp/student/courses/266684?$ctx=design=ca;lang=de&$scrollTo=toc_overview

PH Salzburg Stefan Zweig (University College of Teacher Education Salzburg Stefan Zweig) [Pädagogische Hochschule Salzburg Stefan Zweig] (2023). *Curriculum Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programme PRIMARY LEVEL* [Curriculum Bachelor- und Masterstudium PRIMARSTUFE]. https://qmpilot.phsalzburg.at/File/CoreDownload?id=2170&filename=PG_098_099_Curriculum_Primarstufe_BA_MA-60_MA-90_red.pdf&langId=1

PH Styria (University College of Teacher Education Styria) [Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark] (2019). *Curriculum for the Bachelor's Degree Programme for Primary Education: Regulation of the University Council of the University College of Teacher Education Styria of 19th December, 2018* [Curriculum für das Bachelorstudium für das Lehramt Primarstufe: Verordnung des Hochschulkollegiums der Pädagogischen Hochschule Steiermark vom 19.12.2018]. https://www.phst.at/fileadmin/Mitteilungsblaetter/Studienjahr_2018_2019/MB_77_EVSO_Curriculum_Primar_Bachelor_PHST_27062019_BasisMitteilungsblatt_korrigiert_20191010.pdf

PH Styria (University College of Teacher Education Styria) [Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark] (2021). *Curriculum for the Master's Degree Programme Secondary General Education* [Curriculum für das Masterstudium Lehramt Sekundarstufe Allgemeinbildung]. https://www.phst.at/fileadmin/Mitteilungsblaetter/Studienjahr_2020_2021/MB_32_20210519_MA_LA_SekAB_VerOEff.pdf

PH Styria (University College of Teacher Education Styria) [Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark] (2024a). *Admission Procedure* [Aufnahmeverfahren]. https://www.phst.at/ausbildung/vor-dem-studium/aufnahmeverfahren/

PH Styria (University College of Teacher Education Styria) [Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark] (2024b). *Bachelor's Degree Programme Primary Education* [Bachelorstudium Lehramt Primarstufe]. https://www.phst.at/ausbildung/studienangebot/primarstufe/bachelor-primarstufe/

PH Styria (University College of Teacher Education Styria) [Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark] (2024c). *Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark*. https://www.phst.at/home/

PH Vienna (University College of Teacher Education Vienna) [Pädagogische Hochschule Wien] (2019). *Curriculum for the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Primary Education* [Curriculum Bachelorstudium für das Lehramt Primarstufe]. https://phwien.ac.at/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/PHW_Bachelorcurriculum_Primarstufe_Erl_2019_06_03.pdf

PPH Augustinum (Private University College of Teacher Education Augustinum) [Private Pädagogische Hochschule Augustinum] (2024). *Private Pädagogische Hochschule Augustinum]*. https://pph-augustinum.at

PPH of the Diocese of Linz (Private University College of Teacher Education of the Diocese of Linz) [Private Pädagogische Hochschule der Diözese Linz] (2024). *Courses/Balance Skills – Exercise Toolbox for Emotional Serenity in Everyday School Life* [Lehrveranstaltungen / "Balance Skills" (Übungsschatzkiste fur emotionale Gelassenheit im Schulalltag]. https://www.ph-online.ac.at/ph-linz/ee/ui/

ca2/app/desktop/#/slc.tm.cp/student/courses/247256?$ctx=design=ca;lang=de&$scrollTo=toc_overview

Province of Styria [Land Steiermark] (2021). *Counselling for teachers* [Beratung fur Lehrer*innen]. https://www.verwaltung.steiermark.at/cms/dokumente/12789432_158927714/8424643c/Beratung%20f%C3%BCr%20Lehrpersonen.pdf

Province of Upper Austria [Land Oberösterreich] (2024). New Secondary School [Neue Mittelschule]. https://www.land-oberoesterreich.gv.at/136999.htm

Public Sector Employment Law Amendment 2013 – Pedagogical Service [Dienstrechts-Novelle 2013 – Pädagogischer Dienst] (2013). https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2013_I_211/BGBLA_2013_I_211.pdfsig

Public Sector Employment Law Amendment 2022 [Dienstrechts-Novelle 2022] (2022). https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2022_I_137/BGBLA_2022_I_137.pdfsig

Re HaRe – Reaching the 'Hard to Reach' (2022). *Reaching the 'hard to reach': Inclusive responses to diversity through child-teacher dialogue*. https://reachingthehardtoreach.eu

Republic of Austria Parliamentary Administration [Republik Österreich Parlamentsdirektion] (2024). *Politics at the Ring: Teacher – Dream Job or Nightmare? Parliamentary Groups Are Discussing Strategies to Eliminate the Teacher Shortage* [Politik am Ring: Lehrkraft – Traumjob oder Albtraum? Parlamentsfraktionen diskutieren Strategien zur Beseitigung des Lehrkräftemangels]. https://www.parlament.gv.at/aktuelles/pk/jahr_2023/pk0421

Schnell, H. (1974). *The Austrian School in Transition. Pedagogy of the Present: Vol. 113* [Die österreichische Schule im Umbruch. Pädagogik der Gegenwart: Vol. 113]. Jugend u. Volk.

School Organisation Act (Federal Law on School Organisation of 25th July, 1962) [Bundesgesetz vom 25. Juli 1962 über die Schulorganisation, Schulorganisationsgesetz] (1962). https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/1962/242/P0/NOR11009456

School Psychology Support Association Styria [Unterstützungsverein Schulpsychologie Steiermark] (2024). *Consortium School:Support* [ARGE Schul:Support]. https://schulpsychologenakademie.at/arge-schulsupport/

South-East Development Alliance [Entwicklungsverbund Süd-Ost] (2015). *Teaching Degree South-East* [Lehramt süd-ost]. https://www.lehramt-so.at/ev-sued-ost/

UG (Federal Law on the Organisation of the Universities and their Studies, "University Act") [Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Universitäten und ihre Studien, "Universitätsgesetz"] (2002). https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20002128

University of Graz [Universität Graz] (2024). *University of Graz*. https://www.uni-graz.at/en/

University of Vienna [Universität Wien] (2021). *Preconditions of Transformation of Education Process in Different Educational Contexts by Applying Inclusive Education Strategies*. https://tep.univie.ac.at

University of Vienna [Universität Wien] (2022). *General Curriculum for the Master's Degree Programme Leading to a Teaching Qualification in Secondary Education (General Education) in the North-East Alliance* [Allgemeines Curriculum für das Masterstudium zur Erlangung eines Lehramts im Bereich der Sekundarstufe

(Allgemeinbildung) im Verbund Nord-Ost]. https://senat.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/s_senat/konsolidiert_Lehramt/Allgemeines_Curriculum_MA_Lehramt.pdf

VBG (Federal Law of March 17, 1948 on the Service and Remuneration Rights for Federal Contractual Employees, Contract Staff Act 1948) [Bundesgesetz vom 17. März 1948 über das Dienst- und Besoldungsrecht der Vertragsbediensteten des Bundes, Vertragsbedienstetengesetz 1948 – VBG] (1948). https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/10008115/VBG%2c%20Fassung%20vom%2015.05.2024.pdf

VS Schönau (Schoenau Primary School) [Volksschule Schönau] (2024). *Volksschule Schönau.* https://vs-schoenau.info

Chapter 4
Perspectives from Croatia

Hrvoje Bakić[1], *Gordana Galić*[2] & *Urška Štremfel*[3]

Abstract

The chapter provides a review of current policy frameworks supporting teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness in Croatia. It shows that although these competencies of teachers are not explicitly addressed in educational legislation, strategies and other relevant policy documents, implicitly the need for healthy (social and emotional) development of students is implied. Despite teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness not being systemically supported in initial and continuous professional development programmes in Croatia, several examples of such courses and programmes are identified. The integrated supervision for teachers and other professional staff conducted by the National Education and Teacher Training Agency addresses the development of both teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness competencies and their needs in the field. In the National Plan for Development of the Education and Training System until 2027, the pressing challenges facing the teaching profession (teacher shortages, working conditions, professional status in society) are planned to be addressed with several measures for advancing teachers' professional development. The research findings presented in the chapter hold several policy implications indicating that the development of teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness should be incorporated into the planned renewal of teacher professional development and thereby be better systemically supported.

Keywords: Teachers, Social and Emotional Competencies, Diversity Awareness, Professional Development, Policy, Croatia

Introduction

Croatia has a relatively short history of independent education policy-making from 1991 onwards. For a long time, it was part of other states (e.g., the Habsburg Monarchy, the Ottoman Empire, the Venice Republic between the

1 Ministry of Education and Science, Croatia
2 Center for Education, Rijeka, Croatia
3 Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

15th and 18th centuries). After the First World War, Croatia became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). Following the end of the Second World War, Croatia became a federal republic in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. After attaining independence in 1991, the country's political circumstances were characterised by the process of abandoning its socialist heritage while for several years its socio-economic development was considerably influenced by the war. Croatia entered the European Union (EU) in 2013 and started formal discussions to join the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2022 (Klemenčič Mirazchiyski et al., 2023; Žiljak & Baketa, 2019).

The Croatian education system is largely a centralised system governed on all levels of education by the Ministry of Science and Education together with national agencies. Primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education (International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 1 to ISCED 3) is managed centrally. However, local and regional authorities are responsible for (co-)financing. They also hold the authority to establish a school and are the main founders of early childhood education and care and school institutions. Primary and lower secondary education in Croatia (ISCED 1 and 2) is structured as a single system of compulsory education lasting 8 years. It starts at ages 6–7 and ends at 14–15 (Eurydice, 2024a). In the 2022/2023 school year, there were 927 primary schools in Croatia, 900 of which were public, 9 were private with the rights of public ones, while 18 were private (Eurydice, 2024b).

In Croatia, teachers are employees of public institutions and hold civil servant status. The teaching profession is defined and regulated by national laws (e.g., Act on Salaries in Public Services, 2023) guaranteeing that teachers receive a regular salary and have stable working conditions. Their working time is the overall number of working hours (40 hours per week; Ordinance on Weekly Duties of Teachers and Expert Associates in Primary Schools, 2014). Although teachers' tasks and working hours are clearly defined in policy documents, the World Bank (2015) reports that in the past teachers frequently complained that they worked more than prescribed. They perceived administrative duties, extracurricular tasks, and interaction with parents and the local community as time-consuming. In particular, most teachers considered that the allocated administrative duties took up too much time. Teachers have frequently voiced their concerns in the media and at conferences. A clear example is a strike in 2019 that lasted over 1 month in which thousands of teachers called for increased wages and improved working conditions in schools, as well as better facilities for schools (Srednja.hr, 2019). These facts, together with the contemporary challenges of the teaching profession in Croatia, such as the shortage of teachers in specific geographical areas and subject fields (e.g., science, technology, engineering and mathematics), and teachers considering their profession as undervalued in society, make the question of teachers' well-being and policy

developments in this regard in this national context particularly interesting and important. Results for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA 2022) (OECD, 2023), which among others show that 15-year-old students in Croatia perceive the quality of student–teacher relationships below the OECD average (for more, see Chapter 1), mean that teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness (SEDA competencies) in Croatia are a relevant topic in need of addressing.

The chapter provides a review of the current state of policy support for teachers' SEDA competencies in Croatia. Second, after reviewing the key legislation and policy documents regulating the teaching profession, focus is given to teachers' initial professional development, third, to continuous professional development, fourth, to other policies, projects and activities and, fifth, to evidence-based policies in the field. Sixth, a review of the policy implications of findings of relevant research in the field is presented. Seventh, the current policy reforms and debates explicitly and implicitly related to teachers' SEDA competencies development are outlined. The chapter is based on a review of formal legislative and strategic national policy documents, national and EU reports, along with scientific sources (books, book chapters, articles) in the field. Following the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project (HAND:ET project) framework (Kozina, 2024), it focuses on the development of SEDA competencies among teachers in elementary (ISCED 1 and 2) education.

Legislation and Policies Regulating the Teaching Profession

The Primary and Secondary School Education Act (2008) regulates the activities of primary and secondary education in public institutions. While referring to safety and health protection in school institutions in Article 67, it states, among others, that school institutions are obliged to create the conditions for the healthy mental and physical development and social well-being of students. Based on scientific research (e.g., Collie, 2017; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015), it can be assumed that teachers' SEDA competencies are needed to perform such tasks, even though the Act does not explicitly mention this.

In the Republic of Croatia, teacher education takes place at universities that are licensed to conduct teacher studies. The Primary and Secondary School Education Act (2008) stipulates that the appropriate type of education for teachers, teachers and professional associates is prescribed by the minister.

Study programs and/or majors, type and academic or professional title that is acquired upon completion of the study program, and which must be held by teachers and professional associates in the school in accordance with the programs that are carried out at universities in the Republic of Croatia, are

prescribed by the Rulebook on the appropriate type of education of teachers and professional associates in primary school (2008) and the Rulebook on professional training and pedagogical-psychological education of teachers in secondary education (1992). Also, the Primary and Secondary School Education Act (2008) stipulates that the list of qualifications can be determined by the curriculum of the teaching subject, and in vocational education, the appropriate type of education is prescribed by the vocational curriculum.

The National Pedagogical Standard for Elementary Education (2008) prescribes the minimum infrastructural, financial, material and personnel conditions for the existence and development of the activity and similar conditions for the system's harmonised development, as well as an equal level of quality of education for all students in primary schools across Croatia. The Standards also prescribe equal conditions for a high-quality educational process and the successful accomplishment of goals and objectives in educational institutions. Among others, the set of standards includes criteria with respect to continuing professional development, the professional advancement of school principals, teachers and expert associates, and education and training requirements for other personnel (see the section Continuous professional development). No particular attention is paid in the document to SEDA competencies and/or the well-being of teachers and/or students.

Initial Professional Development

As an EU member state, Croatia introduced significant changes while aligning its system of higher education with both the European higher education area and the Bologna Process (Sablić et al., 2023). One of these changes included transforming initial teacher education programmes to the university level for all prospective teachers in early childhood education and care, elementary and secondary schools.[4] There are two categories of teachers in elementary schools: classroom teachers who teach grades 1–4 and subject teachers who teach respective subjects in grades 5–8 and can also teach in secondary schools. Classroom teachers attend a 5-year integrated undergraduate and graduate university programme (300 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits) provided by the faculties or departments of teacher education and, upon completion, obtain a 'master of primary education' degree, which qualifies them to teach in the first four grades of elementary school. Their initial education includes six domains related to the subjects taught in the

4 Domović and Vizek Vidović (2010) demonstrate that these changes also imply the introduction of quality assurance strategies and therefore the greater quality of the programmes.

first four grades of primary school (mother tongue and literature, mathematics, natural sciences, arts, kinesiology), and these obligatory contents comprise nearly one-third of the initial classroom teachers' education programme. Obligatory courses in educational sciences and teaching methodologies account for around 40% of the study programme. A supervised school-based practicum is obligatory during the time of study, and the study programme also allows students to choose various elective courses. Subject teachers' initial education also lasts 5 years in terms of integrated undergraduate and graduate university programmes ending with a 'master of subject' degree, that qualifies them to teach the respective subject in elementary and secondary schools. Their education takes place at respective faculties within their subject domain (e.g., social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, mathematics), and their initial education chiefly comprises a 5-year programme ending with a 'master of subject' degree (300 ECTS credits). Prospective subject teachers' initial education largely consists of courses related to their basic discipline, i.e., subject, and about 20% of their initial education comprises obligatory courses in educational sciences, teaching methodologies, and school-based practice. In addition, these courses related to teacher competencies are usually introduced on the graduate level, while the undergraduate level is oriented to the chosen academic discipline (Marušić et al., 2017).[5] The requirements for teachers of specific levels and subject fields are specified in detail in the Ordinance on the appropriate type of education of teachers and expert associates in primary schools (2019).

Other entry points exist for professionals willing to be teachers in ISCED 2 level and secondary schools, but who do not have their initial education in the pedagogical-psychological-didactic-methodological field. These professionals can attend a lifelong learning programme (provided by certain higher education institutions), which includes the basics of psychology, pedagogy, methodology, didactics, learning methods, teaching, evaluation and school practice and therefore fulfils the requirements to be a teacher at the ISCED 2 level or a secondary school teacher. Analysis (Burai & Bušljeta Kardum, 2022) of the learning outcomes of lifelong learning programmes that concentrate on the acquisition of pedagogical competencies in Croatia showed that while no programme (in its compulsory part) ensures the acquisition of the necessary key teacher competencies, they seek to provide them with the elective part of the programme. The results indicate a need to design and prescribe a single programme on the national level, one that would certainly assure that all teachers acquire key pedagogical competencies by completing the programme.

5 In Croatia, six universities (faculties) provide study programmes to become a teacher on the ISCED 1 level and at least 12 universities (faculties) provide study programmes to become a teacher on the ISCED 2 level.

In Croatia, SEDA competencies are not included in the initial teacher education study programmes as a mandatory topic. For example, analysis of curricula for future teachers at the Faculty of Philosophy in Split found that the socio-emotional competencies of students and the importance of their acquisition are sporadically mentioned and no single (compulsory or optional) course contains socio-emotional competencies or socio-emotional learning in the title (Ljubetić et al., 2021). However, SEDA competencies are involved in elective courses at some teacher faculties. For example, at the Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka, students in the second year of undergraduate education can choose the elective course Social Skills Training (Trening socijalnih vještina), which addresses topics like: interpersonal communication, emotional and social skills; social, communication, interpersonal competencies and skills development; learning social skills (basic, interactional, emotional and cognitive skills); socio-emotional learning and classroom climate; programmes for the development of social skills in lower grades of primary school; planning, preparation and evaluation of the programme of workshops for the development of social skills; and reflection on learning processes and methods of teaching communication and developing social skills (Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka, 2023).

In line with the Ordinance on taking the first-licence examination for teachers and expert associates in the primary and secondary education system (2003), upon completing their initial education all novice teachers must undergo a 1-year induction period (apprenticeship) in which they are assigned a teacher-mentor who provides professional support, supervises their progress, and prepares them for independent practice. After the induction period, novice teachers have to pass the state professional certification exam to obtain a full teaching qualification (Marušić et al., 2017). Only general guidelines exist concerning the role of the mentors during the induction period, with no specific training or support being provided to the mentors (Marušić et al., 2011). The results of empirical studies (Aderibige et al., 2022; Marušić et al., 2011) also show that workload and administrative demands pose challenges for teachers serving as mentors.

Continuous Professional Development

According to the Primary and Secondary School Act (2008), teachers on all education levels (as well as school heads and their deputies) in Croatia have the right and obligation to pursue continuous professional development. The basic goal of organised continuing professional development is to use and enhance educational workers' potential to improve the educational process and pupils'/students' results in line with the values, educational goals and princi-

ples of the National Curriculum Framework. Participation in continuous professional development is also required for progression in a teacher's career (Ordinance on the Promotion of Teachers, Professional Associates and Principals in Primary and Secondary Schools and Student Dormitories, 2021)[6].

There are official obligations for the amount of time that public school teachers should devote to professional development activities (namely, once every 2 years at the state level, at least three times a year on the county level), to regularly participate in professional training at the school in which a teacher works, develop professionally on their own with respect to the tasks and obligations for which a teacher is responsible (Eurydice, 2024c). In Croatia, each lower secondary teacher is entitled to paid leave of up to five working days a year for education and professional training.[7]

The Primary and Secondary School Education Act (2020) determines that the annual work programme of the school should include a continuing professional development plan. This plan should be developed according to the needs of the school and the mandatory continuous professional development areas defined annually by the Teachers' Council. The school's continuous professional development plan should specify the type and number of estimated continuous professional development hours for each teacher. Moreover, teachers are requested to submit a report on their professional development at least once a year (Eurydice, 2021, p. 98; National Pedagogical Standard for Elementary Education, 2008).

Continuing professional development programmes in Croatia are organised and conducted by institutions responsible for education and by other entities approved by the Ministry of Education. Two national educational authorities – the Education and Teacher Training Agency and the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education – are responsible for the professional

6 In Croatia, years of service and continuous professional development requirements vary depending on the career level. For example, a teacher mentor can be promoted to teacher advisor only after 10 years of service in teaching activities, 5 years of which must be as teacher mentor, and 150 hours of continuous professional development acquired in the last 5 years. Moving from teacher advisor to excellent teacher advisor requires 15 years of service, 5 of which as Teacher Advisor, and 200 hours of continuous professional development acquired in the last 5 years. In all cases, teachers must also show they have achieved the learning outcomes defined by the framework of the national standard for qualifications for teachers in primary and secondary schools. Evaluation criteria also vary depending on the career level (Eurydice, 2021, p. 52; Ordinance on the Promotion of Teachers, Professional Associates and Principals in Primary and Secondary Schools and Student Dormitories, 2021).

7 Exceptionally, an employee is entitled to paid leave of up to 15 working days per year for professional seminars and consultations organised by the Ministry, the Education and Teacher Training Agency, the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education or the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes to which teacher has been sent by the employer (Eurydice, 2021, p. 96).

development of public school teachers. The Education and Teacher Training Agency is a public institution at the centre of professional development activities for educational workers which strives to stand out with its offer and diverse support for their professional development. Senior advisors of the Agency monitor the work of educational staff and organise professional training at the: a) state level; b) inter-county level; and c) county level (through the heads of county expert councils) and target groups: all educational workers (teachers, professional associates, principals). In addition, teacher organisations, the civic sector, private institutions and tertiary education institutions provide for the professional development of public school teachers. When organised by national educational authorities, trainers are employed directly by the respective authority. Most of them do not possess teacher competencies in adult education or training methodology (World Bank, 2015; see also Matešić et al., 2023). However, the Strategy of Education, Science, and Technology (2014) highlighted quality assurance and professional development for teacher educators as an important goal. Professional trainings organised by agencies are free of charge. In practice, professional development is funded by local educational authorities, schools, individual teachers, and teacher organisations (World Bank, 2015).

Lectures, courses, workshops, regular education conferences or seminars, qualification programmes, participation in teacher and/or school networks, mentoring and coaching, as well as peer observations are considered as professional development for public school teachers in Croatia. Still, school visits and research activities are currently formally not part of such development (World Bank, 2015), even though their advantages for teachers' professional development have been recognised (e.g., Vekić-Kljaić & Lučić, 2021).

Official recommendations have also been issued regarding the professional development content for primary and secondary public school teachers. Topics of professional development activities for strengthening and developing the SEDA competencies of educational workers include developing empathy, strengthening social and emotional competencies, communication skills, assertiveness, problem-solving strategies, stress at work and coping with stress, conflict situations, communication skills, motivating teachers for change, critical thinking, respecting diversity, establishing and maintaining stimulating interpersonal relationships etc. The quantity and diversity of the topics on offer is considerably higher in the sets of interdisciplinary and humanist areas, yet in almost every area these topics are covered and continuity depends on the particular needs expressed (Education and Teacher Training Agency's internal evidence).

In previous years, many topics related to SEDA competencies were offered and addressed in the professional training framework organised by the Education and Teacher Training Agency, such as: How to prevent stress and burnout?; Experiential practice of mindfulness and kindness to yourself; Expe-

riential practice of mental resilience for life's joy; Emotional competence and stress in the teaching profession etc., and also available to teachers in 2024: Communication – an important factor in the professional work of teachers; Quality communication as a prerequisite for the quality work of teachers; Communication, emotional and social skills of mentors; What drives teachers and where do they draw their strength from; Development of teachers' emotional resilience and mental health; Mindfulness and coping with stress in everyday school life; Are you fine? (burnout prevention) (Education and Teacher Training Agency, 2024a).

Continuous professional programmes in the area of SEDA competencies of students and teachers are also offered by some faculties. For example, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek (2020) has developed a lifelong learning programme entitled Emotional learning in upbringing and education. The programme is offered as the continuous professional development of teachers for improving their own and/or students' social and emotional competencies. The Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka (2020) has developed a continuous professional development programme entitled Socio-emotional competencies in health promotion in the school environment. Its main aim is to acquaint participants with basic knowledge about social-emotional development programmes needed for understanding risk and protective factors in adolescent development. The programme is dedicated to teachers and other professional workers in schools and other public institutions.

Following the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology (Ministry of Science and Education, 2014), a comprehensive curriculum reform was implemented in primary and secondary schools in Croatia. In the first phases of the comprehensive curriculum reform, the problem concerning the socio-emotional competencies of teachers as well as competencies related to learning validation was recognised along with the need to strengthen teachers' competencies (e.g., Comprehensive Curricula Reform, 2016). In the new curriculum that entered into force in 2018 and 2019, social and emotional skills of students are reflected in several subject curricula (e.g., Nature, Biology) and cross-curricular topics (e.g., Civic and Citizenship Education, Personal and Social Development, Health). In 2018 and 2019, around 40,000 teachers were trained (online and offline) to apply new teaching and evaluation methods, as well as to implement new curricula, including those related to students' social and emotional development (School for Life, 2019).

Other Policies and Projects Supporting Teachers' SEDA Competencies

The Education and Teacher Training Agency (2024b) continuously monitors the work of educational staff and is well informed about their work and needs. The support for teachers' professional development is ensured through expert conferences, individual expert-advisory visits, as well as supervision activities provided on the county, inter-school or school level. From the supervision activities conducted thus far, it is evident that the development and improvement of teachers' SEDA competencies were their focus. For example, the development of personal competencies refers to recognising and understanding teachers' feelings, thoughts, behaviour and needs and their effect on others, acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses through self-assessment, improving the management of personal resources, spotting and changing counterproductive behaviour, developing responsibility for their actions, and recognising to represent oneself others' limits of responsibility while respecting others'. Social competencies relate to understanding the feelings, thoughts, behaviours and needs of others and providing them with appropriate support, improving their communication skills, developing the skill of giving and receiving information without judging a person, and the ability to adapt to new circumstances. Professional competencies relate to noticing, understanding and respecting different learning styles, abilities and potentials, understanding group dynamics, developing group management skills, monitoring and evaluating individual and group work, analysing procedures and circumstances, and making effective decisions.

On the school level, SEDA competencies can be promoted within school curricula – a school policy document, which in line with the Primary and Secondary Education Act (2008) aims at broadening and adjusting national policy recommendations to specific needs of relevant (immediate or indirect) stakeholders, namely, students, teachers, parents and local communities. Despite some examples of the promotion of SEDA competencies in school curricula being evident, there are no aggregate data on the national level regarding how many school curricula actually address this topic.

Evidence-based Policies

In Croatia, although policy instruments to monitor teacher performance exist, they have yet to be implemented. Pursuant to the Professional Pedagogical Supervision Act (1997), an expert supervisor should visit each school every 3 years. However, owing to a lack of capacity, this does not often occur in

practice. Expert supervisors mostly visit a school after a claim has been made against a teacher or a teacher seeks a promotion (World Bank, 2015).

In Croatia, participation in internal evaluations is mandatory for all public school teachers, who are evaluated periodically by school principals. The following criteria are applied by school principals to assess a public school teacher's performance: teacher attendance/absenteeism; subject knowledge; compliance with the curriculum; teaching methods; use of homework in the classroom; student assessment methods; teacher–student interactions; students' academic achievement, socio-emotional development, socio-economic background; class participation; and teacher–parent interaction. In addition to classroom observation protocols, self-assessments are used as sources of information as well as assessments by the school principal, students and parents (World Bank, 2015). Some criteria related to interactions and socio-emotional development involve teachers' SEDA competencies. Yet, the lack of concrete operationalisation may result in school principals adopting different practices.

It can be argued that teachers' SEDA competencies in Croatia are not systematically monitored, at the same time as their needs for developing SEDA competencies are not systematically collected. This corresponds with the recognised lack of evidence-based programmes of teachers' professional development in the National Plan for Development of the Education and Training System until 2027 (see the section Ongoing policy debates and reforms) as well as the recognition of the insufficient use of data and modern, effective instruments for evaluating education public policy in Croatia (Eurydice, 2024d). As regards evidence-based education policymaking in Croatia, Kovačič (2022) also reveals that in the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology (Ministry of Science and Education, 2014), despite evidence-based policymaking being seen as an important goal, no elements supporting the implementation of this orientation are evident.

Policy-research Evidence

Like in many European education systems, the TALIS 2018 survey results (OECD, 2019, 2020) have drawn the attention of policymakers in Croatia, The following results were particularly considered. Most Croatian teachers consider that they possess a high level of sense of control and autonomy when it comes to planning teaching and the teaching itself. The majority of teachers, both experienced and new ones (88% and 83%), feel empowered to do their jobs, while the minority of them disagree with this statement completely (12% and 10%). Teachers enjoy their work even though they experience their profession as not valued in society – 90.8% of teachers feel that the teaching profession is not valued. The percentage rises with experience: those with 5 years of teaching

experience or less are twice as likely to view the profession as valued than the more experienced ones (15.4% vs 7.6%) (Bakić, 2023). In what follows, national activities and research findings relevant to teachers' well-being and professional development in the SEDA competencies field and their policy-relevant findings are presented.

The Croatian Institute for Public Health has been running a national health promotion programme "Healthy Living" since 2015, which covers five topics: health and education, health and physical activity, health and nutrition, health and workplace, health and environment. Health education of children and young people involves health literacy and guidance of children and young people, as well as adults in their environment, towards the adoption of proper nutrition and physical activity habits and raising awareness of the importance of preserving physical and mental health and sexually responsible behaviour (Croatian Institute for Public Health, 2022a). To promote the importance of maintaining the mental health of children and young people along with the importance of health literacy among educational professionals in the field of mental health of children and young people, the Croatian Institute for Public Health published a publication (Muslić, 2020) presenting research on the recognition of depression and readiness to provide support and assistance. The publication concludes that educational professionals should be better supported with professional development programmes in the area of supporting students' mental health. Nevertheless, no specific attention is dedicated to the educational professionals' own mental health, well-being, and SEDA competencies. The Croatian Institute for Public Health (2022b) offers such a programme for teachers entitled PoMoZi Da, which targets the mental health literacy of educational workers in the area of the mental health of children and young people.

Certain research in Croatia has looked at teachers' social reputation and status in society. The study by Šteh et al. (2019) reveals that 85.6% of participating teachers[8] in Croatia agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The low reputation of the teaching profession impacts my job satisfaction", 58.1% strongly agreed and 30.2% agreed with the statement "In the teaching profession, salaries are lower than in other equally demanding jobs with an equal degree of education", 41% strongly agreed and agreed with the statement "The media usually portray teachers in a negative light", 53.9% strongly agreed and agreed with the statement "The teaching profession enjoys a low reputation in society", 47.2% partly agreed with the statement "The teaching profession provides a regular income and financial independence", 35.9% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement "Parents respect teachers" and 24.4% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement "Pupils respect teachers". Similar

8 Between 1,076 and 1,061 teachers responded to the particular statements.

findings are shown in Kadum et al. (2007), Maršić (2007) and Radeka and Sorić (2006), indicating that the low perceived social status of teachers in society is a longer-lasting issue in Croatia.

Based on qualitative research of findings obtained via focus group discussions ($N = 29$) and semi-structured interviews ($N = 25$), Slišković et al. (2017) studied teachers' "perception of their profession, the difficulties they have faced in their work, and the sources of their positive and negative work attitudes". The results reveal that participating teachers "experience their profession as demanding and underestimated". The difficulties they face are summarised as "student-related, team-work-related, parent-related and education system-related". The authors conclude that while training and support in coping with adverse characteristics of the working environment is needed, improving the working conditions is even more important.

Research by Reić Ercegovac et al. (2009), conducted on a sample of 205 primary and secondary school teachers in Croatia, showed that teachers' emotional competence as well as some aspects of emotional regulation contribute significantly to job satisfaction, more positive attitudes to students as well as more efficient coping with stressors. They conclude that it is necessary to make teachers aware of the importance of emotional competencies, and to continuously work on developing them both for their personal well-being and for the well-being of the students as well as the quality of the entire educational process.

In a study conducted within the Erasmus+ KA3 policy experimentation project Promoting Mental Health in Schools (PROMEHS), which addresses the mental health needs of teachers, Tatalović Vorkapić et al. (2023) demonstrated the positive outcomes of the 16-hour teachers' training in the field of social and emotional competencies in terms of teachers' higher levels of self-efficacy, resilience, and socio-emotional competencies, which the authors state reveal the strong need for programme sustainability in schools in Croatia.

Burić et al. (2019) used a sample of 941 school teachers to test "the reciprocal relationships between teacher burnout, psychopathological symptoms, and negative student-related emotions" and explore "the protective role of resilience in these aspects of teachers' psychological well-being". The results expose "the central and detrimental role of burnout in explaining teachers' psychological well-being both at work and in life in general". They implicate the importance of (systemic) support in reducing teachers' burnout levels and therefore preserving their mental health and consequently less negative responses towards their students. Optimising structural job demands and resources and supervising teachers to help them to more successfully cope with their job demands are proposed as school-level policy measures in this respect.

Research by Burić et al. (2021) on a large sample of Croatian teachers ($N = 2{,}002$) employed on various educational levels (i.e., elementary, middle,

high school) show that the "profiles of teachers who dominantly rely on deep-acting had the most adaptive patterns of analysed outcomes, while profiles of teachers who reported higher levels of hiding feelings, regardless the level of deep acting, exhibited less desirable levels of positive affect, self-efficacy, work engagement, and job satisfaction". Building on the findings, Burić et al. (2021) suggest several measures to support the teachers' (and in turn also students') well-being: a) to train pre-service and in-service teachers on how to use deep acting or reappraisal strategies to regulate emotions experienced at work; b) to raise teacher awareness of the potentially adverse effects of surface acting, and especially suppression, to minimise its use in classrooms; and c) to introduce mindfulness-based interventions, which may help reduce suppression as an emotion-regulation strategy and identifying healthier ways to promote and support teachers' authentic emotions.

Tatalović Vorkapić and Peloza (2017) considered a sample of 103 preschool teachers and 117 primary school teachers while exploring personality traits and well-being among preschool and primary school teachers in Croatia. The results show that personality traits were positively associated with life satisfaction, happiness and optimism. Emotional stability was identified as a significant predictor of teachers' well-being. The authors argue that "the findings highlight the importance of teachers' personality traits and their well-being for the quality of their work with children".

A monograph (Kalin & Čepić, 2019) investigated the experiences and attitudes of teachers in Croatia and Slovenia to professional development and status and their personality and transversal competencies in the fields of self-regulation, inclusion and sustainable development. One of the results of the study suggests that teachers possessing high levels of extraversion,[9] conscientiousness, comfort, emotional stability and openness to experience also show significantly higher levels of self-assessment of professional competencies. This led the authors to conclude that the personality of a teacher is a significant determinant and correlative of their professional competence. Transversal competencies or key competencies of lifelong learning do not exist as a stand-alone area but cross the boundaries of the areas concerned and appear as transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary and inter-subject.

Using a sample of 171 elementary school subject teachers, Gradišek et al. (2020) investigated teachers' orientations to work (as a job, a career, and a calling) and their well-being for different stages in teachers' professional development. The results showed the presence of a calling orientation to work and its positive relationship to job and life satisfaction. They conclude that

9 For insights on the importance of promoting both extraversion and introversion perspectives in the educational process, see Cefai et al. (2018, p. 47).

teachers' sense of a calling should be supported by stimulating teachers towards active professional goal-setting and enabling them to interact with other teachers (e.g., in the intervision of study groups) and enable them to identify their work as meaningful and important. Among school-level factors, they mention enabling teachers' professional autonomy by school management as important. They also recognise the societal factors supporting teachers in this regard as crucial.

Brust Nemet and Velki (2016) confirmed the link between teachers' pedagogical, social and emotional competencies and a positive school culture. The study was conducted among 696 teachers in 30 primary schools in the Slavonia region. The authors suggest the systematic development of teachers' pedagogical, social and emotional competencies during initial and continuous professional development and point out the important need for continuous pedagogical and psychological training of university professors and other teachers' educators in this respect. The importance of the willingness, commitment and support of different national stakeholders is also noted.

Based on a document analysis of social and emotional learning in education and care in Croatia according to the CASEL framework, Ljubetić and Maglica (2020, p. 650) conclude that "there is no systematic approach in the implementation of the social-emotional learning in Croatia, and the practice of it is not yet structured and comprehensive and occurs rather occasionally and spontaneously". They further expose that there is no information available in Croatia concerning whether and how much educational staff has been trained in social and emotional learning (ibid., p. 652). However, based on a literature review they recognise that to successfully ensure students' social and emotional learning teachers need professional development in the field.

With the support of the Croatian Science Foundation, the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb (2024) is conducting a scientific research project on the role of personality, motivation and socio-emotional competencies in early-career teachers' occupational well-being. The overarching aim guiding this study is to explore the relationship between early-career teachers' affective-motivational characteristics and their occupational well-being. The research is in progress.

Recent Policy Debates and Ongoing Reforms

The Croatian EU Presidency Conference on Teachers and Trainers for the Future: Towards the 'New Normal' in 2020, where, among others, the Croatian Minister of Education stressed that the political focus of the EU should be on teachers' career development and how to foster the well-being of teachers, could be understood as a sign that teachers' well-being is also high on the national political agenda in Croatia (ETUCE, 2020).

In 2021, simultaneous to the COVID-19 pandemic, Croatia and Croatian schools were affected by an earthquake. The Ombudsperson for Children initiated two debates in this regard. The first was held on 8 February 2021 at the Ministry of Science and Education. The extremely negative impact of earthquakes on children's mental health and well-being was discussed (Ombudsman for Children, 2021). On 29 June 2021, on the initiative of the Ombudsperson for Children the Croatian Parliament held a joint thematic meeting of the Committee on Education, Science and Culture and the Committee on Family, Youth and Sport dedicated to the protection of children's mental health in the context of the coronavirus pandemic to find an urgent and quality response to the changed needs of children in the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic and earthquakes. In both debates, the ombudsman stressed the need to raise the level of mental health literacy among educational professionals in the field of mental health of children and young people so as to enable them to better identify and cope with the mental health problems of their students and to know what to do and how to help a child in such a situation.

The most recent challenges and debates in the Croatian educational system also relate to the teaching profession (Bakić, 2023), notably the lack of systematic educational policy measures needed to attract and retain the best candidates for the educational profession. These challenges mostly concern the teacher shortages in certain subject areas such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and also the lack of teachers in lower secondary and upper secondary schools in remote and depopulated areas (almost 15% of primary school maths teachers and 14% of physics teachers are qualified for other subjects, not the ones they are teaching). Inadequate qualifications of teachers are most prevalent in underdeveloped local self-government units, which are generally associated with a lower overall educational structure of the population, further reducing the chances of providing a quality education for the children in these units. More psychologists, speech therapists and other support staff are also needed in school education. The Ombudsman for Children recommended that they should be provided to the schools in need, at least in the form of mobile teams covering several schools (Bakić, 2023).

The policy responses related to the presented challenges of the teaching profession in Croatia are (Bakić, 2023; see also Eurydice, 2024d):

a) To prepare a programme to attract high-quality candidates to the teaching profession and to motivate and retain the existing staff (along with continuous work on making the teaching profession more attractive, e.g., a more competitive selection process, better salaries and/or benefits, paid quality professional development, career advancement opportunities).
b) To improve professional development models for teachers, expert associates, and principals.

c) To implement continuous professional development on various levels in the following areas: familiarisation with subjects, achievement of learning outcomes, skill management in learning how to learn and supporting the development of problem-solving skills, support for inclusive practices, autonomy in teaching and learning assessment, professional guidance, and effective collaboration.
d) A programme awarding scholarships to students in STEM and information and communication technology areas to increase the number of graduates in STEM teaching study programmes. By awarding direct financial support, i.e., scholarships, it is envisioned that students will be motivated to choose study programmes in STEM teaching study programmes.

Further, the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia (2023a, b) adopted the National Plan for Development of the Education and Training System until 2027 and the accompanying Action Plan for implementation of the National Plan for the Period until 2024. The National Plan defines the implementation of the strategic goal and priority areas of public policies for the education sector from the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030 (Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2021).

The National Plan for Development of the Education and Training System until 2027 (Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, 2023a) states that even though free professional training organised by competent agencies is available to Croatian teachers, the information is publicly available and easy to apply for, it is mostly one-time, does not offer enough experiential learning and reflection, and lacks follow-up and support in the practical application of the acquired content. The absence of a long-term strategy for permanent professional development and the inconsistency of the system of initial teacher education, internships and professional development, coupled with the insufficient involvement of universities in professional development programmes, are seen as obstacles to improving the quality and effectiveness of educational work. The absence of effective coordination between agencies responsible for professional development and the lack of systematic monitoring and data collection at the national level on the professional development of teachers prevent the systematic implementation of needs analysis and long-term planning of professional development on the individual and institutional levels. There are in addition no quality assurance procedures for continuing professional development programmes. Improving the quality of the mentoring system during the internship period, connecting the permanent professional development of teachers and the competency standard and the teacher licensing system are identified as prerequisites for directing the professional development of teachers towards their permanent professional development and improving the quality and efficiency of their immediate educational work.

The National Plan also exposes that Croatia does not have an established national standard in place for teacher qualifications, even though they were a priority of curriculum reform. Although the Framework of national qualification standards for teachers in primary and secondary schools (2016) was drawn up in the form of recommendations, no progress has been made regarding the implementation of the standards themselves.

The strategy (p. 5), as the fourth of six challenges in basic education, exposes the lack of systematic educational policy measures related to attracting and retaining the best educational workers in the profession, and for strengthening and professionalising it, systematic and innovative professional development, and raising their social reputation. As specific objectives with associated outcome indicators, descriptions and associated measures for implementation in this regard, it lists measure 2.4: To improve the working conditions of teachers, teachers and professional associates, to increase the attractiveness of the profession and to enrich the possibilities of professional development. As part of this measure, it is planned to systematise the activities and information related to the working conditions of teachers, teachers and professional associates to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of work, improve working conditions, and improve professional development. Models of the professional development of teachers are planned to be considered and improved. The professional development of counsellors is also planned to be considered, along with the improvement of work and more efficient use of the capacities of bodies and institutions in the education system to improve the professional development of teachers. It is also planned that the model of the internship programme will be considered and tested as part of the professional development of teachers at the beginning of their teaching careers. A proposal for a programme to attract high-quality candidates to the teaching profession and to motivate and retain existing staff will be created, together with continuous work on increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession to make it more appealing for high-quality candidates (e.g., a more competitive selection process, better salaries and/or benefits, paid quality professional development, career advancement opportunities etc.).

In the Action Plan (Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, 2023b, p. 17), the following results are planned for realisation of the measure: a) development and adoption of the national programme for attracting and retaining teachers; b) drawing up and adoption of the national programme for the professional development of teachers and professional staff; c) development and adoption of a national programme for the introduction of novice teachers into the education system with a system of supervision and a tested implementation model; and d) an increased number of teachers and professional staff included in various professional training programmes.

The Whole-Day School (WDS) experimental project was introduced in Croatia as well. It responds to expressed needs and challenges, which show that "it is clear that in the existing framework and work model, principals, teachers, and expert associates face the issue of reduced real opportunities for organisation and implementation of the expected forms of educational work that would help them respond to the needs of increasing average achievements and reducing differences between groups of students" (Ministry of Science and Education, 2023c, p. 4). It is believed that the experimental programme will also impact "the improvement of the professional, social, and financial status of teachers, expert associates, and school principals" (ibid., p. 10). The project is supported with EU funding through which infrastructural investments and new curricula are to be mainly financed. Planned increases in teachers' salaries are planned to be financed from the state budget.

Conclusions

The chapter shows that Croatia, like most other EU countries, faces several challenges related to the teaching profession, including teachers' well-being. Although several examples of supporting the development of teachers' SEDA competencies are identified in their initial and continuous professional development, the field is not systemically arranged in a way that will ensure every teacher enhances their SEDA competencies during their study and/or career. However, the current National Plan for Development of the Education and Training System until 2027 and the accompanying Action Plan for implementation of the National Plan for the Period until 2024 (Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, 2023a, b) recognise the deficiencies and challenges of the existing system and teachers' professional development and plan several measures in the field. The research findings, and their policy implications presented in this chapter along with the HAND:ET project's results (Kozina, 2024), demonstrate the important need for systemic support to teachers' SEDA competencies development for teachers' occupational and personal well-being as well as several student outcomes. Taking them into consideration in the planned measures of improving teachers' professional development will not only help with realising the strategic goals but also add to evidence-based policy-making in the field.

References

Act on Salaries in Public Services [Zakon o plaćama u državnoj službi i javnim službama] (2023). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2023_12_155_2359.html

Aderibigbe, S. A., Holland, E., Marušić, I., & Shanks, R. (2022). A comparative study of barriers to mentoring student and new teachers, *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 30*(3), 355–376. https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2022.2070995

Bakić, H. (2023). Croatian national policy and planned reforms regard the teacher profession in general. Presentation at the HAND:ET project meeting 6. Lisbon, 7.11.2023. Internal document.

Brust Nemet, M., & Velki, T. (2016). The Social, Emotional and Educational Competences of Teachers as Predictors of Various Aspects of the School Culture. *Croatian Journal of Education, 18*(4), 1087–1119. https://doi.org/10.15516/cje.v18i4.2006

Burai, R., & Bušljeta Kardum, R. (2022). An analysis of learning outcomes achieved through pedagogical competencies acquisition programme in the Republic of Croatia. *International Journal of Instruction, 15*(2), 641–658. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.15235a

Burić, I., Kim, L. E., & Hodis, F. (2021). Emotional labor profiles among teachers: Associations with positive affective, motivational, and well-being factors. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 113*(6), 1227–1243. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000654

Burić, I., Slišković, A., & Penezić, Z. (2019). Understanding teacher well-being: a cross-lagged analysis of burnout, negative student-related emotions, psychopathological symptoms, and resilience. *Educational Psychology, 39*(9), 1136–1155. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2019.1577952

Cefai, C., Bartolo, P. A., Cavioni, V., & Downes, P. (2018). *Strengthening social and emotional education as a core curricular area across the EU. A review of the international evidence, NESET II report.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c7fae112-1529-11e8-9253-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

Collie, R. J. (2017). Teachers' social and emotional competence: links with social and emotional learning and positive workplace outcomes. In E. Frydenberg, A. Martin & R. Collie (Eds.), *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific* (pp. 167–184). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3394-0_9

Comprehensive Curricula Reform [Cjelovita kurikularna reforma] (2016). *Stručna i javna rasprava o kurikularnim dokumentima* [Professional and public discussion on curriculum documents]. http://www.kurikulum.hr/strucna-javna-rasprava/

Croatian Institute for Public Health [Hrvatski zavod za javno zdravstvo] (2022a). *Živjeti zdravo* [Healthy Leaving]. https://zivjetizdravo.eu/

Croatian Institute for Public Health [Hrvatski zavod za javno zdravstvo] (2022b). *Edukativni program PoMoZi Da – program mentalnozdravstvenog opismenjavanja odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika u području mentalnog zdravlja djece i mladih* [PoMoZi Da educational program – program of mental health literacy for educational workers in the field of mental health of children and young people]. https://zivjetizdravo.eu/2022/01/21/edukativni-program-pomozi-da-program-

mentalnozdravstvenog-opismenjavanja-odgojno-obrazovnih-djelatnika-u-podrucju-mentalnog-zdravlja-djece-i-mladih/

Domović, V., & Vizek Vidović, V. (2010). Developing a quality culture in initial teacher education in Croatia. In B. Hudson, P. Zgaga, & B. Astrand (Eds.), *Advancing quality cultures for teacher education in Europe* (pp. 105–119). Umea School of Education, Umea University.

Education and Teacher Training Agency [Agencija za odgoj i obrazovanje] (2024a). *Supervizija* [Supervision]. https://www.azoo.hr/pretraga/page/5/?pojam=supervizija

Education and Teacher Training Agency [Agencija za odgoj i obrazovanje] (2024b). *Katalog stručnih skupova* [Catalog of professional meetings]. https://www.azoo.hr/profesionalni-razvoj/katalog-strucnih-skupova/

ETUCE (European Trade Union Committee for Education) (2020). *Croatian EU Presidency Conference on teachers and trainers for the future: Towards the 'New Normal'*. https://www.csee-etuce.org/en/news/education-policy/3903-croatian-eu-presidency-conference-on-teachers-and-trainers-for-the-future-towards-the-new-normal

Eurydice (2021). *Teachers in Europe, Careers, Development and Well-being. Eurydice Report.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/teachers_in_europe_2020_chapter_6.pdf

Eurydice (2024a). *Croatia. Key Features of the Educational System.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/croatia/overview

Eurydice (2024b). *Croatia. Statistics on educational institutions.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/croatia/statistics-educational-institutions

Eurydice (2024c). *Croatia. Continuing professional development for teachers working in early childhood and school education.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/croatia/continuing-professional-development-teachers-working-early

Eurydice (2024d). *Croatia. Ongoing reforms and policy developments.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/croatia/ongoing-reforms-and-policy-developments

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek [Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta Josipa Juraja Strossmayera u Osijeku] (2020). *Socijalno-emocionalno učenje u odgoju i obrazovanju Elaborat o programu cjeloživotnog učenja* [Social-emotional learning in upbringing and education. Elaboration on lifelong learning program]. https://www.ffos.unios.hr/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Socijalno-emocionalno-ucenje-u-odgoju-i-obrazovanju_23122020.pdf

Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka [Medicinski fakultet Sveučilišta u Rijeci] (2020). *Socio-emocionalne kompetencije u promociji zdravlja u školskom okruženju* [Socio-emotional competences in health promotion in the school environment] https://medri.uniri.hr/obrazovanje/cjelozivotno-obrazovanje/socio-emocionalne-kompetencije-u-promociji-zdravlja-u-skolskom-okruzenju/

Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka [Učiteljski fakultet, Sveučilište u Rijeci] (2023). *Integrirani preddiplomski i diplomski sveučilišni Učiteljski*

studij [Integrated undergraduate and graduate university teacher studies] https://www.ufri.uniri.hr/files/studiji/Integrirani_Uciteljski_studij_izmjene_i_dopune_programa_2022.pdf

Framework of national qualification standards for teachers in primary and secondary schools [Okvir nacionalnoga standarda kvalifikacija za učitelje u osnovnim i srednjim školama] (2016). http://nvoo.hr/?page_id=391

Government of the Republic of Croatia [Vlada Republike Hrvatske] (2021). *Nacionalna razvojna strategija Republike Hrvatske do 2030. godine* [National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030]. https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2021_02_13_230.html

Gradišek, P., Pečjak, S., Rijavec, M., & Jurčec, L. (2020). Teaching as a Calling and Well-Being of Slovenian and Croatian Teachers. *Psihologijske teme, 29*(2), 249–267. https://doi.org/10.31820/pt.29.2.3

Institute for Social Research in Zagreb [Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu] (2024). *The role of personality, motivation and socio-emotional competencies in early-career teachers' occupational well-being*. https://www.idi.hr/teachwell/oprojektu_en.html

Kadum, V., Vidović, S., & Vranković, K. (2007). Gledišta učitelja o svojem statusu, motivaciji i Hrvatskom nacionalnom obrazovnom standard [Teachers' views on their status, motivation and the Croatian national educational standard]. *Napredak – časopis za pedagogijsku teoriju i praksu, 148*(2), 192–209.

Kalin, J., & Čepić, R. (2019). *Poklicni razvoj učiteljev: Ugled in transverzalne kompetence* [Teachers' Professional Development: Status and transversal competencies]. Založba Univerze v Ljubljani. https://doi.org/10.4312/9789610601951

Klemenčič Mirazchiyski, E., Štremfel, U., Alfirević, N., & Najev Čačija, L. (2023). Education policies and reforms in Slovenia and Croatia: shared history, diverging paths. In J. B. Krejsler & L. Moos (Eds.), *School policy reform in Europe: exploring transnational alignments, national particularities and contestations* (pp. 237–259). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-35434-2_11

Kovačič, M. (2022). Kako bi analiza trebala spasiti Hrvatsku: stvaranje politika utemeljeno na dokazima kao cilj hrvatskih javnih politika [How analysis should save Croatia: evidence-based policy making as the goal of Croatian public policies]. *Croatian and Comparative Public Administration, 22*(3), 495–520. https://doi.org/10.31297/hkju.22.3.2

Kozina, A. (Ed.) (2024). *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives.* Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Ljubetić, M., & Maglica, T. (2020). Social and emotional learning in education and care policy in Croatia. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education, 9*(3), 650–659. http://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v9i3.20495

Ljubetić, M., Reić Ercegovac, I., & Maglica, T. (2021). Socijalno i emocionalno učenje – prema novim kurikulima obrazovanja učitelja [Social and emotional learning – towards the new teacher education curriculum]. In *Zbornik radova međunarodna znanstvena konferencija 12. dani osnovnih škola krug od znanosti do učionice* [International Scientific Conference, 12th Days of Primary Schools, A Circle from Science to the Classroom] (pp. 25–39). Sveučilište u Splitu, Filozofski

fakultet [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split]. https://www.ffst.unist.hr/images/50023360/ZBORNIK%20RADOVA%2012.%20Dani%20OS%202021..pdf

Maršić, I. (2007). Koliko su učitelji zadovoljni svojim poslom [How satisfied teachers are with their work]. *Školski vjesnik, 56*(4), 543–554.

Marušić I., Jugović I., & Ivanec T. P. (2017). How Personality Dimensions and Motivation to Teach Shape the Learning Achievement Goals of Croatian Future Teachers. In H. M. G. Watt, P. W. Richardson, & K. Smith (Eds.), *Global Perspectives on Teacher Motivation. Current Perspectives in Social and Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 189–219). Cambridge University Press.

Marušić, I., Pavin Ivanec, T., & Doolan, K. (2011). Mentoriranje u Hrvatskoj – Višestruke perspektive [Mentoring in Croatia – Multiple perspectives]. In V. Vizek Vidović (Ed.), *Učitelji i njihovi mentori* [Teachers and their mentors] (pp. 153–194). Institute for Social Research in Zagreb.

Matešić, M., Sviben, I., & Gotlin, B. (2023). *Piquet Country analysis. Existing Practices for the Recruitment and Professional Development of Continuous Professional Development Educators in Croatia.* https://www.issa.nl/sites/default/files/u327/PIQET_Analysis_Croatia.pdf

Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia (2014). *Strategy of Education, Science, and Technology – New Colours of Knowledge*. https://vlada.gov.hr/strategy-of-education-science-and-technology-nove-boje-znanja/17784

Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia (2023a). *Nacionalni plan razvoja sustava obrazovanja za razdoblje do 2027 godine* [National Plan for Development of Education and Training System until 2027]. https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Obrazovanje/AkcijskiINacionalniPlan/Nacionalni-plan-razvoja-sustava-obrazovanja-za-razdoblje-do-2027.pdf

Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia (2023b). *Akcijski plan za provedbu nacionalnog plana razvoja sustava obrazovanja za razdoblje do 2027. godine, za razdoblje do 2024. godine* [Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Plan for the Period until 2024]. https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Obrazovanje/AkcijskiINacionalniPlan/Akcijski-plan-za-provedbu-Nacionalnog-plana-razvoja-sustava-obrazovanja-za-razdoblje-do-2024.pdf

Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia (2023c). *Experimental Program Primary School as a Whole-Day School. A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System.* https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Engleski/wds/PRIMARY-SCHOOL-AS-A-WHOLE-DAY-SCHOOL-Experimental-program-eng.pdf

Muslić, L. (2020). *Zdravstvena pismenost odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika u području mentalnoga zdravlja djece i mladih, Istraživanje prepoznavanja depresivnosti i spremnosti na pružanje podrške i pomoći* [Health literacy of educational workers in the field of mental health of children and young people, Research on recognition of depression and readiness to providing support and assistance]. https://zivjetizdravo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ZDRAVSTEVNA-PISMENOST.pdf

National Pedagogical Standard for Elementary Education [Državni pedagoški standard osnovnoškolskog sustava odgoja i obrazovanja] (2008). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2008_06_63_2129.html

OECD (2019). *TALIS 2018 results (Volume I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners.* OECD Publishing.

OECD (2020). *TALIS 2018 results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals.* OECD Publishing.

OECD (2023). *PISA 2022 results (Volume I): The state of learning and equity in education.* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/53f23881-en

Ombudsman for Children [Pravobranitelj za djecu] (2021). *Pravobraniteljica poziva na zaštitu mentalnog zdravlja djece u školskom okružju* [The ombudsman calls for the protection of the mental health of children in the school environment]. https://dijete.hr/en/pravobraniteljica-poziva-na-zastitu-mentalnog-zdravlju-djece-i-u-skolskom-okruzju/

Ordinance on taking the first-license examination for teachers and expert associates in the primary and secondary education system [Pravilnik o polaganju stručnog ispita za učitelje i stručne suradnike u sustavu osnovnog i srednjeg obrazovanja] (2003). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2003_05_88_1135.html

Ordinance on the appropriate type of education of teachers and expert associates in primary schools [Pravilnik o odgovarajućoj vrsti obrazovanja učitelja i stručnih suradnika u osnovnoj školi] (2019). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2019_01_6_137.html

Ordinance on the promotion of teachers, professional associates and principals in primary and secondary schools and student dormitories [Pravilnik o napredovanju učitelja, nastavnika, stručnih suradnika i ravnatelja u osnovnim i srednjim školama i učeničkim domovima] (2021). https://www.zakon.hr/cms.htm?id=44746

Ordinance on weekly duties of teachers and expert associates in primary schools [Pravilnik o tjednim radnim obvezama učitelja i stručnih suradnika u osnovnoj školi] (2014). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_03_34_613.html

Primary and Secondary School Education Act [Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi] (2008). https://www.zakon.hr/z/317/Zakon-o-odgoju-i-obrazovanju-u-osnovnoj-i-srednjoj-%C5%A1koli

Professional Pedagogical Supervision Act [Zakon o stručno-pedagoškom nadzoru] (1997). https://www.zakon.hr/z/1841/Zakon-o-stru%C4%8Dno-pedago%C5%A1kom-nadzoru

Radeka, I., & Sorić, I. (2006). Zadovoljstvo poslom i profesionalni status nastavnika [Job satisfaction and professional status of teachers]. *Napredak, 147*(2), 161–177.

Reić Ercegovac, I., Koludrović, M., & Jukić, T. (2009). Emocionalna kompetentnost i stres u nastavničkim zanimanjima [Emotional competence and stress in teaching occupations]. *Zbornik radova filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu, 2/3*, 85–96.

Rulebook on the appropriate type of education for teachers and professional associates in primary schools [Pravilnik o odgovarajućoj vrsti obrazovanja učitelja i stručnih suradnika u osnovnoj školi] (2008). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2019_01_6_137.html

Rulebook on the appropriate type of education for teachers and professional associates in secondary schools [Pravilnik o izmjenama i dopunama pravilnika o stručnoj spremi i pedagoško-psihološkom obrazovanju nastavnika u srednjem školstvu] (1992). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1999_07_80_1437.html

Sablić, M., Škugor, A., & Lesandrić, M. (2023). Teacher Education in Croatia: Reforms and Challenges. In M. Kowalczuk-Walędziak, R. A. Valeeva, M. Sablić & I. Menter (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Teacher Education in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 181–200). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-09515-3_8

Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Oberle, E., Lawor, M. S., Abbott, D., Thomson, K., Oberlander, T. F., & Diamond, A. (2015). Enhancing cognitive and social-emotional development through a simple-to-administer mindfulness-based school program for elementary school children. A randomized controlled trial. *Developmental Psychology, 51*, 52–66.

School for Life [Škola za život] (2019). *Kurikularna reforma od jeseni u svim školama!* [Curricular reform from autumn in all schools!]. https://skolazazivot.hr/kurikularna-reforma-od-jeseni-u-svim-skolama/

Slišković, A., Burić, I., & Macuka, I. (2017). The voice of Croatian elementary school teachers: qualitative analysis of the teachers' perspective on their profession. *Teachers and Teaching, 23*(5), 518–531. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1206521

Šteh, B., Kalin, J., & Čepič, R. (2019). Status of the teacher and the teaching profession: views from within. In J. Kalin & R. Čepić (Eds.), *Poklicni razvoj učiteljev: Ugled in transverzalne kompetence* [Teachers' Professional Development: Status and transversal competencies] (pp. 159–180). Založba Univerze v Ljubljani. https://doi.org/10.4312/9789610601951

Srednja.hr (2019). *Obrazovni štrajk obilježio je 2019. godinu, donosimo pregled naših 230 tekstova* [The educational strike marked the year 2019, we present an overview of our 230 texts]. https://www.srednja.hr/novosti/obrazovni-strajk-obiljezio-je-2019-godinu-donosimo-pregled-nasih-230-tekstova/

Tatalović Vorkapić, S., Colomeischi, A. A., & Onaghi, V. (2023). PROMEHS Teachers' Training: The effect of PROMEHS Curriculum on Teachers' Mental Health in Croatia and Romania. *Revista Romaneasca Pentru Educatie Multidimensionala, 15*(3), 400–418. https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/15.3/773

Tatalović Vorkapić, S., & Peloza, I. (2017). Exploring personality traits and well-being among pre-school and primary school teachers in Croatia. *Current Issues in Personality Psychology, 5*(1), 21–31. https://doi.org/10.5114/cipp.2017.65830

Vekić-Kljaić, V., & Lučić, J. (2021). Reflective Practice towards Professional Development of Teachers. *Pedagoška Obzorja, 36*(3–4), 55–68.

World Bank (2015). Republic of Croatia, Teachers SABER country report. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/466501520628402758/pdf/124165-WP-PUBLIC-SABER-Teachers-Croatia-Country-Report-2015.pdf

Žiljak, T., & Baketa, N. (2019). Education Policy in Croatia. In Z. Petak & K. Kotarski (Eds.), *Policymaking at the European periphery. The Case of Croatia* (pp. 265–283). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73582-5

Chapter 5
Perspectives from Portugal

Gina Tomé[1, 2, 5], *Inês Camacho*[1, 2, 3], *Marta Reis*[1, 2], *Cátia Branquinho*[1, 2, 3], *Pascoal Amaral*[4], *Catarina Noronha*[2] & *Margarida Gaspar de Matos*[1, 2, 3]

Abstract

The requirements to become a teacher in Portugal vary depending on the level of education and the specific area in which teaching is to be carried out. Currently, education in Portugal is experiencing great difficulties, there is a shortage of teachers, teachers are unmotivated, tired and have various problems that affect their well-being. 2023 was a difficult year, with several strikes that hampered students' learning and had a major impact on teachers' well-being. The government is trying to change the situation with a range of measures aimed especially at improving teachers' working conditions and promoting their well-being. However, a number of changes are still needed to achieve the desired change. One of the urgent and necessary measures, identified in several national studies, is the promotion of activities that foster teachers' socio-emotional competencies. Such measures are today still scarce. The chapter aims to address the state of education in Portugal and present the measures planned to promote the well-being of Portuguese teachers.

Keywords: Teachers' Socio-emotional Competencies; Teachers' Well-being; Portuguese Teachers' Professional Development

Introduction to Teacher Professional Development in the Country

Nowadays, the environment of Portuguese schools and the professional context of teaching have created working conditions for teachers that make their daily professional and personal lives unduly pressurised. In recent decades, legislative measures have decisively added to the rise in precarious work among Portuguese teachers, with a direct negative impact on their salaries (Piozevan

1 ISAMB, University of Lisbon
2 Aventura Social Team
3 Faculty of Human Sciences of the Catholic University of Portugal
4 Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon
5 European University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Lisbon

& Dal Ri, 2018). Among the main difficulties are excessive workloads, considerable bureaucratic burdens, low salaries, poor working conditions for new teachers, professional instability, difficulties and/or impossibility of career progression, excessive student indiscipline and relational difficulties at work. All of these factors are leading to the gradual deterioration of teachers' health, dissatisfaction with their work, and increased difficulty in teaching (Matos et al., 2022). In 2023, Portuguese teachers strongly expressed their discontent and promoted regular strikes and weekly public protests (CGTP-IN, 2023). This has severely affected the daily life of Portuguese schools and damaged educational processes. Despite the progress observed in some Portuguese educational indicators such as the early school leaving rate or proportion of young people with a higher education (XXII Constitutional Government of Portugal, 2022), the need for investment in Portuguese education is evident, notably in teacher training and teachers' working conditions.

The low investment in the work and training of teachers means that today there are serious problems with the number of teachers available since the generational transition has not been guaranteed by the Portuguese educational system. At the moment, and due to the unattractive working conditions for young people, the present number of newly trained teachers has fallen and does not satisfy market needs (Neves, 2020). In Portugal, the teaching staff is ageing and in recent years the number of teachers reaching retirement age has grown significantly. Over the next decade, an even greater rise in the number of teachers entering retirement age is expected (Thomas Dotta & Lopes, 2021). The combination of these factors creates a considerable reduction in the number of available teachers, forms training gaps in certain scientific areas because students are without teachers in some courses for an entire school year, increases the number of students per class and, in turn, ratchets up the professional pressure on teachers in terms of managing the pedagogical processes – technical and affective – that take place in the classroom.

These factors add to teachers' stress levels and, combined with the multiple tasks they perform and the challenges inherent in the profession (pressure from parents, pressure from the community, multitasking, the classroom environment, the workplace environment), has seen teachers identified in many studies as a population at high risk of developing mental health problems (Parker et al., 2012).

Considering the socio-emotional development of students and teachers, the interventions and programmes implemented have been the outcome of non-universal initiatives. Thus, investment is lacking in the physical and human resources that support the social and emotional activity of teachers in general, while there is a lack of a socio-emotional learning plan which prepares students for the professional market and teachers for the difficulties of work and teaching.

Throughout this chapter, we review the literature on teachers' working conditions and professional access in Portugal. The aim of the chapter is to describe the actions and public policies directed at enhancing teachers' socio-emotional competencies in Portugal and to emphasise their significance for their well-being.

The chapter provides a brief introduction to the professional development of teachers in Portugal, before presenting an overview of public policies that support initiatives aimed at promoting socio-emotional competencies in teachers. This is followed by a description of some national projects and proposals for the future.

Initial Professional Development

The initial teacher training programme for educators in preschool, primary and secondary education leads to the attainment of a teaching qualification corresponding to a specific educational level. The training is designed to equip candidates with foundational scientific, technical and pedagogical skills, along with knowledge applicable to teaching in the following domains: i) professional and ethical aspects; ii) facilitating teaching and learning, fostering participation in school life and community relationships; and iii) encouraging lifelong learning.

Presently, according to Decree-Law (79/2014), a professional teaching qualification is mandatory for teaching positions in public, private and cooperative educational establishments providing preschool, primary and secondary education, including specialised programmes in music and dance artistic education.

Consistent with the principles adopted as part of amendments to the Education Act in 1997, all teachers are required to hold a master's degree at the same qualification level. Further, as outlined in Ordinance (212/2009), teachers recruited for special education purposes must hold a teaching qualification from any other recruitment group, supplemented by specialised training in the field of special education, as outlined by the respective legal framework (Eurydice, 2023a).

Continuous Professional Development

Continuing education and specialised training are two avenues that contribute to the ongoing professional development of teachers. Continuing education is both a right and a responsibility, with the goal of enhancing and refreshing teachers' professional knowledge and competencies, promoting professional mobility, and facilitating career advancement. Specialised training is charac-

terised as supplementary instruction enabling teachers to acquire qualifications in various educational roles, assisting schools in efficient operation, and fostering the education system's overall development (Eurydice, 2023b). Various types of continuing education exist: training courses, training workshops, study circles, short courses or, on the request of the Continuing Education Scientific-Pedagogical Council, internships and projects.

Continuing education is organised by different training bodies: higher education institutions; municipal and intermunicipal-based school (and kindergarten) associations' training centres; not-for-profit professional or scientific association training centres; Ministry of Education central services in areas considered important for developing the education system and other institutions whose intervention is deemed useful in this domain, and which are public, private or cooperative non-profit entities accredited for this purpose.

The accreditation of training bodies, trainers, and training courses falls under the purview of the Scientific-Pedagogical Council for Continuing Training (CCPFC). To support career development and advancement, teachers must participate in and successfully complete continuing education or specialised training courses, with a minimum duration of 25 hours for scale 5 and 50 hours for the remaining scales.

For the above-mentioned purposes, training is valid if it holds accreditation from the Scientific-Pedagogical Council for Continuing Training, is acknowledged and certified by the training bodies (for short courses) and conducted within the framework of European programmes, provided they have been accredited by the Scientific-Pedagogical Council for Continuing Training.

The School Association Training Centres (CFAE) are responsible for devising an annual or multiannual training plan considering the priorities identified by the associated schools. The continuing education courses outlined in the Centres' training plans undergo a process of accreditation by the Continuing Education Scientific-Pedagogical Council. the School Association Training Centres are empowered to establish collaborative agreements with public, private and cooperative entities to deliver training in areas deemed as priorities.

School leadership training is a key area where training initiatives have followed the Ministry of Education's strategy. Overseen by the Ministry, the Directorate General for School Administration (DGAE) has formed different partnerships and designed training programmes that mainly target top-level school leadership (Eurydice, 2023b).

Basic policy documents regulating teachers' continuous professional development in Portugal do not explicitly or implicitly mention or refer to the development of teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness (SEDA competencies).

Other Policy Measures Supporting SEDA Competencies of Teachers

On the national level, Council Conclusions of 26 November 2009 on the professional development of teachers and school leaders previously identified priorities with regard to teacher training: 1) the promotion of professional values and attitudes; 2) improving teachers' skills; 3) recruitment and selection processes that promote quality education; 4) increasing the quality of Initial Teacher Education; 5) introducing entry programmes for new teachers; 6) providing tutorial support to all teachers; 7) improving the quality and quantity of Continuous Training; 8) school leadership; 9) the assured quality of Teacher Trainers; and 10) enhancements of Teacher Education Systems. Dispatch (779/2019) of 18 January also establishes the continuous training of teachers, accredited by the Scientific-Pedagogical Council for Continuing Training, as a priority.

Moreover, these conclusions offer specific measures and identify concerns regarding the teaching profession. With respect to the support for new teachers, national and international research shows that structured support programmes aimed at all new teachers can help deter individuals abandoning their career as a teacher. Regarding this, Council Conclusions argue that efforts should be made to ensure all new teachers receive support and guidance. Effective school management is essential for promoting a positive environment, providing support for students, parents and administrative and teaching staff. This makes it important to ensure that school leaders are capable of taking on the growing number of roles they acquire, and that school leaders are not overburdened by administrative functions. As concerns teachers in particular, these professionals face a considerable number of demands and complexification of their professional role. It is essential that teachers have access to personal and professional support throughout their career. Although Portugal tries to follow the document's indications, in practice and due to the various difficulties currently associated with teaching careers some of these indications have no official national documents to their use.

Portugal Projects

In Portugal, and building on the importance of promoting socio-emotional skills not only with students but with their families and teachers as well, some studies have been carried out in this area.

The ES'COOL – School Mental Health Promotion Project (ES'COOL project) (Aventura Social Association, 2023) aimed to promote adolescents' mental health through building the capacity of school teachers and school staff. The programme sought to develop personal and social skills and included the pre-

vention of anxiety and depression symptoms, the promotion of resiliency, and self-regulation in adolescents. The ES'COOL training was implemented with teachers from primary and secondary schools (grades 1 to 12), kindergarten and special education teachers covering schools from all the regions of Portugal. Training groups appeared across Portugal, namely in the North, Centre, Lisbon, and Algarve regions. The results showed that after the training was completed the teachers' well-being had increased and they felt better able to identify early signs of ill health in their students. The teachers who participated in the project also reported having more strategies for dealing with certain problems and developing projects to promote mental health in their schools (Tomé et al., 2017; 2018a; 2018b; 2019).

Another study carried out in Portuguese schools is the CRESCER Project (CRESCER, 2023). Classes on the contents, materials and development of the CRESCER programme are taught by a school's own teachers who are given specific training for this, in person and in distance education. The training is carried out in a comprehensive manner so that all education professionals become multiplier agents of socio-emotional learning. The work is initially focused on developing the teaching staff's own skills and followed by a joint reflection concerning how to transmit them to students. The development of the CRESCER project encourages positive transformation throughout the school community, also contributing to the promotion of better citizens, better professionals and the construction of a better society. Via the training in socio-emotional learning, this generates a socio-affective environment in which teachers can achieve full personal and social development. Therefore, the results about different studies clearly indicate it is possible to achieve an improvement in socio-emotional skills and the management of emotions in the improvement of conflict resolution and the promotion of democratic coexistence in schools (CRESCER, 2023).

In Portugal, in the past few years the number of social-emotional learning programmes in educational settings has also risen. An important factor in this increase is the investment made by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (2023) through the "Gulbenkian Academies for Knowledge". Between 2018 and 2021, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation financially supported around 100 projects aimed at promoting key social-emotional skills in children and youth under 25 years of age, including the school-based universal intervention programme "Calmly – Learning to Learn Yourself" (Calmamente—Aprendendo a Aprender-se). Despite the greater investment in school-based social-emotional learning interventions, a lack of knowledge of their effects on children attending Portuguese elementary schools is apparent since experimental studies are scarce (e.g., Coelho et al., 2023; Raimundo et al., 2013).

Evidence-based Evaluation and its Implementation in the Field of Teachers' SEDA Competencies

In Portugal, there is no national, regional or local definition of social, emotional and intercultural learning. The explanations found are based on international scientific literature, notably Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2013) – a process of acquiring and applying the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to identify, understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The first international reference to learning social and emotional competencies, as defined by CASEL, appeared in Portugal only in 2011.

Given that no foundational guidelines exist for the development of teachers' SEDA competencies, there is also no structured monitoring of the measures each school implements. The main results reflecting the work performed in schools can be observed, particularly in two works presented below.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) is an international, large-scale survey of teachers, school leaders and the learning environment in schools. Concerning issues related to the socio-emotional competencies of teachers, the following results are observed (OECD, 2019, 2020):

- in Portugal, 85% of teachers report frequently calming students who are disruptive (OECD average 65%) and 93% report frequently explaining how new and old topics are related (OECD average 84%);
- practices involving student cognitive activation, known to be important for student learning, are less widespread, with about half of teachers across the OECD using these methods. Specifically, in Portugal 45% of teachers report frequently asking students to decide on their own procedures for solving complex tasks, a share that is the same as the average of OECD countries and economies participating in TALIS;
- overall, a vast majority of teachers and school leaders view their colleagues as open to change and their schools as places that have the capacity to adopt innovative practices. In the country, 65% of teachers also report that they and their colleagues support each other with implementing new ideas. This is lower than the average share across the OECD countries and economies participating in TALIS (78%);
- on average, in Portugal 19% of teachers work in classes with at least 10% of students with special needs (i.e., those for whom a special learning need has been formally identified because they are mentally, physically or emotionally disadvantaged), which is below the average of OECD countries and economies participating in TALIS (27%);

- 45% of teachers in the country were trained to teach in mixed-ability settings as part of their formal teacher education or training, while 39% of teachers on average felt prepared to teach in such settings when they finished their studies;
- even though 30% of teachers on average had participated in professional development activities including teaching students with special needs in the 12 months prior to the survey, training to teach special needs students is the professional development topic with the biggest share of teachers reporting a great need for it – 27% in Portugal (compared to 22% across the OECD); and
- on average, 48% of school principals in Portugal report that the delivery of quality instruction in their school is hindered by a shortage of teachers who are competent for teaching students with special needs (compared to 32% across the OECD).

In 2022, Matos and colleagues conducted the "Observatory of Psychological Health and Well-Being: Monitoring and Action" study in national schools. Its aim was to assess and monitor the general psychological health and well-being of school-age children and adolescents (5/6 years to grade 12) and their educators/teachers as a general indicator of the well-being of the School Ecosystem. Another aim was to develop recommendations for action and intervention to promote better psychological health and well-being in educational contexts. With respect to teachers, the results showed (Matos et al., 2022):

- when socio-demographic variables are analysed, a risk profile emerges: alongside the variables associated with well-being, being older and having completed more years of service (which are most likely collinear) appear as a risk for psychological distress. This profile worsens when gender is considered, revealing that the risk of distress appears to be higher for older females with longer years of service. When more than 80% of the participants in the study are female, this situation becomes even more concerning;
- the discrimination between the three groups also showed that higher levels of depressive symptomatology characterised teachers with a higher perceived impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas teachers with a lower perceived impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were characterised by higher well-being and life satisfaction; and
- overall, the study revealed that more than half the teachers reported psychological distress.

These results prompted the Ministry of Education to outline measures to enhance the psychological well-being of teachers in the 2023/2024 school year, notably including training initiatives focused on promoting teacher well-being. The outcomes of these actions will not be known until the end of 2024.

Policy-research Literature on Policy Initiatives Regarding Teachers' SEDA Competencies and their Impact

Both empirical findings as well as psychological and pedagogical theory show that teachers' relational competencies are extremely important for students' chances of developing social/emotionally and cognitively (Kozina, 2020). Moreover, promotion of the self-care of teachers is also important for promoting personal well-being and well-being in the teacher–student relationship.

It is vital that curricular designs in schools include teaching strategies, whether based on the master class or mobilised through virtual learning environments, which encourage students to work in unison, develop socio-emotional skills to handle social situations in the classroom, and appropriately manage social experiences in which the understanding, identification, expression, and adequate regulation of own and other emotions is required.

A basic need of the individual is to feel accepted and appreciated for who they are, to feel they have an important role within their community, to establish bonds of loyalty, commitment, ethics and cooperation; as well as obtaining help in times of need, whether on a personal level or as a recipient to overcome the challenges of daily life.

Cristóvão and collaborators (2023) conducted a study in which they analysed 29 teacher training universities, among which 20 were public universities and 9 were private ones. Analysis of the courses offered in the training programmes for preschool and primary teachers showed that only the two private universities were offering curricular units with Emotional Education content. In their analysis, the authors corroborate the gap in teacher training in the area of socio-emotional competencies in Portugal.

These results support the need to work on teacher training in the area, yet also to promote the socio-emotional competencies of the teachers themselves. The "Psychological Health and Well-Being Observatory: Monitoring and Action" was a collaborative effort between the Directorate-General for Education and Science Statistics, the Directorate-General for Education, the National Programme for Promoting School Success, the Social Adventure Team at the Environmental Health Institute (ISAMB) at the Medicine School, University of Lisbon (scientific coordination), the Order of Portuguese Psychologists, and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. This study was carried out at the request and with the support of the Ministry of Education. Its goal was to assess and monitor the general psychological health and well-being of school-aged children and adolescents (5/6 years to grade 12) and their educators/teachers as a general indicator of the School Ecosystem's well-being. A further purpose was to develop action and intervention recommendations to promote better psychological health and well-being in educational settings (Matos et al., 2022).

The different studies also indicate that positive effects may be achieved directly with the students without the intervention. In addition, the new skills learned by teachers might be used not only with all the students in their current class, but also in the coming years with new cohorts of students, and with other teachers, thereby creating a 'snowball effect' that may enhance the sustainability of the effects of training over time. This circumstance may contribute to the programme's cost-effectiveness (Matos et al., 2022).

Ongoing Policy Debates and Reforms in the Field

As part of the promotion of socio-emotional competencies and mental health in Portuguese schools, the government has created the 23/24+ Plan. The 23|24 School+ Plan, established by Council of Ministers Resolution (80-B/2023), is an extension of the 21|23 School+ Plan for consolidating and recovering from the learning deficits caused by the pandemic crisis (Council of Ministers Resolution, 90/2021). It offers schools specific actions to be implemented in the 2023/2024 school year based on the results and the experience gained.

The structuring of the 23|24 School+ Plan is based on seven domains that encompass various actions to be implemented in primary and secondary education and maintains a multidimensional approach to hindering the pandemic's impacts on schools, including diverse measures to address not merely learning disabilities, but also to recover the emotional, social and mental well-being of students. The seven domains of the plan are: reading and writing, curricular autonomy, educational resources, family, assessment and diagnosis, inclusion and well-being, and supporting educational communities (Council of Ministers Resolution, 80-B/2023).

In the field of Inclusion and Well-being, we find the following actions: specific tutorial support; *social and emotional skills programmes; personal, social and community development plans*; more supported inclusion; Portuguese immersion, and "the fourth period".

As concerns action *personal, social and community development plans,* the goal is: Within the scope of promoting educational success and inclusion, the School Groupings/Non-Grouped Schools design and implement measures mainly in areas like Socio-emotional Intelligence and Personal Development; Family Involvement; Community Involvement; Emerging Literacy; Reading and Writing Literacy and Communication; Multiculturalism and Citizenship; Tutoring and Mentoring; Digital Literacy and Arts, Expressions and Culture (Portuguese Republic, 2023).

Also in 2023, the Ministry of Education, through Directorate-General for Education and Science Statistics (DGEEC), set up the "Observatory of Psychological Health and Well-Being" (OSPBE). The Observatory is run by DGEEC,

scientifically coordinated by Professor Margarida Gaspar de Matos, and has the central objective of collecting and monitoring indicators of psychological health and well-being in Portuguese schools with a view to designing different intervention proposals according to the needs identified (Directorate-General for Education and Science Statistics, 2023; Matos et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Education in Portugal is currently undergoing a significant crisis that calls for substantial changes on the national level. The shortage of teachers and reluctance of young individuals to pursue a career in education pose considerable challenges. Exhaustion among teachers is evident, while various studies demonstrate the high risk of mental health issues within this professional group.

Schools are making commendable efforts to address the situation, especially through initiatives aimed at enhancing the well-being of both students and teachers. However, there is a pressing need for a more organised framework that incorporates training and promotion programmes for socio-emotional skills into national educational initiatives.

While this chapter discusses national and regional initiatives with this objective, it remains imperative to develop additional, more structured activities able to be integrated into nationwide educational plans. These initiatives should extend beyond isolated strategies implemented by certain schools.

References

Aventura Social Association [Avenura Social] (2023). *ES'COOL – Promotion of Mental health in Schools.* https://escool.pt/en/

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (2023). *Gulbenkian Programme for Knowledge.* https://gulbenkian.pt/en/initiatives/knowledge-programme/

CASEL, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2013). *CASEL Guide 2013. Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs. Preschool and Elementary School Edition.* https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED581699.pdf

CGTP-IN, Confederação geral dos trabalhadores portugueses – Intersindical nacional [General Confederation of Portuguese Workers – National Trade Union Confederation] (2023). *Professores: Greve Nacional por distritos termina amanhã em Lisboa* [Teachers: National strike by districts ends tomorrow in Lisbon]. https://www.cgtp.pt/accao-e-luta/18868-professores-greve-nacional-por-distritos-termina-amanha-em-lisboa

Coelho, V., Peixoto, C., Azevedo, H., Machado, F., Soares, M., & Espain, A. (2023). Effects of a Portuguese social-emotional learning program on the competencies

of elementary school students. *Frontiers in Psychology,* Article 16;14:1195746. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1195746

Council of the EU (2009). *Council Conclusions of 26 November 2009 on the professional development of teachers and school leaders* (2009/C 302/04). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:302:0006:0009:EN:PDF

Council of the Ministers Resolution (90/2021) [Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 90/2021] https://files.dre.pt/1s/2021/07/13000/0004500068.pdf

Council of the Ministers Resolution (80-B/2023) [Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 80-B/2023]. https://files.diariodarepublica.pt/1s/2023/07/13802/0000200010.pdf

CRESCER (2023). *Our projects.* https://crescer.org/en/projects/

Cristóvão, A., Valente, S., Rebelo, H., & Ruivo, A. (2023). Emotional education for sustainable development: a curriculum analysis of teacher training in Portugal and Spain. *Frontiers in Education, 8,* Article 1165319. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1165319

Decree-Law No 79/2014 [Decreto-Lei n.º 79/2014] *Aprova o regime jurídico da habilitação profissional para a docência na educação pré-escolar e nos ensinos básico e secundário* [Approves the legal regime for professional qualifications for teaching in pre-school education and basic and secondary education]. https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/decreto-lei/79-2014-25344769

Directorate-General for Education and Science Statistics [Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência] (2023). *Observatório da Saúde Psicológica e do Bem-estar* [Observatory of Psychological Health and Well-Being]. https://www. dgeec . medu . pt / pag / 6499de939eff36f307f07bdc / 65524fc0455255473193d2bd / 65524fd6455255473193d2be

Dispatch nº 779/2019 [Despacho nº 779/2019] *Define as prioridades de formação contínua dos docentes, bem como a formação que se considera abrangida na dimensão científica e pedagógica* [Defining the priorities for the continuous training of teachers, as well as the training that is considered to be covered in the scientific and pedagogical dimension]. https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/despacho/779-2019-117982365

Eurydice (2023a). *Initial education for teachers working in early childhood and school education.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/portugal/initial-education-teachers-working-early-childhood-and-school

Eurydice (2023b). *Continuing professional development for teachers working in early childhood and school education.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/portugal/continuing-professional-development-teachers-working-early

Kozina, A. (Ed.) (2020). *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe. Relationships matter.* Verlag Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/volltexte/978-3-339-11406-8.htm

Matos, M. G. de, Branquinho, C., Noronha, C., Moraes, B., Santos, O., et al. (2022). *Observatório de saúde psicológica e bem-estar: Monitorização e ação* [Observatory of psychological health and well-being: Monitoring and action]. Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência, Direção-Geral da Educação, Programa Nacional de Promoção do Sucesso Escolar, Equipa Aventura Social / ISAMB,

Universidade de Lisboa, Ordem dos Psicólogos Portugueses e Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.

Neves, R. (2020). Ser Professor em Portugal: A problemática do acesso à formação/profissão [Being a teacher in Portugal: The problem of access to training/profession]. *Instrumento: Revista de Estudo e Pesquisa em Educação*, *22*(2), 216–230. https://doi.org/10.34019/1984-5499.2020.v22.30715

OECD (2019). *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners.* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en

OECD (2020). *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals.* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/19cf08df-en

Ordinance No 212/2009 [Portaria n.º 212/2009] *Identifica os requisitos que conferem habilitação profissional para a docência nos grupos de recrutamento de educação especial* [Identifies the requirements that attribute professional qualifications for teaching in special education recruitment groups]. https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/portaria/212-2009-602028

Parker, P. D., Martin, A. J., Colmar, S., & Liem, G. A. (2012). Teachers' workplace well-being: Exploring a process model of goal orientation, coping behavior, engagement, and burnout. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *28*(4), 503–513. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.01.001

Piovezan, P. R., & Dal Ri, N. M. (2018). A precarização do trabalho docente em Portugal [The precariousness of teaching work in Portugal]. *Educação Unisinos*, *22*(4), 250–258. https://doi.org/10.4013/edu.2018.224.02

Portuguese Republic [República Portuguesa] (2023). *Escola+ 23/24* [School+ 23/24]. https://escolamais.dge.medu.pt/acoes-especificas/63-planos-de-desenvolvimento-pessoal-social-e-comunitario

Raimundo, R., Marques, P. A., & Lima, M. L. (2013). The effects of a social-emotional learning program on elementary school children: the role of pupils' characteristics. *Psychology in the Schools, 50*(2), 165–180. https://doi-org.nukweb.nuk.uni-lj.si/10.1002/pits.21667

Thomas Dotta, L. T., & Lopes, A. (2021). O ciclo de vida dos professores e a extensão da idade da reforma: Perspetivas de estudo a partir de uma revisão de literatura [The life cycle of teachers and the extension of retirement age: Study perspectives from a literature review]. *Revista Portuguesa de Educação*, *34*(2), 86–106. https://doi.org/10.21814/rpe.18926

Tomé, G., Matos, M. G., Gomes, P., Camacho, I., & Gaspar, T. (2017). Promoção da Saúde Mental nas Escolas – Projeto ES'COOL [Promoting Mental Health in Schools – ES'COOL Project]. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychology, 8*(1), 173–184. https://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/38430/1/ES_COOL.pdf

Tomé, G., Matos, M. G., Camacho, I., Gomes, P., Reis, M., & Branquinho, C. (2018a). Mental health promotion in school context – Validation of the ES'COOL scale for teachers. *Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, 2*, Article 1009. https://doi.org/10.33582/2637–8027/1009

Tomé, G., Matos, M. G., Camacho, I., Simões, C., Reis, M., & Gomes, P. (2018b). Alienation and Health in Adolescents: An Original Evaluation Tool. *Open Access Library Journal,* 5, Article e4183. https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1104183

Tomé, G., Matos, M. G., Camacho, I., & Gomes, P. (2019). Promoting Wellbeing and Mental Health in Adolescents. *Scientific Journal of Neurology*, *1*(1), 2–7. https://www.cientificgroup.com

XXII Constitutional Government of Portugal [XXII Governo da República Portuguesa]. (2022, fevereiro 9). *Portugal abaixo dos 6%: Abandono escolar alcança novo mínimo histórico e cai menos de metade nos últimos seis anos* [Portugal below 6 per cent: School dropout reaches new historic low and falls by less than half in the last six years]. https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/comunicado?i=abandono-escolar-alcanca-novo-minimo-historico-e-cai-para-menos-de-metade-nos-ultimos-seis-anos-

Chapter 6
Perspectives from Slovenia

Urška Štremfel[1], *Aleš Ojsteršek*[2], *Stanka Lunder Verlič*[2] & *Mija Javornik*[2]

Abstract

The chapter presents the systemic support currently available for developing teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness in Slovenia. It demonstrates that in educational legislation they are implicitly related to a safe and supportive learning environment. They are not systematically supported in initial professional development in various pedagogical programmes. Although several continuous professional development programmes in the field can be found in Slovenia, these are mainly shorter-term programmes that teachers attend voluntarily. Several developmental programmes conducted in the last few years in Slovenia were related to a safe and supportive learning environment and developing teachers' diversity awareness. However, research shows that teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness, based on the Teaching and Learning International Survey and rare national research findings, particularly in recent years, in addition to teacher shortages and stress, remain important challenges of the education system in Slovenia. The ongoing educational policy reforms aim to address them by recognising the importance of teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness for the quality of teaching and learning and highlighting the need for systemic support for the development of teachers' relational competencies and the intended renewal of initial and continuous teachers' professional development in this respect.

Keywords: Teachers, Professional Development, Social and Emotional Competencies, Diversity Awareness, Slovenia, Safe and Supportive School Environment

Introduction

Slovenia is a country in Central Europe that became independent in 1991 and has since autonomously developed its education policy. Nonetheless, the Slovenian education system has a much longer history that can be divided into three main periods: a) an imperialistic education policy (until the Second World

1 Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

2 Ministry of Education, Slovenia

War), marked by different interventions and enforced rules. For example, at the beginning of the 19th century parts of Slovenia were included in the Illyrian Provinces of Napoleon I's French Empire and were later under Austro-Hungarian rule; b) supervised education policy (from the Second World War to 1991) in which Slovenia as a socialist republic of Yugoslavia (partially) developed its education policy, while at the same time retaining a policy that was consistent with the typical federal arrangements; and c) sovereign education policy (post-1991), as determined by the development of its own education policy intertwined with Europeanisation and globalisation processes (e.g., Klemenčič Mirazchiyski et al., 2023; Lajh & Štremfel, 2010).

Slovenia is a relatively small country with 2.1 million residents (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2024). In the 2022/2023 school year, 194,562 students were enrolled in 456 basic schools that were implementing integrated primary and lower secondary programmes (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, 2022), with 18,610 teachers being employed in these schools.

Slovenia shares a tradition of teacher education that is typical for Central Europe. From 1870 onwards, teacher colleges conducted a 4-year programme on the secondary level to train primary school teachers. As a rule, teachers in grammar schools had a university degree with a strong subject specialisation. Yet, training in pedagogical practices was almost non-existent. After the Second World War, prospective primary school teachers were trained in 2-year colleges (on the tertiary level), and after around 1985 these colleges merged with universities and began implementing 4-year programmes. Thus, a university degree has become standard for all teachers of both primary and secondary schools. Since 2011, a master's degree is required for all new teachers. Prospective teachers are trained in a parallel and a consecutive model. The successful completion of the professional examination is also a precondition for a tenured teaching position (Peček, 2022; World Bank, 2015).

In recent years, like other European Union countries (Eurydice, 2021; Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7 of this book) Slovenia has faced several challenges regarding the teaching profession, including the need to enhance teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness (SEDA competencies) (for more, see Chapter 2). This led the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, among other policy measures in the area, to support the leading role of Slovenia in European policy experimentation projects in the field. Namely, the first project, HAND in HAND: Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies (A Whole School Approach) (Kozina, 2020), followed by HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges (HAND:ET project) (Kozina, 2024). By pursuing the project's aims of contributing to systemic improvements in the field, the need for an in-depth review of the current state of systemic support available for teachers' SEDA competencies was demonstrated.

This chapter aims to provide the mentioned currently missing insights. It first introduces the legislation and policies regulating the teaching profession in Slovenia. Second, the embodiment of teachers' SEDA competencies development in initial teacher professional development is presented. Third, focus is given to the possibilities for teachers to develop these competencies in continuous professional development. Fourth, the chapter presents other national (developmental) projects dealing with the topic. Fifth, the chapter considers the (missing) monitoring of teachers' SEDA competencies as a basis for developing evidence-based policies in the field. Sixth, policy-relevant research findings in the field are summarised. Seventh, the ongoing policy debates and planned reforms are described. Since in the HAND:ET field trial in Slovenia teachers from primary and lower secondary education (hereinafter: basic schools) were involved, the chapter focuses on a review of systemic support available for their SEDA competencies (and not teachers on other educational levels).

Legislation and Policies Regulating the Teaching Profession

Education, training and working conditions of educational staff at basic schools in Slovenia are specified by common national laws (employment relationships, civil servants, salary system of civil servants etc.) and sector-specific laws. Teachers and preschool teachers on all levels of public education are civil servants. Public servants' salaries, labour relations and retirement are specified in a single national framework. The Employment Relationships Act (2013) details employment, concluding and terminating contracts, a single 40-hour weekly workload, types and forms of labour relations, payments, holidays, and so on. Individual rights from labour relations are subject to negotiations between the government and unions and are regulated by collective agreements, that is, in the field of education by the Collective Agreement for the Education Sector in the Republic of Slovenia (1994).

In Slovenia, a 40-hour working week is in place (Employment Relationships Act of 2013). Primary school teachers are expected to teach 22–25 hours per week (Rules on Norms and Standards for the Implementation of the Basic School Programme (2007), depending on the subject and field of work. Teachers devote their remaining weekly hours to class preparation and other related tasks (World Bank, 2015).

The Organisation and Financing of Education Act (2007) defines profiles of teachers on the individual levels of the education system, common educational qualification requirements, professional initiation and taking of the professional examination, specific features of working conditions and continuous professional development. Rules on educational qualification for teachers and other educational staff in the basic school education programme (2022) set out

the requirements. The rules are accepted by the minister responsible for education with the support of the relevant Council of Experts and in communication with the trade union. Teachers of general subjects in basic and upper secondary schools in Slovenia must hold the educational qualification of a second-cycle study programme in the relevant field.

Initial Professional Development

In Slovenia, the initial teacher education is carried out by universities or their members, as well as individual higher education institutions.[3] The study programmes that offer teacher training qualification can be concurrent (study programmes of one or two subjects of teaching leading to the professional title of professor of one or two subjects (second-cycle study programmes, leading to the professional title *Magister Profesor* or *Profesor*,[4] or a study programme that includes the relevant professional content) or consecutive (study programmes, which impart necessary knowledge about the subject of teaching or the field of education, but do not provide the necessary professional courses for acquiring the required teaching skills). To obtain relevant pedagogical knowledge, a person has to complete a postgraduate non-degree teacher training programme (supplementary study programme), amounting to a minimum of 60 credits in the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

The study programmes are usually implemented in two cycles. All first-cycle pedagogical study programmes give access to the second- and third-cycle study programmes and all second-cycle study programmes give access to third-

3 The Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education at the University of Maribor, Faculty of Education at the University of Primorska. Teachers of the Slovenian language, foreign languages, geography, history and other social studies and humanities receive their educational qualification at the Faculty of Arts (University of Ljubljana, University of Maribor). Teachers of maths and physics may complete the study programmes of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics (University of Ljubljana, University of Primorska). Sports teachers receive their educational qualification at the Faculty of Sport of the University of Ljubljana, music teachers at one of the faculties of education, or at the Academy of Music. Teachers of art often come from arts academies and receive their pedagogical-andragogic qualification at faculties of arts or education. The Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana implements first-cycle study programmes for specialist teachers of maths, computer science and natural science together with the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, the Faculty of Natural Science and Engineering, the Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, as well as the Biotechnical Faculty.

4 The Higher Education Act prescribes the general conditions for awarding degrees. The Professional and Academic Titles Act stipulates the general regulations for the composition of professional titles. By law, Slovenia does not translate the professional and academic titles, nor the titles of a professional qualification.

cycle study programmes. First-cycle pedagogical study programmes are 3- to 4-year university study programmes. The second-cycle study programmes take 1 to 2 years to complete. Study in both cycles takes 5 years altogether. There are also a few integrated pedagogical study programmes which take 5 years (e.g., a study programme for maths and physics teachers at the Faculty of Mathematics). Study programmes for teachers in primary education are integrated: professional, general and subject components are inseparably intermingled. Study programmes for teachers in lower secondary education and teachers of general subjects at upper secondary schools are concurrent: they can be semi-integrated in the first cycle (hybrid) and modular in the second cycle. In the modular structure of the second-cycle study programme, students can study concurrently or consecutively. The standard pedagogical module comprises 20% to 40% of practical-vocational and theoretical content (Eurydice, 2024a; Weilguny et al., 2022).

Study programmes for candidate teachers in primary education take 5 years (300 ECTS credits): 4 years for the first-cycle degree and 1 year for the second-cycle degree. Students may study abroad in part. In the first cycle, subject components and didactics relate to the education programme of primary education. The study includes pedagogical and psychological knowledge and theories, the philosophy and sociology of education, inclusive education, subject-specific didactics, a foreign language, information and communications technology, a wide selection of elective subjects, as well as compulsory practical training in primary education (15 ECTS credits). Upon completion of the first-cycle study programme Primary school teacher, graduates are awarded a degree with the professional title *profesor/profesorica (UNI)*. In the second cycle of study programmes, students gain knowledge and skills for autonomous teaching of all subjects or subject fields in primary education, as well as for research in pedagogical practice. The study includes: learning about scientific methods of research, open to direct research of practices in primary education (12 ECTS credits). After completing the second-cycle study programme Primary school teacher, graduates are awarded the professional title *magister profesor/magistrica profesorica* (Eurydice, 2024a; Rules on educational qualification for teachers and other education staff in the basic school education programme, 2022; Weilguny et al., 2022).

Study programmes for subject specialist or two-subject specialist teachers are carried out in combination 3 + 2 and 4 + 1. Together, they take 5 years and are worth 300 credits. Part of a course can be taken abroad. Education study programmes train two-subject specialist teachers of mathematics, physics, computer science, technical education, biology, chemistry and home economics and single-subject specialist teachers of fine arts and music. First-cycle degree study programmes consist of 25% specialist components (didactics, general subjects, 6 credits of practical training). Upon completion of the first-cycle, two-subject

study programme Specialist teacher of two subjects, graduates are awarded a degree with the professional title *profesor/profesorica* (UNI). Graduates of the one-subject study programme Fine Art Pedagogy are awarded a degree with the professional title *profesor/profesorica* (UNI). Pedagogical subjects are also included in the second-cycle study programme where they intertwine with teaching practice research and theory. Generally, 25% to 40% of all subjects are devoted to the professional training of subject teachers. Upon completion of the second-cycle study programme Subject specialist teacher, graduates are awarded a degree with the professional title *magister profesor/magistrica profesorica* (one or two subjects) (Eurydice, 2024a; Rules on educational qualification for teachers and other education staff in the basic school education programme, 2022; Weilguny et al., 2022).

The second-cycle studies for specialist teachers at multi-disciplinary faculties are 2-year one- or two-discipline study programmes. They are worth 120 ECTS credits, of which 60 to 90 ECTS credits are for profession-specific education including practical training at schools (3 weeks or 6 credits) (Eurydice, 2024a; Rules on educational qualification for teachers and other education staff in the basic school education programme, 2022; Weilguny et al., 2022).

Supplementary study programmes mostly last 1 year (up to 60 credits) and are not degree courses but professional qualifications. They are intended for graduates who need a qualification in education. A general pedagogical course is intended for basic and upper secondary school teacher candidates whose initial education did not include any pedagogical content. The special needs pedagogical course is intended for preschool teachers and teachers who wish to work with special needs children. The supplementary programme in librarianship allows basic and upper secondary school teachers to find employment as school librarians. Primary education teachers can attend supplementary courses for early foreign language education. All teachers can take a supplementary course to teach an additional (third) subject or to work in preschool education. Upon the completion of a pedagogical, pedagogic-andragogic or special teaching supplementary programme, graduates receive a certificate (Eurydice, 2024a; Rules on educational qualification for teachers and other education staff in the basic school education programme, 2022; Weilguny et al., 2022).

Admission Requirements

The admission procedure is the same for all students in which ever higher education institution or study programme in the first cycle they enrol (Higher Education Act, 1993). The following admission criteria apply to candidate students at the Faculty of Education: final examination (before 1995) general *matura* or vocational *matura* examination and additional subjects from one of the general *matura* subjects. If there is a cap on enrolment in first-cycle pedagogical study

programmes, candidates with the better overall outcome of the (vocational) *matura*, average marks in years 3 and 4 and in specific relevant subjects, as well as better results for aptitude tests (if relevant) have priority. Special conditions (learning outcomes in a specific subject, special aptitude, psycho-physiological ability) and criteria for candidate selection in case of a cap are specified in the study programme. The higher education institutions define the admission requirements already for the purpose of accreditation. A special aptitude test can be needed for admission in the study programmes of speech and language therapy and surdopedagogy, visual arts, music and physical education (Eurydice, 2024a; Lunder Verlič & Javornik, 2022; Weilguny et al., 2022).

Anyone who has completed a first-cycle programme in an appropriate professional area with 240 ECTS credits in total and proven their knowledge of English is eligible to enrol in a second-cycle teacher programme. Candidates who have completed the first-cycle study programme in other fields must complete bridging study obligations or an extra year (60 ECTS credits). When enrolment is limited, candidates are selected according to their success rate in the previous study programme, diploma grade and a competitive examination (Lunder Verlič & Javornik, 2022).

Entering the Profession (Subject-specific and Pedagogical Knowledge)

By law, the qualifications of teachers and preschool teachers mean that all teachers must have appropriate pedagogical training and completed the teaching certification examination. The same level of education and subject knowledge is required for teachers of children with special needs, although they must have relevant knowledge in special needs education and have completed the teaching certification examination (Rules on educational qualification for teachers and other education staff in the basic school education programme, 2022). Rules on traineeship for professionals in education (2000) stipulate that, among others, traineeship plans must include content related to respect for human diversity and multiculturalism.

In Slovenia, no other pathways to obtain a teaching profession are offered by an appropriate higher education study programme. The law permits exceptions in three cases: a) if it is not possible to obtain the required level of education in a certain field other experts can teach, however, they must have relevant accomplishments in their profession (e.g., teacher of photography, ballet teacher); b) foreign guest teachers with lower qualifications can teach or assist in classes if they meet the requirements to work as teachers in their country of origin; and c) if kindergartens or schools cannot find a preschool teacher or teacher with appropriate qualifications, they can employ an individual who does not meet the qualification requirements, but for 1 year at most. It is typically more important for candidates to possess relevant subject knowledge, while profes-

sional knowledge is obtained in the first year of employment (Lunder Verlič & Javornik, 2022).

Curricula and Syllabi

Pursuant to the Higher Education Act (1993), the curricula and syllabi of higher study programmes are within the autonomy of higher education institutions. They should be based on the knowledge and competencies of the graduates. All study programmes must be accredited by the National Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2024). They need to meet the specified criteria for accreditation. The Criteria for the Accreditation of the Study Programmes for Teacher Education (2011) determined that education study programmes should integrate pedagogical sciences, disciplines in a particular field that are taught in schools, subject-specific didactics, and practical training (in-school placement).[5] The Criteria also include a list of general competencies that initial teacher education students must acquire, and among these some are at least implicitly related to SEDA competencies (e.g., effective communication with students; development of a community climate and good relationships among them; development of social skills, provision of a safe and supportive learning environment in which students feel accepted, in which diversity is respected and promoted, independence and responsibility, understanding and respect of students social, cultural, language, religious and other personal circumstances; and establishing cooperation and partnership with others (co-workers, society, parents, institutions). It can be argued that these are mostly linked to relationships with students.

While the structure and curricula of pedagogical study programmes among different higher education institutions vary, they have the same structure at the respective higher education institutions. The curricula of pedagogical study programmes at the largest faculty of education, which is a member of the University of Ljubljana, are divided into four basic groups: 1) compulsory general or basic pedagogical subjects; 2) compulsory professional subjects from the following areas: a) pre-school education; b) primary level of basic school; c) one or two general school subjects on the secondary level of basic school; 3) elective subjects (general and professional); and 4) intensive practical training in the first cycle and the master's thesis in the second cycle. Compulsory general or basic pedagogical subjects include didactics with practical training, developmental psychology with practical training, a foreign language with pedagogical terminology, information and communication technology in education, theory

5 The criteria for the accreditation of teacher education study programmes (2011) no longer applied in 2018, although the Ministry of Education still uses them as a guide while providing its opinions. A new act is currently being prepared.

of education, pedagogical methodology, educational psychology with practical training, team work in education, inclusive education, philosophy of education, and sociology of education. SEDA competencies are involved in different subjects with a special emphasis on didactics with practical training, developmental psychology with practical training, educational psychology with practical training, inclusive education, sociology of education and some elective subjects.

For example, in the educational psychology subject, students are systematically guided to become aware of their emotions and their character strengths in the teaching process (Gradišek, 2012). In the teamwork in education subject, students systematically acquire knowledge about the psychological dimensions of teamwork (e.g. trust, assertive communication, empathy, professional reflection) (Polak, 2023). In developmental psychology with practical training subject, students systematically develop their emotional self-regulation (Smrtnik Vitulić & Prosen, 2015). In the social pedagogy study field, the psychosocial skills subject aims to develop students' emotional competencies systematically (Polak et al., 2015). Candidate preschool and primary school teachers take compulsory subjects together with didactic methodology and have 10 weeks of intensive practical training in a kindergarten or school. Subject specialists take subject contents and didactic methodology separately. They have less didactics, as well as less practical training (6 weeks) (Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, 2024a).

The curriculum of the 1-year, second-cycle programme Teaching at the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana comprises general modules (compulsory and elective), professional modules, elective modules and a master's thesis. The compulsory part includes research methodology and applied research of teaching practice. Intercultural education, the methodology of teaching mixed-level classes, teaching students with learning difficulties and team work and supervision are some of the core pedagogical subjects and didactics that systematically contribute to the students' SEDA competencies development. Many subjects with such syllabi are elective (Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, 2024a). The Faculty of Education also has a psycho-social counseling center, which contributes significantly to protecting the mental health and well-being of students and employees (Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, 2024b).

Students who study at multi-disciplinary faculties select a pedagogical or non-pedagogical branch of study or module. Second-cycle degrees at multi-disciplinary faculties take 2 years to complete (120 ECTS credits). The pedagogical branch of study includes pedagogical subjects (60 ECTS credits) concurrent with studying one or two subjects. Pedagogical subjects include pedagogics and andragogics, pedagogical and developmental psychology, general didactics and subject-specific didactics, along with practical training (Lunder Verlič & Javornik, 2022).

The pedagogical supplementary study programme is intended for graduates of non-pedagogical areas and can be taken after completing a first- or second-cycle degree. The programme comprises pedagogics, theory of education and andragogy, general didactics, practical training, elective subjects (including teaching students with learning difficulties, learning process research and similar) and an applied master's thesis containing a theoretical and a practical part (Lunder Verlič & Javornik, 2022).

Continuous Professional Development

The right and duty of preschool teachers and teachers to continuous professional development is specified by the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (2007) and the Collective Agreement for the Education Sector in the Republic of Slovenia (1994), as well as relevant rules. The collective agreement specifies the right of educational staff to up to 5 days of in-service training per year or 15 days over 3 years. The ministry responsible for education opens invitations for in-service training for pedagogical staff and co-finances it. The aim is to provide the professional development of educational staff, the development of public kindergartens and schools, as well as the development of the system as a whole, and thereby to improve its effectiveness and quality.

The Rules on the selection and co-funding of continuing education and training programmes for educational staff (2017) issued by the minister responsible for education prescribe the organisation and financing of the programmes, decision-making bodies and their responsibilities, as well as the awarding and recognition of points for the career advancement of preschool teachers and teachers.

The Rules list two types of continuous professional development programmes. The first are further education programmes (for the improvement of education), which build upon, deepen and extend the education acquired in a degree programme or in an educational programme and are established by law or by-laws as an educational requirement for the performance of the educational work of particular professional staff. Further education programmes include: a) publicly valid study programmes for further education under the law governing higher education; b) further education programmes under the law governing the organisation and financing of education; and c) the programme for education and training for the principalship examination, under the law governing the organisation and financing of education and training. The continuous professional development programmes qualify preschool teachers and teachers for different positions, for teaching a new subject or a subject on a higher level. Providers of these programmes are higher education institutions that have developed and implemented the programmes according to the rules of higher education. The law also prescribes a programme for head teachers –

it is compulsory for all who wish to apply for the position of head teacher. It is implemented by the National School for Leadership in Education (Rules on the Selection and Co-funding of continuing education and training programmes for educational staff, 2017).

The second are career development programmes (shorter in duration) that enable the continuous professional development of professional staff, training for the implementation of new publicly valid education programmes and achievement of the objectives of new curricula or catalogues of knowledge and examination catalogues, the continuous updating of disciplinary, professional and professional knowledge, and familiarisation with effective educational practices and successful approaches for the professional management of the educational process and to increase its effectiveness. Career development programmes include: a) professional training programmes; b) thematic conferences; c) part-time programmes; d) project programmes; e) programmes of public institutions; and f) programmes of higher education institutions (Rules on the selection and co-funding of continuing education and training programmes for educational staff, 2017),

Organisation-wise, every year the ministry responsible for education announces a public call for proposals and the co-financing of continuous development programmes. The ministry outlines the priority topics and fields. The Council of Experts for General Education defines priority themes on the recommendation of the ministry and in cooperation with the development and counselling institutes. The programmes are then selected by the tender commission and approved with a decision by the minister. The state has set up a network of continuous professional development providers and programmes on offer.

Kindergartens and schools plan the continuous professional development of their educational staff in the annual work plan. Since continuous professional development is the right and obligation of educational staff, preschool teachers and other teachers are entitled to paid study leave (during their regular work) while their travel costs and participation fees are reimbursed. For this purpose, the state and municipalities provide funds to cover the material costs of participation.

It is up to preschool teachers and teachers to decide on the training programmes they want to take. The training for changes of major curricular or other reforms is either compulsory or recommended, and also awarded with points (for promotion).

The Ministry of Education has been surveying the realisation and efficiency of the system. It carries out periodic evaluations of continuous professional development programmes.

There are various incentives and measures in place to centrally support the continuous professional development of preschool teachers and teachers:

Among them, teachers receive points for participating in programmes of continuous professional development that count towards their promotion to titles. This acts as further motivation for educational staff to pursue training.

In this framework, various continuous professional development programmes are also provided to enhance teachers' SEDA competencies. The aim is to extend the knowledge and skills of teachers with topics that promote competencies for a culture of coexistence in the classroom, school life and outside school. The focus is on exploring coexistence in the light of the development of creativity, innovation, volunteering, tolerance of cultural diversity and creating a relaxed, cooperative working environment in the classroom with activities on the school and local level and in international projects.

In 2021, 136 programmes were published in the KATIS catalogue that at least implicitly addressed the social-emotional competencies of teachers. They were implemented by 52 different providers, with EUR 91,000 being allocated to funding them. Section 5 of the Catalogue was dedicated to social-emotional competencies and well-being in education and empowering professionals to deal with mental health issues. The programmes on offer covered topics such as mental health and digital addiction, coaching and mediation for children and adults, conflict-solving strategies and the basics of mediation, developing skills for cohesive communication with children and adults, emotional intelligence, empathy and compassionate communication, stress management for teaching staff, mindfulness at school, reducing stress, distress and congestion in the school environment, and teachers' self-care.

In 2021, 53 programmes dealing with teachers' career planning and management were published, as run by 24 different providers, with EUR 30,000 being allocated to funding them (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, 2021).

Despite several opportunities for teachers to develop their SEDA competencies, they are mostly provided on a short-term basis. The quality of providers and courses is not systematically evaluated.

Other Projects and Activities

In previous years, one of the most pressing themes or needs in schools was emotional and social literacy and the management of unwanted behaviour. The National Institute of Education (2024a) addresses these challenges through activities for a safe and supportive learning environment, the overarching theme under which the following topics are addressed: a) mental health and support for mental distress; b) well-being and a supportive school climate; c) peer violence and prevention activities; d) strengthening empathy; e) integration of immigrants and children and adolescents with temporary protection; and f) working with parents. The challenges in these fields are addressed by: a) KATIS

seminars, which reached over 1,000 teaching staff in the 2020/2021 school year and were also conducted in the ensuing years; b) the development task "Quality relationships, well-being – the path to learning engagement and success", running since the 2018/2019 school year, which focuses on both the didactic (e.g., formative monitoring and learning environments for the 21st century) and psychosocial aspects and was launched in 60 educational institutions in the 2020/2021 school year; and c) offering video packages based on KATIS seminars, which schools can access after logging into the online classroom.

Considerable attention in the framework of the European Social Fund projects in the period 2016–2021 was also paid to teachers' diversity awareness. The aim of "The Challenges of Intercultural Coexistence project" (Koper Primary School, 2024) was to contribute to the development of values of interculturalism and to improve the professional competencies of school leaders, teachers and other professional staff in education for the more successful integration of immigrant children with a different linguistic and cultural background into Slovenia's education system by providing appropriate training. Funding of EUR 3 million was dedicated to implementing the project in which 6,000 professional staff attended the training. With similar aims, the project "Only with others we are" provided seminars to professional staff in education on the following topics: a) living diversity: integration of immigrants, Slovenian and intercultural dialogue; b) challenges of contemporary society and school; c) intercultural relations and integration; d) zero tolerance for violence: challenges and problems; and e) respectful communication and conflict resolution. Funding of EUR 10 million was reserved for the project implementation in which 10,000 professional staff attended the training.

Another European Social Fund project in Slovenia in the period 2016–2020, which at least implicitly addressed teachers' SEDA competencies, involves strengthening the competencies of professionals in the management of innovative educational institutions (National Education Institute, 2024). Trainings for school leaders were, among other fields, conducted in the field of promoting preventive activities in mental and physical health and social and emotional learning.

Evidence-based Policies

In Slovenia, teachers' SEDA competencies and well-being are not systematically monitored. The Law on the Organisation and Financing of Education and Training (2017) stipulates that the head teacher is responsible for quality assurance and quality assessment through self-evaluation and the preparation of an annual self-evaluation report for the school or kindergarten. Mandatory areas of monitoring are not defined.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (2017) prepared the National Framework for Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance in the Field of Education and Training intending to define a common (more uniform) concept of quality assessment and quality assurance on the level of educational organisations (kindergarten, primary and secondary school levels) and evaluation of the education system. The model of quality identification and assurance in the field of education has been tested on the level of educational organisations since January 2016 in the course of the programme "Establishment, completion and pilot testing of the model of quality identification and assurance in the field of education" (2016–2019) (National School of Leadership in Education, 2021).

Within the framework of this programme, the collection of standards and indicators of quality in kindergartens and schools was developed. The collection proposes mandatory monitoring of the following areas of learning and teaching: a) pupils' learning achievements and children's development and learning achievements; b) teachers' professional learning and performance; and c) a safe and stimulating learning environment. The standards and indicators in the Quality Compendium within the domains represent the basic orientations of quality in schools, giving principals, quality teams, teachers and other stakeholders a contextual framework and tools to improve the quality of schools (National School of Leadership in Education, 2021). In 2024, the framework is still in the developmental phase, and activities for its implementation are continuing at the system level.

Policy-research Evidence

In Slovenia, the TALIS 2018 results (OECD, 2019, 2020) were considered by the Ministry of Education while assessing the current state and planning the further development of teachers' professional development. The proportion of Slovenian teachers who responded that their school has developed a culture of collaboration, reflected in mutual support, was above the OECD average, whereas the proportion who said they can rely on each other is average compared to other countries. Teachers mostly agree with their principals that they can participate in decision-making processes at school. In general, large proportions of teachers perceive that the feedback they receive on their teaching from different sources has a positive effect on the quality of their teaching, with more teachers perceiving these effects in their subject teaching and fewer in teaching in specific, e.g., multicultural and multilingual, contexts. Perceived good relationships with other teachers in the school have a positive effect on teachers' reporting that feedback on their teaching has contributed to improving it, including gender, age, work experience and type of employment.

About half the Slovenian teachers reported having experienced a lot or quite a lot of stress at work. This share is in line with the OECD average, but higher-than-average shares of Slovenian teachers and head teachers reported too much administrative work as a significant stress factor.

The TALIS data also suggested that greater attention needs to be paid to the reputation of the teaching profession, as Slovenian teachers perceive it to be low. Just 6% of Slovenian teachers consider their profession to be valued in society, compared to the OECD average of 26%. At the same time, only 3% of teachers feel that their views and opinions are valued by policymakers (the OECD average is 14%).

National research in the field of teachers' SEDA competencies has grown only in the last few years. The study by Dolenc (2023) conducted on a sample of 194 Slovenian teachers (grades 1–5) employed in primary schools "provides evidence that resilience and mindfulness significantly contribute to the prediction of burnout among Slovenian primary school teachers. The results point to the importance of including these psychological factors in stress/burnout prevention programmes in teacher education".

Vršnik Perše et al. (2020) researched the predictive value of teachers' social, emotional and intercultural competencies for teachers' satisfaction with their work. The overall model, with all predictors of emotional, social and intercultural competencies included, explains 34% of the variance in teachers' job satisfaction, with the strongest predictor being relational skills. The authors argue this justifies the importance of developing these competencies throughout the professional development of teachers in Slovenia.

Košir et al. (2020) considered a sample of 344 teachers from 22 Slovenian primary schools and demonstrated that in order to foster teachers' working engagement the absence of (too) high stressors in the work environments (i.e., work demands) is not enough and that other aspects of the work environment which constitute work resources (autonomy, deep emotional labour) must be strengthened.

Based on a review of scientific discussions on the importance of teachers' social and emotional competencies, Šepič (2023) concludes that these competencies should be developed systematically on the national level and that teachers should be given opportunities to develop them in the initial and continuous professional development.

Following an extensive review of international scientific findings, Bogdan Zupančič and Gavriloski Tretjak (2023) proposed a framework of factors that should be considered and adapted while developing national policies for addressing the teacher shortages in Slovenia. This framework entails micro-level factors (individual teachers' needs), meso-level factors (investing in support systems, cooperation and communication; organisational changes to workplaces and working conditions; adjustments and changes to learning and work-

ing processes) and macro-level factors (developing and implementing policies that promote the long-term sustainability of the profession, including adjustments in teachers' career trajectories and support for their continuous professional development).

Other research shows that teachers' professional development in Slovenia is largely missing good quality systematic solutions, especially for early-career teachers (Pavlin, 2020) and that major challenges for the future development in the field of teacher education in Slovenia include the preparation of future teachers for work with a culturally heterogenous population and the organisation of practical training in initial teacher education (Jeznik & Ermenc, 2019). The need to strengthen teachers' intercultural competencies in Slovenia also confirms the PISA 2018 results, showing that Slovenian 15-year-olds on average reported more teacher discrimination towards students from other cultures than their peers from OECD countries (e.g., Šterman Ivančič & Štremfel, 2023).

Ongoing Policy Debates

Curricula Renewal

The ministry responsible for education started a multi-year modernisation of education programmes in February 2021. Under a decision of the minister, the National Education Institute is tasked with developing background material for the modernisation of education programmes in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary general education, background material for the modernisation of knowledge catalogues for general education subjects in upper secondary vocational and technical education, and short upper secondary vocational education, as well as background material for the modernisation of the Kindergarten Curriculum. The National Education Institute has to relate the background material to the current analysis of subject-curricula in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary general education, the findings of the pilot projects carried out along with development projects and activities, as well as concepts developed parallel to this. The process of developing the background material must be in line with the strategic goals and policies of the national recovery plan that in particular seeks to improve the digital competencies and sustainable development competencies (including social emotional and intercultural competencies) in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary general education, as well as other important strategic development documents of the Republic of Slovenia.

The Framework for Curriculum Renewal in Primary and Lower Secondary Education (National Education Institute, 2022) sets out the need for Common Goals and their integration into curricula and skills catalogues (National Edu-

cation Institute, 2023). It is intended to realise common goals by linking them to the subject objectives. In this way, it is anticipated that they will be achieved by students in different subjects during primary and secondary education vertical. These five goals are: a) language, citizenship, culture and arts; b) sustainable development; c) health and well-being; d) digital competence; and e) entrepreneurship. In the framework of health and well-being, the holistic development of students is emphasised. It is noted that teachers should be attentive to their role in promoting holistic (mental, physical, social) well-being and be aware of how they can contribute to this in an informed, reflective and systematic way. It is also noted that the key to such relational competence is the teacher's willingness to develop a relational and reflective exploration of their own teaching practice (National Education Institute, 2023).

National Education Programme 2023–2033

In December 2022, the minister responsible for education appointed a working group to prepare the National Education Programme for the period 2023–2033. The Working Group presently contains 56 experts from the field of education who are members of an umbrella group and 6 working sub-groups. A total of 21 meetings of the umbrella group, 125 meetings of the sub-groups, and 14 meetings of the sub-group leaders' coordination meetings were held. The Working Group also organised seven public hearings and, following an invitation from the Education, Science and Youth Committee of the National Assembly, participated in a public hearing on the future of the Slovenian education system in the National Assembly.

In January 2024, the Working Group published a draft National Education Programme for the period 2023–2033. It identified six priority areas for the further development of education: a) social development and the role of education; b) providing a safe and supportive environment for the optimal personal development of individuals; c) teaching, learning, monitoring progress, assessment and evaluation; d) professional and career development of education and training staff; e) a quality assessment and assurance system; f) a system of education and training.

Teachers' SEDA competencies are the most comprehensively addressed in the framework of priority area 2: providing a safe and supportive environment for the personal development of the individual. As part of strategic objective 2.1, which addresses support for the psychological development of children and adolescents, sub-objective 1 is particularly related to strengthening the relational competencies of professional and leading staff. It is pointed out that relationally competent professionals and school leaders are vital for strengthening systematic support for the educational functioning of educational institutions, making it essential to put support mechanisms in place to bolster

their relational competence. This is important for their own job satisfaction and effectiveness, to protect them from stress and burnout, and for professionally appropriate educational action, which is a precondition for a constructive, supportive and inclusive relationship with students, and for managing groups or departments in a way that supports an inclusive social climate. The relational competence of professionals and school leaders can be adequately developed by supporting their emotional and social competencies in a safe and supportive working environment (Ministry of Education, 2024a).

In priority area 4, which relates to the professional and career development of education and training staff, in the area of initial professional development the stated goal is to provide financial support for the ongoing and systematic updating of pedagogical studies programmes that enable professionals in education to acquire appropriate competencies to effectively meet the contemporary challenges of education and training (subject-specific competencies, critical reflection competence, relational competence, support for emotional and social learning …). In the field of continuous professional development, one of the goals is to provide a supportive and stimulating working environment for professional and managerial staff, including by offering continuing education and training designed to ensure the well-being of the individual (Ministry of Education, 2024a).

Parallel to the development of the National Education Programme (2023–2033), the Partnership for Quality and Equity in Education in the Republic of Slovenia presented a recommendation for a new social contract for education (Trade Union of Education, Science and Culture of Slovenia, 2024). In the document, which relates to the proposals and views on certain conceptual issues in the field of education and the professional development of professional staff in Slovenia, the section Proposals and views on some conceptual issues in the field of education and professional development of Slovenian education professional staff exposes the importance of teachers and other professional staff in education being self-reliant autonomous personalities with developed character strengths. The authors (Polak et al., 2024) point out that teachers and other professionals are key actors in providing a safe and supportive learning environment and that, on top of their general and specific professional competencies, their personal qualities, communication and other social skills, referred to as relational competencies are important as well.

Other Ongoing Debates

A considerable shortage of qualified teachers, especially in certain areas like mathematics or foreign languages, was evident in Slovenia before 2000, yet after that year the shortage of teachers gradually eased (World Bank, 2015).

In recent years, Slovenia has faced challenges recruiting qualified teachers and maintaining the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Although no comprehensive dataset on teacher shortages is centrally available, it is estimated that a shortfall of qualified teachers is expected in the coming years, notably in the science, engineering, technology and mathematics subjects. To address these challenges, an amendment to the Organisation and Financing of Education Act was accepted in July 2023. It simplifies the procedures for hiring teachers and enables people without teaching qualifications to be hired under certain conditions. Individuals without professional pedagogical education can be employed as teachers for 2 years, but they must gain it at the university level within 3 years of the start of employment to qualify for a long-term employment contract.

As regards working conditions and teachers' salaries, intensive salary negotiations have been underway between the government and trade unions. In April 2023, the salaries of most public sector employees, including teachers, increased by one salary grade (around 4%) while negotiations on a new pay system are continuing. In September 2023, an amendment to the Organisation and Financing of Education Act was accepted to improve the system of professional development of teachers and other educational staff. A new title of professional promotion (senior teachers) was introduced, which allows the most experienced teachers to receive higher salaries. The challenges of teacher shortages were also comprehensively addressed when preparing the National Education Programme 2023–2033 (Ministry of Education, 2024a, b).

To help future professionals in education acquire new competencies, including digital and sustainable development competencies, the Ministry of Education dedicated sources of the Recovery and Resilience Plan (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2021). In the framework of teachers' initial professional development, the Ministry of Education plans to develop a proposal for updated pedagogical study programmes, which will be tested and evaluated in at least 92 pilots (European Commission, 2023). With respect to continuous professional development, the Ministry of Education launched a call for project proposals to implement large-scale training for education professionals in digital skills and competencies for environmental sustainability and financial literacy (EUR 17.58 million), aiming to train up to 20,000 teachers and head teachers by June 2026 (Ministry of Education, 2023).

Conclusions

Based on the review presented in the chapter, one may argue that several ongoing activities that are closely related to the teachers' SEDA competencies are being implemented in Slovenia. Although these activities are performed as part

of initial teacher education (for obtaining competencies to teach social, intercultural, and emotional content or work with students), less attention is paid to the development of teachers' own SEDA competencies. In the framework of continuous professional development, considerable attention is devoted to activities linked to realising a safe and supportive learning environment. However, these are mainly short-term programmes, which teachers voluntarily attend and, once again, are largely focused on developing students' – not teachers' – SEDA competencies. The insight arising from international and national research shows that despite several activities being implemented, teachers' own SEDA competencies remain one of the biggest challenges of the education system in Slovenia. The need for systemic support of the field is recognised in ongoing reforms (e.g., preparation of the National Education Programme 2023–2033). Nevertheless, at the moment it remains unclear how attainment of the new strategic goals is to be monitored and measured.

References

Bogdan Zupančič, A., & Gavriloski Tretjak, M. (2023). Pomanjkanje učiteljev in ukrepi za zagotavljanje kadra v kontekstu reforme vzgoje in izobraževanja [Shortage of teachers and measures for ensuring staff in the context of education reform]. *Sodobna Pedagogika, 74*(4), 75–114.

Collective Agreement for the Education Sector in the Republic of Slovenia [Kolektivna pogodba za dejavnost vzgoje in izobraževanja v Republiki Sloveniji] (1994). http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=KOLP19

Criteria for the accreditation of study programmes for teacher education [Merila za akreditacijo študijskih programov za izobraževanje učiteljev] (2011). http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=MERI41

Dolenc, P. (2023). The Role of Mindfulness and Resilience in Predicting Job Burnout among Slovenian Primary School Teachers. In A. Istenič, M. Gačnik, B. Horvat, M. Kukanja Gabrijelčič, V. R. Kiswarday et al. (Eds.), *Vzgoja in izobraževanje med preteklostjo in prihodnostjo* [Upbringing and Education between the Past and the Future] (pp. 13–30). Založba Univerze na Primorskem. https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-293-255-8

*Employment Relationships Ac*t [Zakon o delovnih razmerjih] (2013). http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO5944

European Commission (2023). *Education and Training Monitor 2023. Slovenia.* https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2023/en/country-reports/slovenia.html

Eurydice (2021). *Teachers in Europe Careers, Development and Well-being*. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/78fbf243-974f-11eb-b85c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-198443603

Eurydice (2024a). *Slovenia. Teachers and education staff. Initial education for teachers working in early childhood and school education.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.eu-

ropa.eu/national-education-systems/slovenia/initial-education-teachers-working-early-childhood-and-school

Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana [Pedagoška fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani] (2024a). *Študijski programi* [Study Programmes]. https://www.pef.uni-lj.si/studij/

Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana [Pedagoška fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani] (2024b). *Psihosocialna svetovalnica* [Psycho-social counseling center]. https://www.pef.uni-lj.si/studij/psihosocialna-svetovalnica-za-studentke-in-studente-ter-zaposlene/

Gabrijelčič, M. K., Antolin, U., & Istenič, A. (2021). Teacher's social and emotional competences: A study among student teachers and students in education science in Slovenia. *European Journal of Educational Research, 10*(4), 2033–2044. https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.10.4.2033

Government of the Republic of Slovenia [Vlada Republike Slovenije] (2021). *Recovery and Resilience Plan* [Načrt za okrevanje in odpornost]. https://www.gov.si/assets/organi-v-sestavi/URSOO/Summary-RRP-SI.pdf

Gradišek, P., Pečjak, S., Rijavec, M., & Jurčec, L. (2020). Teaching as a Calling and Well-Being of Slovenian and Croatian Teachers. *Psihologijske teme, 29*(2), 249–267. https://doi.org/10.31820/pt.29.2.3

Gradišek, P. (2012). Character Strengths and Life Satisfaction of Slovenian In-service and Pre-service Teachers. Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal, 2(3), 167–180. https://doi.org/10.26529/cepsj.379

Higher Education Act [Zakon o visokem šolstvu] (1993). http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO172

Jeznik, K., & Ermenc, S. K. (2019). Teacher education in Slovenia. In K. G. Karras & C. C. Wolhuter (Eds.), *International handbook of teacher education. Revised and augmented edition* (pp. 257–272). HM Studies and Publishing.

Klemenčič Mirazchiyski, E., Štremfel, U., Alfirević, N., & Najev Čačija, L. (2023). Education policies and reforms in Slovenia and Croatia: shared history, diverging paths. In J. B. Krejsler & L. Moos (Eds.), *School policy reform in Europe: exploring transnational alignments, national particularities and contestations* (pp. 237–259). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-35434-2_11

Koper Primary School [Osnovna šola Koper] (2024). *Izzivi medkulturnega sobivanja* [The Challenges of Intercultural Coexistence project]. https://www.medkulturnost.si/en/about-this-project /

Košir, K., Tement, S., & Horvat, M. (2020). Zaznane značilnosti delovnega mesta in čustveno delo kot dejavniki delovne zavzetosti učiteljev [Perceived job characteristics and emotional labor as factors of teachers' work engagement]. *Psihološka obzorja*, *29*, 107–116.

Kozina, A. (Ed.) (2020). *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe.* Verlag Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/open-access/11406/11406_Kozina%20ED%20-%20Social%20emotional%20and%20intercultural%20competencies%20for%20inclusive%20school%20environments%20across%20Europe.pdf

Kozina, A. (Ed.) (2024). *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges. Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives.* Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Kušić, S., Vrcelj, S., & Lesar, I. (2020). Perception of academics on content and realization of pedagogical study programmes for the implementation of inclusiveness. *Sodobna pedagogika*, *71*(2), 156–173.

Lajh, D., & Štremfel, U. (2010). Flourishing cooperation with limited effects?: Slovenian education policy in an international environment. In D. Fink-Hafner (Ed.), *The open method of coordination: a view from Slovenia* (pp. 59–79). Faculty of Social Sciences.

Lunder Verlič, S., & Javornik, M. (2022). *HAND:ET project policy questionnaire. Slovenia.* Internal Report. Educational Research Institute.

Ministry of Education [Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje] (2023). *Pričetek projekta za digitalno izobraževanje zaposlenih v vzgoji in izobraževanju Digitrajni učitelj* [Digital education project for education of education employees Digitus teacher]. https://www.gov.si/novice/2023-06-16-pricetek-projekta-za-digitalno-izobrazevanje-zaposlenih-v-vzgoji-in-izobrazevanju-digitrajni-ucitelj/

Ministry of Education [Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje] (2024a). *Osnutek-predloga-Nacionalnega-programa-vzgoje-in-izobrazevanja-2023-2033* [National Education Programme 2023–2033 – Draft]. https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MVI/Dokumenti/Razvoj-solstva/DS-NPVI/Nacionalni-program/Osnutek-predloga-Nacionalnega-programa-vzgoje-in-izobrazevanja-2023-2033.pdf

Ministry of Education [Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje] (2024b). *Pomanjkanje učiteljev osrednja tema 13. seje delovne skupine* [Teacher shortage at the heart of the 13th meeting of the Working Group]. https://www.gov.si/novice/2023-09-25-pomanjkanje-uciteljev-osrednja-tema-13-seje-delovne-skupine/

Ministry of Education, Science and Sport [Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport] (2017). *Nacionalni okvir za ugotavljanje in zagotavljanje kakovosti na področju vzgoje in izobraževanja* [National framework for identifying and ensuring quality in the field of education]. http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/urad_za_razvoj_in_kakovost_izobrazevanja/sektor_za_razvoj_izobrazevanja/ugotavljanje_in_zagotavljanje_kakovosti_v_vzgoji_in_izobrazevanju/

Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport [Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport] (2021). *Katalog programov nadaljnega izobraževanja in usposabljanja strokovnih delavcev v vzgoji in izobraževanju za šolsko leto 2021/2022* [Catalogue of continuing education programmes and training of professionals in education and training for the school year 2021/2022]. https://paka3.mss.edus.si/Katis/Katalogi/KATALOG2122.pdf

Ministry of Education, Science and Sport [Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport] (2022). *Šolsko leto 2022/2023 skozi številke* [School year 2022/2023 in numbers]. https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MVI/Dokumenti/Novice/2022/Solsko-leto-2022_23-v-stevilkah.pdf

National Agency for Quality in Higher Education [Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije za kakovost v visokem šolstvu] (2024). https://www.nakvis.si/?lang=en

National Education Institute Slovenia [Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo] (2022). *Izhodišča za prenovo učnih načrtov v osnovni šoli in gimnaziji* [The Frame-

work for Curriculum Renewal in Primary and Lower Secondary Education]. https://www.zrss.si/pdf/izhodisca_za_prenovo_UN.pdf

National Education Institute Slovenia [Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo] (2023). *Skupni cilji in njihovo umeščanje v učne načrte in kataloge znanj* [Common Goals and their integration into curricula and skills catalogues]. https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MVI/SRI/REFORMA/Skupni-cilji-in-njihovo-umescanje8.pdf

National Education Institute Slovenia [Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo] (2024a). *Varno in spodbudno učno okolje* [Safe and supportive learning environment]. https://www.zrss.si/stiki-s-prakso/aktualno/varno-spodbudno-ucno-okolje/

National Education Institute Slovenia [Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo] (2024b). *Krepitev kompetenc strokovnih delavcev na področju vodenja inovativnega vzgojno-izobraževalnega zavoda* [Strengthening the competencies of professionals in the management of innovative educational institutions]. https://www.zrss.si/inovativni-javni-zavod/

National School of Leadership in Education [Šola za ravnatelje] (2021). *Vzpostavitev, dopolnitev in pilotni preizkus modela ugotavljanja in zagotavljanja kakovosti na področju vzgoje in izobraževanja* [Establishing, updating and piloting a model for quality assessment and quality assurance in the field of education and training]. https://solazaravnatelje.si/index.php/dejavnosti/projekti/projekti-evropskega-socialnega-sklada/vzpostavitev-dopolnitev-in-pilotni-preizkus-modela-ugotavljanja-in-zagotavljanja-kakovosti-na-podrocju-vzgoje-in-izobrazevanja

OECD (2019). *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners.* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en

OECD (2020). *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals.* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/19cf08df-en

Organisation and Financing of Education Act [Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja] (2007). http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO445

Pavlin, S. (2020). Who makes higher education graduates ready for work? The case of teacher education in Slovenia. *European Journal of Education, Research, Development and Policy, 55*(4), 489–500. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12423

Peček, M. (2022). Teacher education in Slovenia: between the past, the present, and the future. In M. Kowalczuk-Waledziak, R. A. Valeeva, M. Sablić & I. Menter (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of teacher education in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 269–294). Palgrave Macmillan.

Polak, A. (2023). Systematically guided reflection on teamwork as an opportunity to enhance the personal and professional development of student teachers. In A. Lipovec & J. Usenik (Eds.), *Perspectives on teacher education and development* (pp. 89–111). University of Maribor, University Press. https://doi.org/10.18690/um.pef.1.2023.6

Polak, A., Gradišek, P., & Marentić Požarnik, B. (2024). *Predlogi in pogledi na nekatera konceptualna vprašanja s področja izobraževanja in profesionalnega razvoja slovenskih strokovnih delavcev v vzgoji in izobraževanju* [Proposals and views on

some conceptual issues in the field of education and professional development of professional staff in education in Slovenia]. https://www.sviz.si/nova-druzbena-pogodba-za-vzgojo-in-izobrazevanje/

Polak, A., Rapuš Pavel, J., & Bajramlić, E. (2015). Approaches, methods and techniques used for developing emotional competency in the classroom. *Studia Edukacyjne*, 34, 325–344. https://doi.org/10.14746/se.2015.34.20

Rules on educational qualification for teachers and other education staff in the basic school education programme [Pravilnik o izobrazbi učiteljev in drugih strokovnih delavcev v izobraževalnem programu osnovne šole] (2022). http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV14591

Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the basic school programme [Pravilnik o normativih in standardih za izvajanje programa osnovne šole] (2007). http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV7973

Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of education programmes and the education programme for students with emotional and behavioural disorders in upper secondary education [Pravilnik o normativih in standardih za izvajanje izobraževalnih programov in vzgojnega programa na področju srednjega šolstva] (2010). http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV10249

Rules on the selection and co-funding of continuing education and training programmes for education staff [Pravilnik o izboru in sofinanciranju programov nadaljnjega izobraževanja in usposabljanja strokovnih delavcev v vzgoji in izobraževanju] (2017). http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV13060

Rules on traineeship for professionals in education [Pravilnik o pripravništvu strokovnih delavcev na področju vzgoje in izobraževanja] (2000). http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV6697

Smrtnik Vitulić, H., & Prosen, S. (2015). Samoocena uravnavanja čustev in subjektivno blagostanje pri študentih razrednega pouka in socialne pedagogike [Self-Assessed Emotion Regulation and WellBeing in Primary Education and Social Pedagogy Students]. *Journal of Elementary Education, 8*(3), 5–16.

Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia [Statistični urad Republike Slovenije] (2024). *Population* [Prebivalstvo]. https://www.stat.si/statweb/en/Field/Index/17

Šepič, M. (2023). Socialno-čustvena kompetenca učiteljev med preteklostjo in prihodnostjo. In A. Istenič, M. Gačnik, B. Horvat, M. Kukanja Gabrijelčič, V. R. Kiswarday et al. (Eds.), *Vzgoja in izobraževanje med preteklostjo in prihodnostjo* [Upbringing and Education between the Past and the Future] (pp. 31–45). Založba Univerze na Primorskem. https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-293-255-8

Šteh, B., Kalin, J., & Čepič, R. (2019). Status of the teacher and the teaching profession: views from within. In J. Kalin & R. Čepić (Eds.), *Poklicni razvoj učiteljev: Ugled in transverzalne kompetence* [Teachers' professional development: Status and transversal competencies] (pp. 159–180). Založba Univerze v Ljubljani. https://doi.org/10.4312/9789610601951

Šterman Ivančič, K., & Štremfel, U. (2023). *Globalne kompetence slovenskih učencev in učenk: konceptualni in empirični vpogledi* [Global competences of Slovenian students: conceptual and empirical insights]. Pedagoški inštitut. https://www.doi.org/10.32320/978-961-270-349-3

Trade Union of Education, Science and Culture of Slovenia [Sindikat vzgoje, izobraževanja, znanosti in culture Slovenije] (2024). *Nova družbena pogodba za vzgojo in izobraževanje* [A new social contract for education]. https://www.sviz.si/nova-druzbena-pogodba-za-vzgojo-in-izobrazevanje/

Vršnik Perše, T., Kozina, A., Vidmar, M., Veldin, M., Pivec, T., Mlekuž A., & Štremfel, U. (2020). Socialne, čustvene in medkulturne kompetence učiteljev: napovedna vrednost za zadovoljstvo z delom [Teachers' social, emotional and intercultural competencies: predictive value for job satisfaction]. *Sodobna pedagogika, 71*(3), 26–43.

Weilguny, M., Schmuck, A., Lovšin, M., Globokar, R. Kraner, D., & Jeglič, U. (2022). *LOOP Empowering Teachers. The national research report on the state-of-the-art, Slovenia.* https://empowering-teachers.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/D1.3-LOOP-National-Report-Slovenia.pdf

World Bank (2015). *Slovenia, Teachers, SABER Country Report 2015.* https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/233cd480-a99d-5e21-bc1f-c6c5eeb4521d/content

Chapter 7
Perspectives from Sweden

Nina Eliasson[1] *& Helene Dahlström*[1]

Abstract

The chapter describes Swedish legal texts that regulate parts of the country's school system, initial teacher training and teacher in-service training to provide the background for understanding the opportunities available to teachers to strengthen their personal social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness. Some relevant research is also presented, despite being limited in this area. Teachers' opportunity for in service-training is further described as being strongly focused on learning other than teachers' own personal competence development. It is concluded that no formal requirements exist for teachers to possess social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness themselves, even though to some extent the teacher training includes content from this field. When in-service training for teachers is given, research shows the participants largely see it as deficient. We establish that Swedish teachers' own well-being or career development is rarely the focus in policy documents, teacher in-service-training, or research.

Keywords: Social and Emotional Competencies, Diversity Awareness, Initial Professional Development, Continuous Professional Development, Sweden

Introduction

To understand the national policies in place for supporting teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness (SEDA competencies) in Sweden, it is first necessary to briefly describe the country's education system, teacher training system, and teacher in-service training.

The Swedish Education System

The country's education system changed from centralised control to being highly decentralised during the 1990s (Sveriges riksdag, 1989). The compulsory

1 Mid Sweden University

school includes 10 years from the year students turn 6. The education system is very decentralised, with the parliament (the Riksdag) and government defining the national curriculum while central authorities, municipalities, and various institutions ensure that educational activities are implemented in line with the legislative framework. A major part of school budgets is funded by municipalities (Kelly et al., 2020).

The Swedish National Agency for Education monitors and supports the local development of school quality. The agency's mission may be summarised as entailing: drawing up goals and knowledge requirements; providing support for the development of preschools and schools; developing, and disseminating new knowledge to benefit target groups; and communicating for the purpose of improvement. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate provides supervision while the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools coordinates government support for special needs education (Kelly et al., 2020).

Independent (private) schools must be approved by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Education Act, SFS 2010:800). Such schools receive municipal grants based on the number of students enrolled per academic year, and can generate a profit. This makes Sweden the only country in the world which uses common tax money to pay for both municipal schools and independent schools (Wolodarski, 2022). As described by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (2023), the general government grants the municipalities receive are not intended for any specific activities but, like tax revenues, are subject to the political priorities in each municipality. This means individual municipalities decide on how much of the general government grants is allocated to the school system (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2023). The financial conditions for different schools can accordingly vary. Targeted government grants, on the other hand, are intended to finance a specific purpose or mission and must be used for that. Grants of this nature that currently exist are career positions for teachers, staff reinforcements in student health and schooling for 'undocumented children'. Municipalities apply for these and other targeted government grants in the school area with the Swedish National Agency for Education, depending on which area each municipality finds important to invest in. However, an examination shows that not all municipalities apply for these grants. Some reasons for this are that they disadvantage municipalities with modest administrative resources to apply for the grants and the lack of co-financing resources in the form of teachers' working hours (Swedish National Audit Office, 2014). The extent of the teacher shortage in Sweden is today estimated at around 22,000 teachers (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2019a), which limits the ability to choose which teachers can be employed. One may assume that teachers' SEDA competencies are given low priority when schools are under financial, administrative or other kind pressure.

Policy Documents Regulating School Activities and Teacher Education in the Area of SEDA Competencies

No Swedish policy document explicitly mentions social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness (SEDA competencies). Yet, the Swedish Discrimination Act (SFS, 2008:567) is mandatory and seeks to combat discrimination and in other ways promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age. This act overrides all other national, regional and local policies concerning discrimination in Sweden. The main legal documents for the Swedish compulsory school are the Education Act (SFS 2010:800) and the National Curriculum (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2023a). We can find similar wording in the Swedish Discrimination Act and in all policy documents regarding the country's school system and teacher education. For example, the Educational Act states that education must "convey and anchor respect for human rights" (SFS 2010:800, section 4). The documents also provide that "Education shall convey and firmly establish respect for the human rights and basic democratic values on which Swedish society rests" (SFS 2010:800, section 4). The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are the values the school should represent and impart.

To exemplify what is meant by education on democratic grounds and respect for human rights, we present some arguments offered by the Swedish Council of Higher Education (2019) in a report based on the Swedish syllabus with a view to supporting schools in their work with diversity. They highlight the importance of developing the ability to empathise with the conditions and values of others. The school is a social and cultural meeting place linked with both an opportunity and a responsibility to enhance the mentioned ability in everyone working there. Further, it is stated that everyone working in the school must uphold the fundamental values stated in the Education Act and the curriculum while distancing themselves from anything that contradicts them. For teachers, this means that they are expected to clarify and discuss with pupils the basic values of Swedish society and their consequences for personal behaviour, and pay attention and, in consultation with other school staff, take the measures required to prevent and counteract all forms of discrimination and offence. For students, this means students should be able to empathise with and understand the situation of other people, develop a willingness to act in their best interests, and interact in meetings with other people based on knowledge of similarities and differences in living conditions, culture, religion and history.

What is mostly apparent in the legal documents concerns what should be included in the school's activities and teaching, yet it is unclear whether the

teacher and other school staff are expected to possess SEDA competencies on their own or how they can strengthen them.

Initial Teacher Training

There are two different teacher qualifications for compulsory school, primary teacher (grades 0–3 and 4–6) and subject teacher (grades 7–9) and 25 different universities and university colleges have the right to examine at least one of these forms (Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2023). Since 1 December 2013, a professional certification is required for school and pre-school teachers on permanent contracts (Swedish Institute, 2023). The decision was aimed at raising the status of the teaching profession, support professional development, and to thereby increase quality in education. The number of teachers working in primary schools in the 2022/2023 academic year was approximately 91,000 and the proportion of qualified teachers was 71% (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2023b) and permanent employment is frequent, 88% of lower secondary teachers compared to the European Union (EU-22) average of 80% (European Commission, 2023a).

To be admitted to a teacher training programme, basic qualifications from upper secondary school or equivalent are needed. No requirements are explicitly related to SEDA competencies. Who is given a place at a particular teacher training programme is decided in a selection process whereby applicants with the best grades from upper secondary school are admitted. Special qualifications are also needed in certain teacher training programmes for subjects like art and music. The content of teacher education is regulated by the governing documents of compulsory schools and the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100).

There are no aptitude tests on SEDA competencies for individuals applying for teacher training. During teacher training, the Educational Science Core, which is mandatory in all teacher education, provides all teacher students with a common knowledge base that includes the foundations of democracy and human rights and social relationships, conflict management and leadership (Regulation on training for teachers and pre-school teachers, SFS 2021:1335). The core consists of 60 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. Some objectives associated with Social and Emotional competencies that must be met by students to pass the exam are exemplified here by a syllabus from a teacher training programme at Uppsala University. Teacher students must:

– convey and anchor the democratic values and value base of society;
– show self-awareness and empathy;
– have a professional approach to children, students and their caregivers; and

– demonstrate the ability to convey, anchor and apply existing regulations aimed at preventing and counteracting discrimination and other abusive treatment of children and students (Uppsala University, 2017).

Higher education institutions that provide teacher training are free in designing the teaching so long as the requirements concerned with content and quality are met. This indicates that Swedish teacher training provides opportunities to develop SEDA competencies through Education Science Core. Nonetheless, when teachers participating in the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project (HAND:ET project) were asked whether they had an opportunity to develop SEDA competencies in their initial teacher training, 64% strongly disagreed or disagreed (Štremfel, 2024). Aspelin (2019) argues that the core of most curricula for teacher training consists of subject knowledge and didactic competence and that many educators would probably say that socio-emotional competence is implicit in the educational processes and that it will develop by itself alongside other competencies.

Teacher students have the right to continue their studies as long as they can complete and pass the various courses included in a teacher training programme. If a student is deemed unsuitable as a future teacher during their teacher training, yet has not broken any rules, the student can only be recommended to terminate their education.

Teacher In-service Training

The school principal is responsible for the school's quality and results, and the school budget (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2023c). The Education Act (SFS 2010:800) also prescribes that the pedagogical work must be led and coordinated by the principal. While ensuring the provision of teacher in-service training is thus a responsibility of the principal, continuing education can also be initiated by state initiatives. A teacher under a permanent contract is entitled to 13 working days of competence development per year (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2023).

This brief description of the Swedish school system, teacher training and teacher in-service training reveals that there is an economic interest among different actors to conduct school activities. In the 2022/23 school year, there were 831 independent school units in the compulsory school system compared to zero in 1995/96, and several school groups are even listed on the stock market (Öljemark, 2023). Along with the principal's responsibility for teacher in-service training and the school budget, a market also exists for different actors to conduct teacher in-service training. Falén, chairman of the Swedish

Teachers' Union, asserts that although teachers demand needs-based teacher in-service training, opportunities to deepen their knowledge and for continuous professional development, they are offered general, large-scale lectures that cost money and that might be pleasant for the moment (Hallonsten, 2023). Teacher education financed by the state cannot currently be perfumed by actors other than universities and university colleges. Yet, since higher education is regulated by the Higher Education Act, which is enacted by the Riksdag, conditions may change depending on which politicians are in power. One suggestion from the government, that took office in 2023, is to reform teacher education. An investigation related to this reform has been commissioned and is to be presented in November 2024 (Government Offices of Sweden, 2023). The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the government's education and research policies. The ministry works on issues such as school performance, conditions for teachers, and financing of studies.

Sweden has no obligatory programmes of continuous professional development at all and therefore none that include SEDA competencies for teachers. The role of national-level governance in SEDA on the system level lies in the national steering documents like the Education Act (SFS 2010:800) and school curricula, even though teachers' SEDA competencies are not explicitly mentioned. Each municipality must comply with these regulations in their schools and decide how to meet them by, for instance, deciding what further teacher in-service training efforts are needed. Research in this field is limited, making it hard to know the extent to which the different alternatives are practised in Sweden. One teacher union, Sveriges lärare, reported the results of a major review concerning teachers' professional development. A survey among 4,000 teachers showed that only 12% consider that they are receiving continuing teacher in-service training which satisfies their needs (Hallonsten, 2023). It also appears that 87% of teachers do not have a chance to decide on their continuing education at all or only to a small extent, and that the content is instead largely about their students' identity, values, motivation, behaviour, and health (37%). The teaching and learning international survey (TALIS), which includes 48 countries, also shows that Swedish teachers' participation in in-service training is 3 to 4 days per year as compared to the 13 working days of competence development a year that are provided (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2023).

The Swedish National Agency for Education offers around 100 different continuing education programmes for teachers, student health teams and principals, among which about 20 of them include one or more SEDA competencies in some way. However, all courses are more about how this knowledge will benefit the school and the students rather than teachers' personal development in this area.

Hallonsten (2023) reviewed teacher in-service training and reported her findings in *Vi Lärare*, a magazine for union-affiliated teachers. Almost nine out of ten teachers are critical of the continuing education they receive through their employer – just over one-quarter receive none at all. This is shown by the Subject Teacher's survey answered by nearly 4,000 teachers. Just 12% believe that they are receiving continuing education which satisfies their needs. Private actors are a growing market in the field of teachers' in-service training and some researchers also lecture outside of their university employment, albeit as consultants with their own companies (Norlund & Levinsson, 2023). According to Levinsson, one reason for this may be the decentralisation of the school in the 1990s that transferred power from the state to the municipality and school management, in turn creating a market open to a range of different actors in the education market (in Hallonsten, 2023). Together with a strict school budget, this may affect what is ultimately offered in the form of teacher in-service training. Norlund (in Hallonsten, 2023) believes that the advice and recommendations given on the websites of many continuing education providers, and with which they market themselves, tend to be too basic and general, as many teachers also reflected on in the survey. In Hallonsten (2023), some of the teachers' voices are heard: "The only continuing education given is municipal general education nonsense", wrote one teacher. Another stated that they only receive "completely meaningless mass education. It does nothing for the students or for the teacher".

Other Policy Measures Supporting Teachers' SEDA Competencies in Sweden

Other policy measures supporting SEDA competencies do not exist on the national/regional or local level. Instead, the focus for Swedish teachers when they are offered any type of professional education by national or local authorities is mainly to improve the conditions for students to accomplish the objectives in basic subjects like reading, writing and arithmetic.

Evidence-based Evaluation and its Implementation in the Field of Teachers' SEDA Competencies

The third time Sweden participated in the TALIS was in 2018. The results show that among teachers in compulsory school 45% of Swedish teachers said they feel stressed at work and excessive administrative work was the biggest source of stress (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2020). Teachers of grades

1–6 who experience a high level of stress in their work are almost four times more likely to leave the profession within 5 years than other grade 1–6 teachers (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2020). Swedish teachers' need for in-service training is in line with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) mean; 25% of the teachers did not find that the in-service training of past years had any positive effect; 15% of teachers in compulsory schools expressed that they have a great need for continuing education about teaching in a multicultural or multilingual environment, namely, a rise of 4 percentage points since the previous survey (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2019b).

The Swedish National Agency for Education writes on its website that Sweden's participation in TALIS is important and that the results from TALIS and other international studies form the basis for many reforms and investments the government makes in the school area. In September 2019, the government then in office made an investment of SEK 1 billion in teaching assistants to help relieve the burden on teachers. Upon taking office, the new government has announced that it intends to set aside SEK 50 million in 2023 and estimates SEK 50 million annually in 2024–2025 for pre-school teachers' and teachers' in-service training education.

Policy-research Literature on Policy Initiatives Regarding Teachers' SEDA Competencies and Their Impact

The general debate in Sweden today is more about students who do not achieve the knowledge goals and the order in schools. The focus in teachers in-service training is chiefly concerned with establishing good conditions for students, not developing the teachers' own personal SEDA competencies. Teachers' working conditions (well-being and stress) are regularly stressed in different ways in the teacher unions' magazines for members and in Facebook groups for teachers, yet is seldom raised in research or more public debates. Nevertheless, a few studies mention the conditions of teachers in articles and reports on students' well-being. For example, Kjellström et al. (2016) and Granvik Saminathen et al. (2020) emphasise that teachers' well-being is a prerequisite for creating learning environments that promote students' well-being and learning in Swedish schools. They argue that to establish a successful school and strengthen students' academic performance and well-being, both school policy generally and individual schools must prioritise teachers' conditions and highlight the importance of teachers and their professional development and well-being. Improving teachers' ability to support students in their school life for them to feel in control of their situation is hence an important measure required for

schools to contribute to the well-being of children and young people. Given that teacher support is considered to be a crucial factor in reducing stress-related problems among students (Sonmark & Modin, 2017) and raising student performance (Klem & Connell, 2004), it is worrying that the results of a study by Granvik Saminathen et al. (2020) revealed that 15% of the teachers participating in the study felt that their time was not being used for the right tasks, while 40% reported being stressed. Aspelin (2019) reports a study focused on enhancing pre-service teachers' relational competence and socio-emotional competence. The study showed positive outcomes, indicating that after the intervention pre-service teachers demonstrated improvements in various aspects. They revealed increased use of diverse vocabulary to express specific emotions, a better understanding of emotions within the context of interaction, and the ability to support their interpretations with observable behavioural cues. The findings suggest that socio-emotional competence is a crucial pedagogical skill that can be developed in teacher education. The concept involves perceiving emotions as integral to ongoing relational processes, defining it as a relational capacity encompassing sensitivity, responsibility, emotional presence, and the promotion of students' emotional development. The article recommends that socio-emotional competence development be incorporated into teacher education and underscores significant positive changes in pre-service teachers' abilities to name specific emotions, link emotions to individual experiences, describe emotions within teacher–student interactions, connect emotions to visible behaviour, and understand managing emotions as part of professional responsibility.

To shift the focus to diversity awareness and Swedish research concerned with how this is reflected in policy documents, a study was conducted by Hermansson et al. (2022). The centre of attention was given to how cultural and linguistic diversity was made visible in the course syllabi of the Swedish teacher education programmes for pre-, primary and secondary schools in five different teacher education programmes (preschool, primary school years P-3 and 4–6, secondary school years 7–9 and upper secondary school). The authors found that linguistic diversity was to a certain extent targeted in the syllabus, mainly through the subjects of Swedish and English, whereas cultural diversity was rarely visible. Cultural diversity was made visible only in individual courses or in teacher education for preschool and early school years. The researchers concluded that if knowledge concerning diversity is limited to certain courses that not all teacher students attend, or in education for preschool and the earliest school years, future Swedish teachers will be unprepared for contemporary diverse classrooms. Thus, work on creating equal educational opportunities for all students will be limited.

However, even though research shows that Swedish teachers experience a high degree of stress, a fast work pace, considerable emotional demands, a small

influence at work and a poor psychosocial safety climate, not much research has looked at views concerning teachers' personal outcomes (Boström et al., 2019). Casely-Hayford (2022) concentrated on factors that made teachers remain at work. The results revealed that teachers' intention to stay in the profession is largely teachers' perceived health state, work motivation and collegial support. The central implication of the researchers was, that drawing on the importance of teachers' perceived health state for their intention to remain, the role of a health-promoting work environment in schools must be addressed.

One of the few papers in this area presents results of a thematic analysis of the process diaries of teachers involved in teacher training in social and emotional learning. The results suggest that training generates both general teacher improvement and better implementation of social and emotional learning programmes (Kimber et al., 2013). Another paper investigated how Greece, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom treat social and emotional education in pedagogical practice (Scott Loinaz, 2019). Teacher education in social and emotional education was found to be available only to a minority of teachers in all four countries. In terms of practice, social and emotional education was more likely to be introduced in schools by teachers themselves (or in a partnership between teachers and headteachers) rather than by educational policy.

One outcome of the Erasmus+ programme HAND in HAND: Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies (Kozina, 2020) is that beginning with autumn 2022 Mid Sweden University is offering a course worth 7.5 ECTS credits on the theme of Social, Emotional and Intercultural Learning. The course is provided by the Department of Education, and university studies in Sweden are free of charge for EU residents.

Ongoing Policy Debates and Reforms

The Swedish parliament has submitted a proposal for changes to the School Act that makes it possible to introduce a national professional programme for principals, teachers and preschool teachers (Government Offices of Sweden, 2023). The purpose of this programme is to develop the quality of teaching, strengthen the profession, make the profession more attractive and thereby increase equality for students. The Legislative Council's referral contains proposals for amendments to the Education Act (2010:800) where a national professional programme is to be introduced for principals, teachers and preschool teachers in the school system. The municipalities' existing obligation under the Education Act to ensure that staff are given opportunities for skills development must be specified to some extent. The amendments to the law are proposed to enter into force on 1 July 2024 (Government Offices of Sweden, 2023).

Another recent action is aiming at improving working conditions for teachers since the ratio between working hours and teaching time is the second-lowest in the EU, despite Swedish teachers working nearly 5 hours per week more than their European peers. Sweden therefore offers a state grant for school providers which employ teaching assistants to ease the administrative burden on teachers (European Commission, 2023b).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the conclusion, it is paramount to emphasise the significance of explicitly addressing teachers' SEDA competencies within the governing documents. Doing so might not only acknowledge the pivotal role of teacher professional development but also reinforce the foundations upon which education systems are built. Embedding SEDA competencies into these documents can expand opportunities for prospective teachers as well as practising teachers to develop the competencies they need to meet the needs of today's classrooms. This refers to possibilities that pave the way for strengthening teachers' ability to navigate the numerous challenges they encounter in their professional lives.

Empowering teachers with the tools and knowledge to enhance their SEDA competencies may be expected to not only benefit the educators themselves but also hold a profound impact on the quality of education they provide. It can equip them to adapt to evolving pedagogical landscapes and fosters an environment conducive to lifelong learning and personal growth. Moreover, it may enhance their career prospects, making them more versatile and resilient in an ever-changing educational landscape. To achieve these goals, it is imperative to offer teacher in-service training that is not only tailored to their specific needs but also has sound scientific foundations. This approach assures that the educational courses are relevant, effective and evidence-based. Teachers should have the autonomy to request the training they need, reflecting their unique challenges and aspirations, while educational authorities and institutions should collaborate with experts and researchers to design these programmes according to the latest pedagogical research.

In summary, addressing teachers' SEDA competencies in the governing documents is an essential step for ensuring continuous improvement of the Swedish education system. By offering teachers the support and resources they need to develop their SEDA competencies, and by aligning in-service training with scientific principles, we can foster a teaching community that is more skilled, adaptable, and better equipped to meet the evolving needs of students and society. Ultimately, this commitment to teacher development and competence is an investment in the future of education.

The Swedish National Education Agency's teacher forecast for 2021 highlights that the persistent shortage of qualified teachers and preschool teachers is expected to extend until 2035 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2021). Based on the teacher situation in 2020, the forecast projects a shortfall of approximately 12,000 newly graduated teachers and preschool teachers by 2035. This shortage poses a considerable challenge to the education system.

A major factor causing this deficiency is the prevalent issue of teachers leaving the profession, with the primary reason being the challenging work environment, including factors like stress and workload. This trend is consistent across various educational levels, including primary school, secondary school, and adult education. The second-most common reason cited for teacher attrition is working conditions, encompassing concerns about salary and overall working circumstances.

Addressing these challenges is vital for sustaining a robust and effective education system. Strategies and policies aimed at empowering teachers, offering tools for handling stress, developing social and emotional competencies, creating supportive work environments, and enhancing working conditions are essential for mitigating the projected shortage and ensuring the availability of qualified educators in the years to come.

References

Aspelin, J. (2019). Enhancing pre-service teachers' socio-emotional competence. *International Journal of Emotional Education, (11)*1, 153–168.

Bartholdsson, B., Gustafsson-Lundberg, J., & Hultin, E. (2014). Cultivating the socially competent body: bodies and risk in Swedish programmes for social emotional learning in preschools and schools. *Critical Studies in Education, 55*(2), 201–212. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2014.889733

Boström, M., Björklund, C., Bergström, G., Nybergh, L., Schäfer Elinder, L., Stigmar, K., Wåhlin, C., et al. (2019). Health and Work Environment among Female and Male Swedish Elementary School Teachers–A Cross-Sectional Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17*(1), Article 227. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17010227

Casely-Hayford, J., Björklund, C., Bergström, G., Lindqvist, P., & Kwak, L. (2022). What makes teachers stay? A cross-sectional exploration of the individual and contextual factors associated with teacher retention in Sweden. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 113,* Article 103664. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103664

Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567). https://www.do.se/choose-language/english/discrimination-act-2008567

Education Act [Skollagen] (SFS 2010:800) (2010). https://www.skolverket.se/regler-och-ansvar/skollagen-och-forordningar

European Commission (2023a). *Education and training monitor 2023: Sweden. Publications Office of the European Union.* https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/22958

European Commission (2023b). *Promoting diversity and inclusion in schools in Europe*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/443509

Government Offices of Sweden [Regeringskansliet] (2023). *Nationellt professionsprogram för rektorer, lärare och förskollärare*, Prop. 2022/23:54. [National professional program for principals, teachers and preschool teachers, Prop. 2022/23:54]. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2023/01/prop.-20222354

Granvik Saminathen, M., Brolin Låftman, S., & Modin, B. (2020). En fungerande skola för alla: skolmiljön som skyddsfaktor för ungas psykiska välbefinnande [Effective schools for all: the school environment as a protective factor for young people's mental well-being]. *Socialmedicinsk Tidskrift, 97*(5–6), 804–816.

Hallonsten, A. K. (2023). *Stor granskning: 9 av 10 lärare sågar fortbildningen i skolan*. Ämnesläraren [Major review: 9 out of 10 teachers criticise in-service training in schools]. https://www.vilarare.se/amneslararen-svenska-sprak/fortbildning/9-av-10-larare-sagar-fortbildningen-i-skolan/

Hermansson, C., Norlund Shaswar, A., Rosén, J., & Wedin, Å. (2022). Teaching for a monolingual school? (In)visibility of multilingual perspectives in Swedish teacher education, *Education Inquiry*, *13*(3), 321–337. https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2021.1885588

Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100). https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Higher-Education-Ordinance/

Kelly, D. L., Centurino, V. A. S., Martin, M. O., & Mullis, I. V. S. (2020). *TIMSS 2019 Encyclopedia: Education Policy and Curriculum in Mathematics and Science*. https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/timss2019/encyclopedia/

Kimber, B., Skoog, T., & Sandell, R. (2013). Teacher Change and Development during Training in Social and Emotional Learning Programs in Sweden. *International Journal of Emotional Education, 5*(1), 17–35.

Kjellström, J., Almquist, B., & Modin, B. (2016). Lärares arbetsvillkor och hälsa efter 1990-talets skolreformer [Teachers' working conditions and health after the 1990s school reforms]. *Arbetsmarknad & Arbetsliv, 22*(1), 52–69.

Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2004). Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health, 74*(7), 262–273. https://doi-org.nukweb.nuk.uni-lj.si/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2004.tb08283.x

Kozina, A. (Ed.) (2020). *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe: Relationships matter*. Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/open-access/11406/11406_Kozina%20ED%20-%20Social%20emotional%20and%20intercultural%20competencies%20for%20inclusive%20school%20environments%20across%20Europe.pdf

Norlund, A., & Levinsson, M. (2023). Ett neuropedagogiskt ideal på lärares kompetensutvecklingsmarknad: kännetecken, konsekvenser och kritik [A neuropedagogical ideal in the teachers' professional development market: characteristics, implications and critique]. *Nordisk Tidskrift för Allmän Didaktik, (9)*1, 1–18.

Öljemark, J. (December 2023). *Ekonomifakta* [Economic facts]. https://www.ekonomifakta.se/Fakta/Foretagande/offentlig-sektor/Antal-friskolor-i-Sverige/

Regulation on training for teachers and pre-school teachers [Förordning om utbildning till läraren och förskolelärare] (2021:1335). https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-20211335-om-utbildning-till-larare_sfs-2021-1335/#K2

Scott Loinaz, E. (2019). Teachers' perception and practice of social and emotional education in Greece, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Emotional Education, 11*, 31–48.

Sonmark, K., & Modin, B. (2017). Psychosocial work environment in school and students' somatic health complaints: An analysis of buffering resources. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health, 45*(1), 64–72. https://doi.org/10.1177/1403494816677711

Sveriges Riksdag (1989). *Proposition 1989/90:41 om kommunalt huvudmannaskap för lärare, skolledare, biträdande skolledare och syofunktionärer* [Proposition 1989/90:41 on municipal principalship of teachers, school principals, deputy principals and support staff]. https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/proposition/om-kommunalt-huvudmannaskap-for-larare-skolledare_gd0341/html/

Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions [Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner] (2023). *Huvudöverenskommelse (HÖK 21) med Lärarförbundets och Lärarnas Riksförbunds Samverkansråd* [Main agreement (HÖK 21) with the Cooperation Council of the Teachers' Union and the National Union of Teachers]. https://skr.se/download/18.5912cbb18b5b7284b428e68/1698339930525/H%C3%96K

Swedish Council for Higher Education (2019). *Lärande för hållbar utveckling i styrdokument för förskola och skola – Ett stöd för skolledare, huvudmän och pedagoger.* [Learning for sustainable development in policy documents for preschool and school education - A support for school leaders, principals and educators]. https://www.utbyten.se/globalassets/2.-program/den-globala-skolan/dgs-larande-for-hallbarutveckling-i-styrdokumenten-2019.pdf

Swedish Higher Education Authority [Universitetskanslersämbetet] (2023). Om lärarutbildning [About teacher training]. https://www.uka.se/sa-fungerar-hogskolan/om-lararutbildning

Swedish Institute [Svenska institutet] (2023). *The Swedish school system.* https://sweden.se/life/society/the-swedish-school-system

Swedish National Agency for Education [Skolverket] (2019a). *Pedagogisk personal i skola och vuxenutbildning läsåret 2018/19* [Educational staff in schools and adult education in the academic year 2018/19]. https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/beskrivande-statistik/2019/pm---pedagogisk-personal-i-skola-och-vuxenutbildning-lasaret-2018-19

Swedish National Agency for Education [Skolverket] (2019b). *TALIS 2018. En studie om lärares och rektorers arbete i grund- och gymnasieskolan. Delrapport 1. Rapport 481* [TALIS 2018: A study of teachers' and principals' work in primary and secondary schools. Interim report 1. Report 481]. https://www.skolverket.se/download/18.192dfce916aff44f9af1225/1560866110173/pdf4307.pdf

Swedish National Agency for Education [Skolverket] (2020). *TALIS 2018. En studie om lärares och rektorers arbete i grund- och gymnasieskolan. Delrapport 2. Rapport 2020:2* [TALIS 2018. A study of teachers' and principals' work in primary and

secondary schools. Interim report 2. Report 2020:2]. https://www.skolverket.se/getFile?file=6460

Swedish National Agency for Education [Skolverket] (2021). *Pedagogisk personal i skola och vuxenutbildning läsåret 2020/2021* [Educational staff in schools and adult education in the academic year 2020/2021]. https://www.skolverket.se/publikationer?id=7908

Swedish National Agency for Education [Statens skolverk] (2023a). *Pedagogisk personal i skola och vuxenutbildning, Läsåret 2022/23* [Educational personnel in schools and adult education, Academic year 2022/23]. https://www.skolverket.se/getFile?file=11343

Swedish National Agency for Education [Statens skolverk] (2023b). *Skollagen och förordningar* [Education Act and Regulations]. https://www.skolverket.se/getFile?file=11343

Swedish National Agency for Education [Skolverket] (2023c). *Rektorns ansvar* [Principal's responsibilities]. https://www.skolverket.se/regler-och-ansvar/ansvar-i-skolfragor/rektorns-ansvar

Swedish National Audit Office [Riksrevitionen] (2014). *Specialdestinerade stadsbidrag – Ett sätt att styra mot en mer likvärdig skola? RIR 2014:25* [Specialised city grants – A way of steering towards a more equal school? RIR 2014:25]. https://www.riksrevisionen.se/download/18.78ae827d1605526e94b2fc98/1518435446010/RiR_2014_25_Statsbidrag%20skolan_anpassad.pdf

Swedish Teachers' Union [Sveriges Lärare]. (2023). *Arbetstid* [Working hours]. https://www.sverigeslarare.se/rad-och-stod/arbetstid/ferietjanst/kommunal-ferietjanst/

Swedish Council for Higher Education [Universitets- och högskolerådet] (2019). *Lärande för hållbar utveckling i styrdokument för förskola och skola – Ett stöd för skolledare, huvudmän och pedagoger* [Learning for sustainable development in policy documents for preschool and school education – A support for school leaders, principals and educators]. https://www.utbyten.se/globalassets/2.-program/den-globala-skolan/dgs-larande-for-hallbarutveckling-i-styrdokumenten-2019.pdf

Štremfel, U. (2024). Teachers social, emotional, and diversity awareness competencies: from policy experimentation to policy recommendations. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges: Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 231–245). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Uppsala University (2017). *Syllabus – teacher training programme.* https://www.uu.se/utbildning/sok-kursplan

Wolodarski, K. G. (2022). *Experimentet: Så blev den svenska skolan en av världens mest avreglerade* [The experiment: how Swedish schools became one of the most deregulated in the world]. Natur & Kultur Allmänlitteratur.

Chapter 8
National Policy Support for Developing Teachers' Social and Emotional Competencies and Diversity Awareness: Comparative Insights

Urška Štremfel[1]

Abstract

The chapter aims to provide comparative insights into national policy frameworks supporting the development of teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness in the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project field trial countries (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden). The results show that, despite several good practices being identified, the field is not systematically supported in the mentioned countries. This is evident in the lack of clear definitions and goals in key national policy documents, the non-obligatory presence of the topic in both initial teacher education and continuous professional development, the absence of systematic monitoring of teachers' well-being and social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness, coupled with the scarce policy-related research in the field. Nevertheless, significant differences between countries are established. These findings are important for determining fields in need of further improvement, identifying good practices for policy learning between European Union countries as well as providing one of the several backgrounds for understanding the complexity of the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges policy experiment results.

Keywords: Teachers' Well-being, Social and Emotional Competencies, Diversity Awareness, National Educational Policy, Comparative Insights

Introduction

The HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project (HAND:ET project) is a European policy experimentation project (EACEA, 2019) that is expected to actively contribute to further developing the European Union's (EU) recent education policy agenda in the area of teachers' well-being (Council of the EU,

1 Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

2021). In-depth insight into the current national policy frameworks supporting teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness (SEDA competencies) in the HAND:ET project field trial countries (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden) (see Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) and comparative insight into these policy frameworks (presented in this chapter) are needed to identify where further policy developments are required to support the attainment of the EU strategic priorities in the field (see Chapter 2). This chapter therefore aims to provide comparative policy-oriented research evidence to better understand the system-level factors in place to support the enhancement of teachers' SEDA competencies as key factors for supporting and navigating teachers' professional careers. (Comparative) insights into existing policy frameworks, along with the results of the policy experimentation (Kozina, 2024) and other policy-relevant scientific research are important for providing recommendations for continuing policy development in the field (see Chapter 10).

The comparative insights outlined in this chapter play an explanatory role of providing insights into the broader (political, cultural, historical) contexts in which the HAND:ET policy experimentation results (Kozina, 2024) are embedded. The intention is not to indicate cause-and-effect relationships (see Auld & Morris, 2014), namely the correlation of existing national policies and the HAND:ET project results in particular HAND:ET field trial countries, as may be required by contemporary trends in the borrowing of educational policy. Even if evidence-based policymaking, guided by the overarching question of what works (e.g., Colebatch, 2006), lies in the background of the policy experimentation (EACEA, 2019), notwithstanding the well-thought-out and strictly implemented field trials of the HAND:ET project in different national environments, the answer is not straightforward.

The chapter largely adopts a horizontal comparative case study approach (between countries). However, by considering the policy framework on the EU level (Chapter 3) it also provides some vertical comparison by assessing how in line the current national policy frameworks are with realising the EU's strategic priorities in the field (e.g., Barlett & Vavrus, 2017) (for more, see Chapter 2). Still, although some common trends in teacher education over the last few decades may be expected due to Europeanisation (e.g., Chapter 3; Symeonidis, 2021), it should be recalled that Europeanisation is a two-level game in which cultural, socio-political and economic contexts, together with national (teacher) education traditions, and actors' preferences, play a vital role. Teacher education systems have their own nationally and internationally driven dynamics and, in this context, European development can stimulate policy learning by challenging domestic institutions, policies and processes (Börzel, 2005). Thus, by focusing on five case studies (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden), the chapter helps to explore how teachers' well-being and SEDA competencies are supported by the national policies. Taking account of the findings given in

Chapter 3, it also enables understanding of the extent to which they resonate with European developments.

The education systems of the HAND:ET field trial countries vary with respect to governance arrangements (e.g., Austria and Sweden have decentralised education systems, Croatia, Portugal and Slovenia have centralised education systems) and structure of the education system (e.g., a single structure of basic education in Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden, and divided into general and vocational tracks on the ISCED 2 level in Austria). Differences between the HAND:ET field countries are also evident in teachers' initial and professional development frameworks and formal requirements of becoming and being a teacher. In this chapter, we do not consider these differences in detail but focus on how the development of teachers' SEDA competencies is addressed in the countries' national policy frameworks.

The chapter is mainly based on the findings presented in Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, which we analytically summarise in a comparative perspective. Where appropriate, these findings are supplemented with other sources (scientific debates, public policy reports). The comparative perspective is introduced with scientific discussions from comparative education.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, the embodiment of (teachers') SEDA competencies in existing national policies in terms of definitions, goals and policy measures is presented. Second, insights into the initial teacher training frameworks and the embodiment of SEDA competencies within them are provided. Third, an overview is given of the content and forms of continuous professional development that support teachers' SEDA competencies. Fourth, other policy measures addressing teachers' SEDA competencies in the HAND:ET field trial countries are introduced. Fifth, a review of evidence-based approaches to the development of teachers' SEDA competencies then follows. Sixth, a review of policy-research evidence is provided. Seventh, insights into recent professional and political debates are presented. Finally, the conclusion summarises the key findings and sets out the implications of the differences we have revealed in policy support for teachers' SEDA competencies in the HAND:ET field trial countries.

Embodiment of Teachers' SEDA Competencies in Policy Documents

A review of key legislative, strategic and other educational policy documents in the HAND:ET field trial countries (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden) was conducted to determine whether and how (teachers') SEDA competencies are defined, and whether and which goals and policy measures are established for their development.

Table 1: Embeddedness of teachers' SEDA competencies in policy documents in the HAND:ET field trial countries

	Austria	Croatia	Portugal	Slovenia	Sweden
Definition	Not explicitly defined Mental health promotion, mental well-being	Not explicitly defined Mental health promotion	Reference to CASEL is evident from 2011 onwards	Not explicitly defined A safe and supportive learning environment	Not explicitly defined Human rights, diversity
Goals	Mostly related to school health promotion, including the communicative and cooperative competencies of teachers	Mostly related to students' (not teachers') SEDA competencies	Mental health improvement of the educational community	Mostly related to students' (not teachers') SEDA competencies	The school should promote understanding of other people and the ability to empathise (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2017)
Policy measures	/	/	/	/	/

The review shows that SEDA competencies are not explicitly defined in core educational legislation in the HAND:ET field trial countries. Yet, they are defined implicitly in educational and other sectoral policy documents (e.g., the Discrimination Act (2008) in Sweden).

There is no clear definition of SEDA competencies in the policy documents of the HAND:ET field trial countries. However, these competencies can be implicitly understood in terms of health promotion (Austria), mental health promotion (Croatia), a safe and supportive learning environment (Slovenia) and human rights and diversity awareness (Sweden). It is apparent that they are most precisely defined in Portugal where the CASEL (CASEL, 2013) definition is referred to and applied in policy documents. It is common in these countries for teachers' SEDA competencies (albeit only implicitly defined) to be treated in terms of supporting the social-emotional and cognitive development of students (rather than the personal, social and professional development of the teachers themselves).

Since teachers' SEDA competencies in the policy documents in the HAND:ET field trial countries are not explicitly defined and concrete goals are absent, no policy measures to assist with their achievement are proposed. However, since teachers' professional development (implicitly also in the area of SEDA competencies) is at the forefront of ongoing policy debates in some HAND:ET field trial countries (e.g. in Croatia and Slovenia) more concrete policy measures can be anticipated in the future (see the section Ongoing professional and political debates).

For policies to be effective, it is important that their goals are clearly stated. This sharpens the focus of different stakeholders in the pursuit of these goals, while also improving the chances of their achievement being properly measured (e.g., Hogwood & Gunn, 1984). Clearly stating political goals with regard to teachers' SEDA competencies and well-being, supported by appropriate policy measures on the national level of EU countries, would also enhance the opportunities of EU countries to compare and learn from each other's context-based national approaches to develop them.

Initial Professional Development

The review of teachers' initial professional development in the HAND:ET field trial countries reveals that their organisation varies widely and may appear as quite a complex structure, which is also true for all other EU countries (see Eurydice, 2021). It is evident that a university degree is required for teachers in all of the HAND:ET field trial countries. As this was not the case before 2000, this alignment may be attributed to the Bologna Process (e.g., Vizek Vidović & Domović, 2013). Table 2 on the next page presents how teachers' SEDA competencies are embedded in initial professional development in the HAND:ET field trial countries.

In almost all the HAND:ET field trial countries (Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden), except for Austria, aptitude assessments of SEDA competencies as an entrance exam for candidates entering teacher faculties are not provided. In Austria, admissions procedures for teacher faculties include an aptitude assessment in the area of personal and performance-related aptitude. The admissions procedures are structured in three consecutive stages: (1) an online self-assessment; (2) a computer-based aptitude assessment on personal resources that enable the successful management of both interpersonal and intrapersonal challenges, including emotional competencies as well as communication, health and recovery behaviours; and (3) a face-to-face assessment (PH Styria, 2024).

The development of SEDA competencies in initial teacher professional development in the HAND:ET field trial countries is not supported systematically. For example, teachers' SEDA competencies are not explicitly defined in

Table 2: Embeddedness of teachers' SEDA competencies in initial professional development in the HAND:ET field trial countries

	Austria	Croatia	Portugal	Slovenia	Sweden
Entrance exam	Admissions procedure, involving an aptitude assessment in the field of personal and performance-related aptitude	/	/	/	/
Competency profiles, courses, outcomes	Not explicitly mentioned in courses and training objectives Implicitly mentioned in terms of competency profiles and students' outcomes in certain pedagogical areas A focus on students' SEDA competencies (teaching methodologies, classroom management)	Not a mandatory topic Elective courses (e.g., Social Skills Training at the University of Rijeka)	Explicitly mentioned in courses at two private universities Related to students' health and well-being	Implicitly defined in the Criteria for the Accreditation of Study Programmes for Teacher Education Implicitly addressed in pedagogical and psychological courses A focus on students' SEDA competencies (community climate, effective communication, a safe and supportive learning environment)	Implicitly mentioned in courses (foundations of democracy, human rights, social relationships, conflict management)

the competence profiles of graduates, the criteria for programme accreditation etc.).

The review shows that when addressed in subject syllabi teachers' SEDA competencies generally focus on the development of students' SEDA competencies. For instance, in Austria, these are mostly focused on developing teaching methodologies and classroom management techniques. In Slovenia, the community climate, effective communication, and a safe and supportive learning environment are in focus. Even though a lack of systematic support for future

teachers' SEDA competencies is seen in the HAND:ET field trial countries, good practices at certain faculties (elective courses etc.), which concentrate on teachers' own SEDA competencies were, however, identified (e.g., Social Skills Training at the University of Rijeka in Croatia). These are somewhat different findings from those of Schonert-Reich et al. (2015) with respect to the United States of America. In their review of studies on initial teacher education in promoting mental health, they reported that teachers in university education received little training on promoting students' social and emotional education and creating positive classroom contexts. In a nationwide investigation of current practices in teacher education programmes, the authors found that few state-level standards for teacher education programmes focus on developing students' social-emotional education. This may show a distinct European approach to the development of SEDA competencies (see also Downes, 2020), but also the existence of a time gap of one decade, in which the field of social and emotional learning has developed significantly, should be considered (e.g., Kozina, 2020).

Continuous professional development

Since continuous professional development is essential for upgrading and updating teachers' professional competencies to reflect contemporary social, educational and scientific developments (e.g., Fraser et al., 2007), we were interested in how the SEDA competencies are involved in such programmes in the HAND:ET field trial countries (see table 3 on the next page).

The review shows that even some amount of continuous professional development in a few of the HAND:ET field trial countries is required, suggested or needed for professional promotion,[2] the amount of continuous professional development in the area of SEDA competencies development is prescribed in none of the HAND:ET field trial countries. According to TALIS 2018 (OECD 2019, 2020), teachers' participation in continuous professional development in the EU is also generally limited by the presence of different barriers (e.g., 29.6% of teachers in Croatia to 77.2% of teachers in Portugal reported that continuous professional development conflicted with their work schedule). This makes teachers' participation in SEDA competencies-related programmes even more questionable.

However, if teachers are to attend continuous professional development programmes, their availability is crucial. The review shows that teachers' SEDA competencies development is not supported systemically in continuous professional development in the HAND:ET field trial countries, although examples of

2 For more details about Croatia and Slovenia. see Chapters 4 and 6 of this book and Eurydice (2021, p. 94).

Table 3: Embeddedness of teachers' SEDA competencies in continuous professional development in the HAND:ET field trial countries

	Austria	Croatia	Portugal	Slovenia	Sweden
Continuous professional development	SEDA competencies are not explicitly mentioned Stress management, work–life balance, classroom management	SEDA competencies are not explicitly mentioned Stress, burnout, mindfulness, mental resilience, empathy, assertiveness, respecting diversity, stimulating interpersonal relationships	SEDA competencies are not explicitly mentioned	SEDA competencies are not explicitly mentioned Competences for the culture and coexistence in the classroom, school life, and outside school Intercultural dialogue, mental health, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, empathy and compassionate communication, stress management, teachers' self-care	SEDA competencies are not explicitly mentioned 20 programmes related to SEDA competencies, mainly focused on how they benefit the school and the students Not tailored to teachers' needs

good practices (e.g., in Austria and Croatia), as well as more systematic support (e.g., in Slovenia) can be found. In Slovenia, these competencies were supported by developmental projects of the European Social Fund (e.g., a safe and supportive learning environment, diversity awareness) in the last few years, while a wide range of shorter-term programmes in the Catalogue for continuous professional development is continuously available to teachers (see Chapter 6). In Croatia, some faculties offer continuous professional development programmes in the field. In the mentioned countries, the different forms of continuous professional development programmes involve a broad range of topics related to the development of teachers' SEDA competencies, including teachers' mental health and emotional well-being, stress management, work–life balance, and coping strategies to handle challenging classroom situations.

Even though several (good) practices of continuous professional development dealing with teachers' SEDA competencies and well-being were identi-

fied, almost all are provided on a short-term basis and are generally not evaluated. The certification of continuous professional development providers is also nearly missing in all the HAND:ET field trial countries. This puts the question of the effectiveness and quality of these programmes open/unanswered.

Other Policy Measures

Alongside the initial and continuous professional development, we were interested in whether (and how) teachers' SEDA competencies are supported by other policy measures on the national, regional, local and school levels of the HAND:ET field trial countries (see table 4).

Table 4: Other policy measures supporting teachers' SEDA competencies in the HAND:ET field trial countries

	Austria	Croatia	Portugal	Slovenia	Sweden
National / regional / local policy measures	Supervision Sabbatical Research teams (Consortium School: Support) Handbook on Health Promotion for Teachers, Handbook on Burnout Prevention for Teachers Give – Service Centre for Health Promotion in Austrian Schools	Supervision and other forms of expert support on the county, inter-school or school levels (personal, social, professional competencies)	No specific programmes Dependent on a school's needs	Supervision Developmental projects	Supervision (Student health teams)
School-level initiatives	School development plans	School development plans	Schools have the autonomy to organise internal projects and programmes	School development plans Self-evaluation	School development plans Self-evaluation

Different policy and school-level initiatives for supporting teachers' SEDA competencies were identified in the HAND:ET field trial countries. Among them, supervision is exposed in all the countries, except Portugal. In Austria, supervision is available to teachers and schools as a kind of reflective approach, which does not necessarily focus on teachers' SEDA competencies. In Croatia, supervision and other forms of expert support are available to teachers on the county, inter-school or school levels to support their personal, social and professional development. In all of the HAND:ET field trial countries, on the school level school development plans are exposed as those, which depending on a school's needs, allow for a more in-depth consideration of the topic on the individual school level.

In Austria, Give – Service Centre for Health Promotion in Austrian Schools (BMBWF et al., 2024) is a platform that connects a range of free-of-charge, health-related information, materials, activities, workshops and seminars for health promotion in schools, including teacher health and stress as focus topics. It thereby supports various dimensions of teachers' well-being through different projects and interventions. The sabbatical model can be used by all public employees in Austria within the "4-year framework period" and may also be understood as a stress release for teachers and allowing them to focus on their personal development and well-being. Handbooks on Health Promotion and Burnout Prevention for teachers in Austria can also be mentioned as an important policy measure supporting teachers' professional development in the field (School Psychology Support Association Styria, 2024).

Evidence-based Policymaking

The review also concentrated on whether teachers' SEDA competencies and related concepts, like well-being and stress, are systematically monitored as a source for evidence-based policymaking in the field (see table 5 on the following page).

The review shows that in not one of the HAND:ET field trial countries are teachers' SEDA competencies or related concepts such as well-being and stress systematically monitored and measured. The most detailed research on teachers' SEDA competencies among the HAND:ET field trial countries has been carried out in Portugal. The Observatory of Psychological Health and Well-Being: Monitoring and Action conducted research on the current state of the general psychological health and well-being of teachers and developed action and intervention recommendations to promote better psychological health and well-being in educational settings (Matos et al., 2022). Even though no information is available on whether these studies will monitor in the longer term, the initiative seems promising in terms of planning evidence-based measures

Table 5: Evidence-based policymaking approaches regarding teachers' SEDA competencies in the HAND:ET field trial countries

	Austria	Croatia	Portugal	Slovenia	Sweden
Monitoring SEDA competencies	Internal teacher appraisal with no direct involvement of SEDA competencies Teachers' health is generally assessed, but teachers' SEDA competencies are not	None	None Observatory of Psychological Health and Well-Being: Monitoring and Action	The new national framework of quality assurance presupposes indicators that would focus on a safe and supportive school environment for all stakeholders (including teachers)	None
Other initiatives	Quality Management System	Partly the assessment of a teacher's performance by the principal	/	/	/

in the field. In Austria, although teachers' health has generally been assessed, this is not explicitly done for teachers' SEDA competencies.

In all the HAND:ET field trial countries, attention was paid to the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS 2018) results (OECD, 2019, 2020), which provided some limited, yet important nationally representative and internationally comparative evidence in the field. However, a different topic related to teachers' well-being was considered in the HAND:ET field trial countries, typically referring to cases of worrying and/or below-average results.

Some recent developments in the HAND:ET field trial countries indicate shifts towards more systematic quality assessment and evidence-based education policymaking, which may at least implicitly also address teachers' SEDA competencies. For example, in 2021 a quality management system was introduced in Austria. On the level of individual teachers (the other two levels being school leadership and instructional teams), it is supposed that each teacher forms an individual profile in which they describe their professional goals and values as the basis of individual professional development activities (BMBWF, 2024). In Slovenia, the new National Framework for Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance in the Field of Education and Training has been in place since 2017. It presupposes indicators that would focus on a safe and supportive

school environment for all stakeholders (including teachers) (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017).

Policy-research Evidence

The review of research was performed with a view to determining whether and which topics are addressed and what implications they hold for policymaking in the fields of developing teachers' SEDA competencies, stress, and well-being in the HAND:ET field trial countries.

Table 6: Policy-oriented research implications for teachers' SEDA competencies development in the HAND:ET field trial countries

	Austria	Croatia	Portugal	Slovenia	Sweden
National/regional/local research	Teacher Health Survey (2010) ISCED 2 and 3	Research on: Social reputation and status in society; Emotional competencies, job satisfaction; Emotional competencies, self-efficacy, resilience; Burnout; Personality-traits	Social and emotional learning: Reflections on theory and practice in Portuguese schools School Mental Health Promotion Project CRESCER project Calmly – Learning to Learn Yourself	Several small-scale studies (resilience, mindfulness, stress, burnout, SEDA competencies, work satisfaction, and their relatedness) with policy implications were provided	Limited. Focused on the importance of teachers' SEDA competencies for students' well-being and academic achievement Deficient initial education in the field of cultural diversity, and limited linguistic diversity Teachers' health
International studies	Preparing teachers for diversity (DG EAC, 2017) TALIS	TALIS HAND PROMEHS	TALIS	TALIS PISA HAND	TALIS HAND

Ljubetić and Maglica (2020) noted that while the impact of social and emotional learning programmes on students is well researched, little attention has been paid to the impact of social and emotional learning programmes on teachers'

social and emotional skills, a view that arguably can also apply to all of the HAND:ET field trial countries. Except for participation in international surveys (e.g., the Teacher Health Survey as part of the World Health Organisation (2024) study "Health Behaviour in School-aged Children" and TALIS (OECD 2019, 2020), which partly addressed teachers' SEDA competencies and well-being, the HAND:ET field trial countries do not monitor these competencies on the national level systematically and regularly. Even though several examples of national research and in some cases also comparative research (e.g., Gradišek et al., 2020; Šteh et al., 2019) were found, these were mostly done on non-representative national samples and conducted once or at several points in the school year.

Teachers' SEDA competencies development was also addressed in several national and European applied projects. For example, the School Mental Health Promotion Project in Portugal looked at promoting adolescents' mental health by building the capacity of school teachers and school staff. Still, positive outcomes for teachers' well-being are evident. CRESCER focuses on teachers' socio-emotional learning and generating a socio-affective school environment. Three HAND:ET field trial countries (Croatia, Slovenia, Sweden) already collaborated in the predecessor of the HAND:ET project, namely, HAND in HAND: Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies (A Whole School Approach) (HAND) (Kozina, 2020), where policy experimentation in the field of developing students and teachers' social and emotional and diversity awareness skills was focused on.

Although large-sample and longitudinal research is missing and several research gaps in the field were revealed, based on the review performed one may argue that research attention to teachers' SEDA competencies and related concepts like well-being, stress and burnout has increased in the HAND:ET field trial countries over the last few years. The identified research provides several policy implications, pointing to the importance of systematic systemic support for developing teachers' SEDA competencies. However, further research to support policy planning in the field is called for. These findings concerning the field of developing teachers' SEDA competencies correspond with Symeonidis's (2024) findings regarding teachers' education research generally. He argues that the lack of a knowledge base of large-scale and longitudinal studies and absence of a systematic connection among small-scale studies mean that teacher education research is often still seen as underdeveloped and holding limited potential to influence policy. While he recognised the rise of teacher education research in recent years, he states that the increased quantity of research produced has yet to succeed in developing a systematic knowledge base for the field. Ultimately, Smith's (2024) recognition should be considered as meaning that the responsibility for strengthening the role of research in teacher education policy lies with both the system and research.

Ongoing Professional and Political Debates

The policy debates on teachers' well-being and SEDA competencies in the HAND:ET field trial countries became especially prominent during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused schools to close, teachers to make demands, and stressful working conditions. For example, in Portugal the 23/24 School+ Plan was established with the aim of consolidating and recovering from the pandemic-triggered crisis. The plan also includes social and emotional and mental well-being and supporting educational communities (Portuguese

Table 7: Ongoing professional and political debates regarding teachers' SEDA competencies in the HAND:ET field trial countries

	Austria	Croatia	Portugal	Slovenia	Sweden
Policy/professional/public debate	The COVID situation Teacher shortages A focus on lateral entrants	Ombudsman stresses the importance of students' mental health and well-being (during the COVID pandemic and earthquake) and teachers' competencies to deal with them	Working conditions Shortage of teachers 2023 strikes	Lack of teachers and lateral entries Teachers' working conditions (salary negotiations, career advancement)	The voices of teachers' unions, which do not attract much political and media attention The National Professional Programme for principals, teachers and preschool teachers (strengthening the profession, making the profession more attractive)
Recent/ongoing reforms	/	Comprehensive curricular reform with the stated need to strengthen teachers' competencies and training National Plan (2027) – advancing teachers' professional development	23/24 School+ Plan Evaluation of the system, including SEDA competencies in schools Training Initiatives Promoting teachers' well-being	Curricula renewal (2021–2026) National Education Programme (2023–2033)	Modernisation of education programmes Improving teachers' working conditions (employing teaching assistants to ease the administrative burden on teachers)

Republic, 2023). The shortages of teachers (generally and/or in certain subjects and geographical areas) across Europe, including in the HAND:ET field trial countries, have in recent years also acted to considerably stimulate these debates.

The review shows that the HAND:ET field trial countries are in different stages of the reform process of their education systems. Both recently published (Croatia) and developing (Slovenia) strategies for the development of education largely respond to the identified challenges and importance of teachers' SEDA competencies for dealing with them, as well as the wider transformation of teachers' initial and continuous professional development (Ministry of Education of the Republic of Slovenia, 2024; Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, 2023). In these two countries, the modernisation of programmes and curricula is identified as the field calling for the development of teachers' SEDA competencies. For example, in Slovenia the curricula renewal proposes five common goals including health and well-being, regarding which the role of teachers in promoting the holistic (mental, physical, social) well-being of students is emphasised together with the importance of their relational competence. In Portugal and Sweden, initiatives have been accepted with the aim of improving teachers' working conditions and well-being.

Conclusions

The chapter aims to provide comparative insights into the national policy frameworks supporting the development of teachers' SEDA competencies in the HAND:ET field trial countries (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden). The review reveals that no clear definition of SEDA competencies exists in the policy documents of these countries. While these competencies are not explicitly defined in core educational legislation, they are implicitly defined in educational and other sectoral policy documents. For example, they are implicitly defined in terms of health promotion in Croatia and a safe and supportive school environment in Slovenia. When mentioned, they are mainly defined in terms of supporting the development of students' SEDA competencies. Some authors (e.g., Hascher & Waber, 2021) even show the complexity of the SEDA competencies and related difficulties in establishing a single definition of them. Further, from the perspective of policy studies (e.g., Hogwood & Gunn, 1984), a clear statement of the goals and definitions of SEDA competencies in policy documents would make them more visible and add to their implementation.

The review of existing policies in the HAND:ET field trial countries (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden) reveals a gap with regard to national and international comparative data on teachers' SEDA competencies and the broader field of teacher well-being. Not one of the countries systematically

collects these data, with such data usually being limited to the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS 2018) reports (OECD 2019, 2020). The same situation is observed in the field of policy-oriented research, which does not systematically monitor the impact of different (national) policies on teachers' SEDA competencies. The findings support those of Roeser (2016) highlighting the neglect of teacher SEDA competencies in research, policy and practice.

Despite some common features, mostly in terms of a lack of systemic support for developing teachers' SEDA competencies in the HAND:ET countries, several differences were also identified. Substantial variations across countries remain in the availability and content of policies and programmes aimed at boosting teachers' SEDA competencies. This also corresponds to the findings (Štremfel, 2024), which show differences between teachers from different HAND:ET field trial countries concerning perceived policy support from the national level, school level, initial professional development and continuous professional development.

At least some explanations can be provided for the established differences among the national policy contexts that support the development of SEDA competencies. EU countries have sovereignty over their national education systems and EU institutions only play a formally supportive role in the development of national educational policies and practices, including teacher professional development. The fact that teachers' well-being has only recently appeared on the EU agenda (Council of the EU, 2021), along with the non-binding character of the EU's cooperation in the field of education (Treaty on European Union/ Maastricht Treaty, 1992; Lisbon Conclusions, 2000), and the structural and cultural differences[3] in national educational contexts, makes the identified differences in the systemic support given for developing teachers' SEDA competencies understandable. All the more so when we consider that teacher education is a field with a strong institutional character due to state control of the budget, regulations and provisions and is thus also highly politicised (e.g., Symeonidis, 2021). Like other educational fields, teacher professional development depends on complex professional and social negotiations, leading to different national policy responses and approaches.

The established differences in the approaches to teacher education, including the development of teachers' SEDA competencies, should be carefully con-

3 For example, Hecht and Shin (2015) stress the differences between individualistic Western and collectivist Eastern EU societies. They explain that cultures differ in the way they construe the self as representing individual personhood, while others underline the importance of the collective group. For instance, behaviours like shyness and anxiety are considered problematic in individualistic societies such as Western cultures, but may be regarded as positive personality traits in traditional collectivist Eastern societies.

sidered while contextualising the implementation of the HAND:ET programme in different national contexts (Fredericks et al., 2024), evaluating their results (e.g., Roczen et al., 2024; Rožman et al. 2024) and identifying implications for the further development of this important and emerging topic in European education (see Chapter 9 of this book).

References

Auld, E., & Morris, P. (2014). Comparative education, the 'New Paradigm' and policy borrowing: constructing knowledge for educational reform. *Comparative Education, 50*(2), 129–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2013.826497

Barlett, I., & Vavrus, F. (2017). *Rethinking Case Study Research: A Comparative Approach.* Routledge.

BMBWF (Bundesministerium, Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung) [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research] (2024). *QMS – Qualitätsmanagement für Schulen* [Quality management for schools]. https://www.qms.at

BMBWF (Bundesministerium, Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung) [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research], BMSGPK (Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz) [Federal Ministry Republic of Austria, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection], & Austrian Youth Red Cross (2024). GIVE – Servicestelle für Gesundheitsförderung an Österreichs Schulen [Service centre for health promotion in Austrian schools]. https://www.give.or.at

Börzel, T. A. (2005). Europeanization: How the European Union Interacts with its Member States. In S. Bulmer & C. Lequesne (Eds.), *The Member States of the European Union* (pp. 45–76). Oxford University Press.

CASEL, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2013). CASEL Guide 2013. Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs. Preschool and Elementary School Edition. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED581699.pdf

Colebatch, H. K. (2006). What work makes policy? *Policy Sciences, 39*, 309–321. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-006-9025-4

Council of the EU (2021). *Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030)* (2021/C66/01). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)

Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567). https://www.do.se/choose-language/english/discrimination-act-2008567

Downes, P. (2020). Foreword. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe* (pp. 9–12). Verlag Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/open-access/11406/11406_Kozina%20ED%20-%20Social%20emotional%20and%20intercultural%20competencies%20for%20inclusive%20school%20environments%20across%20Europe.pdf

EACEA (2019). *European Policy Experimentations in the field of Education and Training led by high-level public authorities.* https://wayback.archive-it.org/

12090/20210122045332mp_/https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/european-policy-experimentations-in-the-fields-of-education-and-training-led-by-high-level-public-authorities-2020_en

Eurydice (2021). *Teachers in Europe, Careers, Development and Well-being. Eurydice Report.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/teachers_in_europe_2020_chapter_6.pdf

Fraser, C., Kennedy, A., Reid, L., & Mckinney, S. (2007). Teachers' continuing professional development: contested concepts, understandings and models. *Journal of In-Service Education, 33*(2), 153–169. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674580701292913

Gradišek, P., Pečjak, S., Rijavec, M., & Jurčec, L. (2020). Teaching as a Calling and Well-Being of Slovenian and Croatian Teachers. *Psihologijske teme, 29*(2), 249–267. https://doi.org/10.31820/pt.29.2.3

Hascher, T., & Waber, J. (2021). Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000–2019. *Educational Research Review, 34*, 100411. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100411

Hecht, M. L., & Shin, Y. (2015). Culture and social and emotional competencies. In J. Durlak, T. Gullotta, C. Domitrovich, P., Goren & R. Weissberg (Eds.) *The Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning* (pp. 50–64). The Guildford Press.

Hogwood, B. W., & Gunn, L. A. (1984). *Policy analysis for the real world.* Oxford University Press.

Kozina, A. (Ed.) (2020). *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe.* Verlag Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/open-access/11406/11406_Kozina%20ED%20-%20Social%20emotional%20and%20intercultural%20competencies%20for%20inclusive%20school%20environments%20across%20Europe.pdf

Kozina, A. (Ed.) (2024). *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives.* Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000 Presidency Conclusions (2000). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm

Ljubetić, M., & Maglica, T. (2020). Social and emotional learning in education and care policy in Croatia. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education, 9*(3), 650–659. http://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v9i3.20495

Matos, M. G. de, Branquinho, C., Noronha, C., Moraes, B., Santos, O., et al. (2022). *Observatório de saúde psicológica e bem-estar: Monitorização e ação* [Observatory of psychological health and well-being: Monitoring and action]. Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência, Direção-Geral da Educação, Programa Nacional de Promoção do Sucesso Escolar, Equipa Aventura Social / ISAMB, Universidade de Lisboa, Ordem dos Psicólogos Portugueses e Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.

Ministry of Education of the Republic of Slovenia [Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje] (2024). *Osnutek-predloga-Nacionalnega-programa-vzgoje-in-izobrazevanja-2023-2033* [National Education Programme 2023–2033 – Draft]. https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MVI/Dokumenti/Razvoj-solstva/DS-

NPVI/Nacionalni-program/Osnutek-predloga-Nacionalnega-programa-vzgoje-in-izobrazevanja-2023-2033.pdf

Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia [Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport] (2017). Nacionalni okvir za ugotavljanje in zagotavljanje kakovosti na področju vzgoje in izobraževanja [National framework for identifying and ensuring quality in the field of education]. http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/urad_za_razvoj_in_kakovost_izobrazevanja/sektor_za_razvoj_izobrazevanja/ugotavljanje_in_zagotavljanje_kakovosti_v_vzgoji_in_izobrazevanju/

Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia (2023). Nacionalni plan razvoja sustava obrazovanja za razdoblje do 2027 godine [National Plan for Development of Education and Training System until 2027]. https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Obrazovanje/AkcijskiINacionalniPlan/Nacionalni-plan-razvoja-sustava-obrazovanja-za-razdoblje-do-2027.pdf

OECD (2019). *TALIS 2018 results (Volume I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners.* OECD Publishing.

OECD (2020). *TALIS 2018 results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals.* OECD Publishing.

PH Styria (University College of Teacher Education Styria) [Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark]. (2024). *Admission Procedure* [Aufnahmeverfahren]. https://www.phst.at/ausbildung/vor-dem-studium/aufnahmeverfahren/

Portuguese Republic [República Portuguesa] (2023). *Escola+ 23/24* [School+ 23/24]. https://escolamais.dge.medu.pt/acoes-especificas/63-planos-de-desenvolvimento-pessoal-social-e-comunitario

Roczen, N., Rožman, M., Delgado-Osorio, X., Nguyen T. M., & Hartig, J. (2024). Evaluation of the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity Awareness Career Challenges. Findings from the Participants' Perspective. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 203–230). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Roeser, R. W. (2016). Processes of teaching, learning, and transfer in mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) for teachers: A contemplative educational perspective. In K. A. Schonert-Reichl & R. W. Roeser (Eds.), *Handbook of mindfulness in education* (pp. 149–170). Springer.

Rožman, M., Roczen, N., & Hartig, J. (2024). Evaluation of the HAND:ET System – Results of the Questionnaire Scales. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 181–200). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Hanson-Peterson, J. L., & Hymel, S. (2015). SEL and preservice teacher education. In J. A. Durlak, C. E. Domitrovich, R. P. Weissberg & T. P. Gullotta (Eds.), *Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice* (pp. 406–421). The Guilford Press.

School Psychology Support Association Styria [Unterstützungsverein Schulpsychologie Steiermark]. (2024). *Consortium School:Support* [ARGE Schul:Support]. https://schulpsychologenakademie.at/arge-schulsupport/

Smith, K. (2024). Evidence-Based, Evidence-Informed or Evidence-Ignored Teacher Education? The Role of Research in Teacher Education. In V. Symeonidis (Ed.), *Enhancing the Value of Teacher Education Research Introduction and Key Messages* (pp. 23–41). Brill.

Symeonidis (Ed.) (2021). *Europeanisation in Teacher Education. A Comparative Case Study of Teacher Education Policies and Practices*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003013969

Symeonidis, V. (2024). Enhancing the Value of Teacher Education Research Introduction and Key Messages. In V. Symeonidis (Ed.), Enhancing the Value of Teacher Education Research Introduction and Key Messages (pp. 1–19). Brill.

Šteh, B., Kalin, J., & Čepič, R. (2019). Status of the teacher and the teaching profession: views from within. In J. Kalin & R. Čepić (Eds.), *Poklicni razvoj učiteljev: Ugled in transverzalne kompetence* [Teachers' Professional Development: Status and transversal competencies] (pp. 159–180). Založba Univerze v Ljubljani. https://doi.org/10.4312/9789610601951

Štremfel, U. (2024). Teachers social, emotional, and diversity awareness competencies: from policy experimentation to policy recommendations. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges: Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 231–245). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Treaty on European Union/Maastricht Treaty (1992). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/the-parliament-and-the-treaties/maastricht-treaty

Vizek Vidović, V., & Domović, V. (2013). Teachers in Europe – Main trends, issues and challenges. *Croatian Journal of Education, 15*(3), 219–250.

World Health Organization (2024). *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study*. https://www.who.int/europe/initiatives/health-behaviour-in-school-aged-children-(hbsc)-study

Chapter 9
Supporting Teachers' Social and Emotional Competencies and Diversity Awareness in the Future

Implications for Educational Policies and Practices

Urška Štremfel[1], Ana Kozina[1], Tina Vršnik Perše[1,2], Iva Odak[3], Ivana Pikić Jugović[3], Lisa Paleczek[4,5], Valerie Fredericks[4,5], Nina Roczen[6], Mojca Rožman[6,7], Nina Eliasson[8], Helene Dahlström[8], Gina Tomé[9,10], Margarida Gaspar de Matos[9,10,11], Hrvoje Bakić[12], Aleš Ojsteršek[13] & Iva Perković[14]

Abstract

The chapter is based on summarised findings of both the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges policy experiment (presented in volume 1) and analyses of current European Union and national policy frameworks (presented in this volume), and elaborates on the conditions needed to ensure the scalability, transferability and thus sustainability of the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project outcomes and the systematic policy and political support needed on the European Union and national levels. It sets out 39 guidelines organised in 5 areas: 1) Including social and emotional and diversity awareness content in teachers' professional development; 2) Supporting

1 Educational Research Institute, Slovenia
2 Faculty of Education University of Maribor, Slovenia
3 Institute for Social Research in Zagreb; Centre for Educational Research and Development, Croatia
4 University of Graz, Austria
5 Research Center for Inclusive Education, Austria
6 DIPF | Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education, Germany
7 IEA International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Germany
8 Mid Sweden University, Sweden
9 University of Lisbon, Portugal
10 Aventura Social Team, Portugal
11 Faculty of Human Sciences of the Catholic University of Portugal
12 Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia
13 Ministry of Education of the Republic of Slovenia
14 Network of Education Policy Centers

the development and implementation of teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness programmes; 3) Considering the role of working conditions in teachers' well-being; 4) Enhancing teachers' professional status in society; and 5) Improving policy frameworks for supporting teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness on all levels of the European Union's multi-level governance. While considering the differences in current national policy arrangements and challenges to teachers' well-being and the development of their social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness in the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project field-trial countries (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden), the chapter also introduces specific guidelines concerning ways to foster teachers' SEDA development in their respective national contexts.

Keywords: HAND:ET, Policy Guidelines, European Union, Field Trial Countries, Social and Emotional Competencies and Diversity Awareness, Initial and Continuous Professional Development, Working Conditions, Teachers' Professional Status in Society

Introduction

As a policy experiment, the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges project (HAND:ET project) aims to provide policy-oriented research evidence to better understand the individual, school and system-level factors relevant for enhancing teachers' social and emotional competencies and diversity-awareness (SEDA competencies) as vital elements for supporting and navigating teachers' professional careers. Accordingly, the HAND:ET project seeks to contribute considerably to the forming of a comprehensive teacher policy in the European Union (EU) that encompasses every stage of teachers' professional careers. In this manner, it sets out EU-level and country-specific recommendations addressing structural problems of the teaching profession today in an evidence-based way. The project thus outlines the conditions needed for the scalability, transferability and hence sustainability of the HAND:ET project outcomes in the broader area of teachers' SEDA competencies and teachers' professional development.[15]

The recommendations follow a review of existing national policy frameworks supporting teachers' SEDA competencies in the participating countries (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) as well as findings of the external evaluation of the

15 For a conceptual understanding of teachers' SEDA competencies, please refer to Volume 1 (Kozina, 2024). The conceptualisation of these complex and broad competencies within the HAND:ET project is also crucial for understanding the scope and focus of the policy guidelines presented in this chapter.

HAND:ET system (volume 1) and insights from the national stakeholder meetings.

The recommendations presented in this document are divided into two sections. The general recommendations found in Part 1 are what we believe to be the most crucial while continuing to develop EU and national policies and practices in this area. In fact, these recommendations should be considered together since many are closely intertwined. The order in which they are listed does not suggest a particular priority, but may be seen as giving meaningful direction while undertaking actions for ensuring that the development of teachers' SEDA competencies in the EU reaches its full potential. These broader recommendations for the EU and national educational policies and practices are as follows:

1. Including SEDA content in teachers' professional development
2. Supporting the development and implementation of teachers' SEDA programmes
3. Considering the role of working conditions in teachers' well-being
4. Enhancing teachers' professional status in society
5. Improving policy frameworks for supporting teachers' SEDA competencies on all levels of the EU's multi-level governance.

Part 2 presents the most important specific recommendations that we assert, alongside the general recommendations found in Part 1, should be especially considered while developing national implementation plans for systemically supporting the development of teachers' SEDA competencies in the field trial countries (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden).

Guidelines for EU and National Educational Policies and Practices

1. Including SEDA content in teachers' professional development

Key findings and outcomes

To address contemporary teaching challenges, programmes that focus on teachers' SEDA competencies are essential. In the EU countries, programmes have thus far largely focused on supporting students' SEDA competencies and less on the SEDA competencies held by teachers (e.g., Jones et al., 2013). Further, a recent qualitative study (Rodriguez et al., 2020) revealed that teachers themselves can neglect their own development in the social and emotional domain and focus on their students' respective development instead.

The analysis of the policy contexts of the field trial countries (Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden) reveals the current lack of systemic support for

teachers and school staff for developing SEDA competencies in both initial and continuous professional development. The lack of opportunities for developing SEDA competencies in their initial education was revealed in particular by teachers participating in all of the field trial countries (Štremfel, 2024).

Recommendations

1.1 Initial professional development

1.1.1 *Integrate SEDA competencies into existing courses and consider introducing them in the modality of specific subjects.* Although the universal nature of SEDA competencies allows them to be integrated into different subjects, to comprehensively address the topic specific subjects concentrating on SEDA competencies could provide further added value (e.g., Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

1.1.2 *Enhance university teachers' SEDA competencies.* Teachers serve as role models for their students (e.g., Scheirlinckx et al., 2023). This also applies to the university teachers who are educating future teachers (Brust Nemet & Velki, 2016).

1.1.3 *Ensure that every future teacher receives appropriate education in the field.* This could be achieved by adding SEDA competencies to the competency profiles of graduates (future teachers) and the criteria for programme accreditation and/or by requiring that all future teachers receive certain credits in the field of SEDA competencies development. Even thought the initial professional development of teachers is the responsibility of autonomous universities, teachers' competence profiles are an idea that has long been a recurring theme in the EU policy documents (e.g., Symeonidis, 2021). Recognising the importance of teachers' SEDA competencies for teachers' personal and professional well-being (e.g., Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) and students' social-emotional and academic outcomes (e.g., Jennings et al., 2013) makes the inclusion of teachers' SEDA competencies in competence profiles relevant.

1.2 Continuous professional development

1.2.1 *Advocating the importance of continuous professional development in the SEDA field with the time allocated for continuous professional development being part of paid working hours.* The systemic arrangement of continuous professional development strongly influences teachers' readiness, motivation and responsibility to participate (e.g., Osman & Warner, 2020).

1.2.2 *Planning long-term continuous professional development programmes.* Long-term programmes with professional learning communities and supportive environments established inside schools are advised. The

cooperation of principals in these programmes is crucial (e.g., Cefai et al., 2018).

1.2.3 *Providing supervision as a systemic measure and practice.* For SEDA competencies to be developed fully, continuous long-term professional support in the form of supervision is called for (e.g., Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

1.2.4 *Providing tailored support for early-career teachers.* This is especially vital in the first year of employment, aimed at regulating stress, enhancing self-care and supporting teachers' SEDA competencies to meet a wide range of challenges in everyday working life. Beginning teachers are prone to epistemological challenges and emotional exhaustion (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). Their social and emotional competencies have been found to be important determinants of early-career adaptation and occupational well-being (Carstensen & Klusmann, 2021). Teachers, particularly in the first year(s) of employment, therefore need support in the field of regulating stress, enhancing self-care and supporting their SEDA competencies to meet diverse challenges in everyday working life (see also Gaikhorst et al., 2017).

1.2.5 *Establishing a teacher competence framework.* This should clearly state the basic competencies that teachers should develop (e.g., Council of the EU, 2021). Such competencies should also include the development of teachers' SEDA competencies (e.g., Cefai et al., 2018, p. 12). As a first step, certain hours of continuous professional development in the field of developing SEDA competencies could therefore be made compulsory for every teacher to attend.

1.2.6 *Introducing obligatory special SEDA programmes for new employees without teacher qualifications.* It is important to ensure that the current policy measures in place for overcoming the teacher shortages across Europe (e.g., in Austria (for more, see Chapter 3) and Slovenia (for more, see Chapter 6)) do not overlook the importance of the SEDA competencies of educational staff (e.g., Collie, 2017; Jennings et al., 2013; Vorhaus, 2010; Zins et al., 2007).

2. Supporting the development and implementation of teachers' SEDA programmes

Findings and outcomes

The findings of the HAND:ET system formative and summative evaluation show several positive outcomes, including an increase in teachers' SEDA competencies together with their positive assessment of the programme, perceived changes in terms of aspects of their lifestyle and a wide range of reported learning outcomes. The HAND:ET system may accordingly be evaluated as

effective, even though its effects are complex, appear to vary across countries, and depend on the particular outcome being examined. Based on the findings, several strengths are recommended for consideration while planning and conducting programmes to support teachers' SEDA competencies (for more details, see Kozina, 2024).

Recommendations

2.1 *The integration of social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness.* The complexities of temporary teaching challenges call for enhanced social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness. By including this combination of competencies, they could reinforce each other and lead to more positive outcomes (Jensen, 2024; Matić Bojić et al., 2024)

2.2 *Content flexibility.* SEDA programmes should maintain their key ingredients (focus on core competencies and core activities) and at the same time be adapted to the needs of specific national contexts, schools or participants. Adaptations might also relate to the different career stages of the participants (e.g., Lund Nielsen, 2020; Odescalchi et al., 2024). To do so, the trainers need profound knowledge and a wide range of tools that they can teach and adapt to the participants' needs (e.g., Lund Nielsen, 2020).

2.3 *Length of the programme.* Even though the HAND:ET was implemented in longer (whole-year) and shorter (two meetings) versions and hence allows flexibility in its delivery, the longer version is preferred by participants and proved to be more efficient (Roczen et al., 2024b; Rožman et al., 2024).

2.4 *Long-term supervision support.* Ensuring long-term professional support for those participating in SEDA programmes would enhance the programmes' long-term effectiveness and the quality embodiment of key ingredients in the programmes in teachers' daily practice (see also Durlak, 2016).

2.5 *On-site implementation of the programme.* The on-site (yet outside the school) implementation compared to on-line/virtual implementation permits the more active involvement and collaborative work of teachers, encouraging their interaction and exchange. It also creates a possibility of establishing a distance from everyday working life and focusing on the development of SEDA competencies (e.g., Roczen et al., 2024b).

2.6 *Whole-school approach.* Given that SEDA competencies are strongly linked to a positive school climate, SEDA programmes should include the whole school. Research (e.g., Desimone, 2009; Durlak, 2016; Lund Nielsen et al., 2019) shows that programmes integrated into the entire school and its daily practices have a stronger likelihood of continuing compared to those programmes only implemented in some classrooms. The involvement of the school leaders is important for assuring commitment and

sustainability. This includes changing the school culture by making the orientation towards social interaction and relations more pronounced. It further allows the programme to be adapted to suit a given school's needs (Matić Bojić et al., 2024).

2.7 *Competent and experienced trainers.* Trainers with adequate professional backgrounds and experiences are required for the delivery of the SEDA programmes, addressing the participants' needs, and creating a positive and inclusive atmosphere. To successfully perform their role, the trainers must have initial training and supervision support. It is essential that trainers undergo the training with a focus on their own SEDA competencies (e.g., Oskarsson et al., 2024).

2.8 *Small groups.* Groups (15–25 participants) are preferred for the implementation of the SEDA programmes because the acquisition of SEDA competencies entails many practical and interactive exercises while small groups also enable all participants to participate actively (Roczen et al., 2024b).

2.9 *Multi-method evaluation of the programme.* SEDA programmes must be evaluated. A multi-method approach is advised, consisting of qualitative and quantitative measures and combining an experimental and participant-focused procedure that includes summative and formative components (e.g., Roczen et al., 2024a; Štremfel et al., 2020).

3. Considering the role of working conditions in teachers' well-being

Key findings and outcomes

Teachers report work-related stress arising from the volume of administrative tasks, staff shortages, lack of support from external professional agencies, challenging behaviour of students, frequent changes in national policies and regulations and, in some cases, also a lack of skills and training (Eurydice, 2021; OECD 2019, 2020a). Their low satisfaction with existing working conditions was also demonstrated in strikes (e.g., in Croatia in 2019 and Portugal in 2023) (for more, see Chapters 4 and 5).

Recommendations

3.1 *Paying attention to teachers' personal and professional well-being with systematic analysis of teachers' needs in the field.* This should help develop evidence-based system-level measures for the field (e.g., Brady & Wilson, 2021).

3.2 *Supporting principals in recognising the importance of SEDA competencies.* Principals' recognition of the importance of SEDA competencies in the

school environment along with the development of their own SEDA competencies are important for positive interpersonal relations and a positive school climate (e.g., Cefai et al., 2018, p. 13).

3.3 *Establishing support services with which teachers can discuss their challenges in a safe environment.* This may be achieved by establishing internal support services in schools or external ones, depending on the national context.

3.4 *Ensuring the highest possible percentage of permanent jobs in schools.* Fairly frequent temporary contracts make the profession less attractive and add to teachers' stress (e.g., Forcella et al., 2009). Frequent fluctuation of educational staff can also negatively impact the school climate and the students' well-being, which largely relies on stable and supportive relationships with teachers.

3.5 *Establishing national career frameworks.* It is vital to establish national career frameworks that allow stimulating career progression and enhance teachers' motivation and willingness to remain in the profession (e.g., OECD, 2020b).

3.6 *Providing flexible career paths.* These may allow teachers to temporarily perform other tasks in the education system (e.g., practically oriented research, work of public officials on the local or national level) (e.g., European Commission, 2020).

3.7 *Raising teachers' awareness of the importance of exposing the problem of their non-favourable working conditions on the levels of policy and society.* Teachers possess the greatest insights into the professional challenges they are facing. To address them systemically, it is necessary that they proactively communicate them to the policy level. Offering teachers the possibility to be actors of change also contributes to the attractiveness and prestige of the teaching career (Schleicher, 2011). However, TALIS 2018 results (OECD, 2020a) show that on average across the OECD countries 24% of teachers believe that they can influence policy and only 14% of teachers consider that policymakers in their country value their views.

4. Enhancing teachers' professional status in society

Key findings and outcomes

Human beings have existential needs to feel valued and feel that they have integrity. Teachers are on the frontline when many societies' challenges are expressed in the classroom as a microcosm mirroring society at large and at the same time crucial agents when the classroom of today is seen as the society of tomorrow (Juul & Jensen 2005, 2017; Mattson, 2019 in Kozina, 2024). Yet, the TALIS (OECD, 2019, 2020a) data reveal that the majority of teachers in the

HAND:ET countries do not feel valued in society (for more, see Chapter 1). This can add to teachers' already stressful working conditions, low well-being, and burnout. Although SEDA competencies can help teachers cope with these pressures, systemic changes in society are also required to make the teaching profession more valued.

Recommendations

4.1 *Attracting students to teacher university programmes.* Systematic educational policy measures (e.g., scholarships) are needed to attract the best candidates to the teaching profession (e.g., Henry et al., 2012).

4.2 *Increasing the capacity of teachers' programmes in university programmes.* The projected teacher shortages across the EU (e.g., European Commission, 2023a) in the coming years make it reasonable to expect that empty positions will not be fulfilled by the existing capacities (the number of students) in teachers' university programmes.

4.3 *Issuing public campaigns to promote the teaching profession.* To reveal individual teachers' stories and the role they play in students' lives as inspiration for (young) citizens to value the teaching profession and enter it (e.g., Willis et al., 2021).

4.4 *(Public) recognition of teachers' achievements with awards for teachers.* Individual teachers' achievements should be strongly promoted to increase the profession's value in society, as confirmation of their work and to inspire other teachers to stay in the profession (Huggett et al., 2012; Seppala & Smith, 2020).

4.5 *Raising parents' awareness of their rights and obligations, as well as the boundaries of their involvement in the educational process.* Teachers today report parents' communication as being a considerable element of their work-related stress (e.g., OECD, 2020a; Tekavc & Vončina, 2023). It is important to establish appropriate relationships of responsibility and authority between educational institutions and parents as concerns achieving students' learning and educational goals.

4.6. *Encouraging media coverage of the importance of teachers and knowledge in society.* More frequent and supportive reporting on education-related issues can help raise awareness of the important role played by teachers and education in society (e.g., Willis et al., 2021). However, TALIS 2018 (OECD, 2019, 2020a) results show that on average across the OECD countries 19% of teachers report that they feel valued by the media in their country.

5. Improving policy frameworks for supporting teachers' SEDA competencies on all levels of the EU's multi-level governance

Key findings and outcomes

The review of existing policies in the countries participating in the HAND:ET project shows that the development of teachers' SEDA competencies is not being optimally systemically supported in terms of clear political goals, initial and continuous professional development, favourable working conditions as well as systematic measurement and supporting policy-oriented research in the area (for more, see Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). For many of these measures, concerning which we have already presented recommendations in the previous sections, high-level political and policy support is needed.

Recommendations

5.1 *Making education a high political priority.* This would signal to all stakeholders that education is important and unite them in a common commitment and efforts to promote education as a prerequisite for a better future of society.

5.2 *Establishing clear European and national policy frameworks for developing teachers' SEDA competencies.* Clear policy frameworks would clarify actors' responsibilities and enhance their awareness and commitment to the issue (e.g., Cefai et al., 2018; Štremfel et al., 2020).

5.3 *Articulating the political and policy goals related to developing teachers' SEDA competencies.* For policies to be effective, it is vital that their goals are clearly stated. This sharpens the focus of different stakeholders in the pursuit of these goals while also improving the chances that their achievement is properly measured (e.g., Hogwood & Gunn, 1984).

5.4 *Making the SEDA dimension of education valued.* This could be done in terms of exposing teachers' and students' outcomes in this field as an important indicator of quality education, which at the moment is generally focused on cognitive outcomes and ignores social and emotional ones (e.g., Biesta, 2009).

5.5 *Opening up possibilities for teachers' voices in education policymaking.* Teachers should be given normative and de facto possibilities to participate actively in the forming of teacher policy on the school, local, regional, national and EU levels. Research (e.g., Good et al., 2017; OECD, 2019, 2020a) shows that their involvement in policymaking is limited.

5.6 *The systematic introduction of SEDA competencies into school development plans* would enhance the whole-school commitment to developing SEDA competencies (e.g., Meyers et al., 2018).

5.7 *Support systematic needs assessment of teachers in the SEDA field.* This should also be related to teachers' well-being, occupational stress, and burnout. The assessment of teachers' needs is important for developing responsive policies in the area (e.g., Brady & Wilson, 2021).

5.8. *Supporting scientific research in the field.* Scientific research insights are crucial for developing evidence-based measures to support the development of teachers' SEDA competencies and their well-being. Roczen et al. (2020) state that "schools are complex systems and that triggering a change in such system may depend on several contextual factors impossible to control for in small experimental studies". This demonstrates the need for further large-scale evaluation research in this field.

National-specific Recommendations

Austria

Current state

According to the findings of Chapter 3 and the Education and Monitoring Report (European Commission, 2023b), Austria's education system faces several challenges involving the teaching profession, including: a) the considerable staff shortages due to the ageing teaching force, rising student numbers and many qualified graduates choosing not to enter the teaching profession; b) the low attractiveness of the teaching profession; c) the teaching profession is not valued by society; and d) the limited mentoring and support available for new teachers.

Recommendations

The development of teachers' SEDA competencies could be integrated into the Human Resource Development Framework for the Austrian school system currently being prepared by the European Commission's Technical Support.

The national campaign "Great Job" seeks to modernise the image of schools, encourage people to join the teaching profession, and develop teacher education. At least in the final phase, this campaign could be considerably supported by the content regarding the development of teachers' SEDA competencies.

Both activities could be especially supported by:

– raising awareness among education professionals and policymakers that SEDA competencies and mindfulness approaches can increase mental health and of the fact that teachers need SEDA competencies as a fun-

damental tool in their daily duties while interacting with each other and their students;
- providing a clear national definition of SEDA competencies;
- ensuring the provision of mentoring and supervision for young teachers in the area of SEDA competencies;
- providing for a better structure of continuous professional development, more information about how to find specific offers, more possibilities to advertise them, structural possibilities to attend continuous professional development programmes as a whole school team or for more than 2 hours, not outside official working hours, and by offering incentives to participate in continuous professional development; and
- relieving principals of organisational and administrative tasks, expanding the opportunities to build their SEDA competencies, and establishing a positive school culture as important factors of teachers' and students' well-being.

Croatia

Current state

According to the findings in Chapter 4 and the Education and Monitoring Report (European Commission, 2023c), the Croatian education system faces several challenges involving the teaching profession, including: a) the shortage of teachers in certain areas of the country (e.g., islands, small rural areas); b) the shortage of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) teachers; c) the low salary (compared with the average salary); d) pressure from parents; e) the high administrative workload; f) the fact teachers feel that the teaching profession is not valued; and g) the large share of teachers who do not feel they can influence the educational policy or that politicians appreciate their opinions.

Recommendations

- To raise the awareness of school principals concerning the urgent need to address teachers' well-being and the development of their SEDA competencies
- To consider a further national adaptation of the HAND:ET programme
- To continue the discussion on the organisational and legal aspects of further introduction of the HAND:ET programme into the educational space in Croatia
- To contemplate ways of introducing the SEDA competencies empowerment programme into the first year of teachers' careers (apprenticeship period)

- To discuss possible modes of implementing the programme in the designated career period with the Education and Teacher Training Agency
- In consultation with local educational stakeholders, to consider the possibilities of implementing SEDA learning in local communities
- To consider amendments to the legislative framework in order to remove the barriers to effective in service-education
- To reinforce the national funding of research/projects about SEDA competencies in schools

Portugal

Current state

According to findings of Chapter 5 and the Education and Monitoring Report (European Commission, 2023d), Portugal's education system faces several challenges involving the teaching profession, including: a) the ageing teacher force and the fact not many young people are entering the profession; b) particular regions, subject areas and specialisations are encountering teacher shortages; c) the number of teacher graduates is shrinking; d) teachers believe that society does not value their work; and e) many teachers report work-related stress and exhaustion.

Recommendations

A new model of initial teacher training featuring longer internships is presently being prepared in Portugal. The possibilities of including SEDA competencies development programmes in this framework should be considered.

Intentions to reduce the administrative burden on teachers open space for discussion concerning whether this time can be devoted to teachers' professional development in the area of SEDA competencies.

Since several (shorter) trainings for teachers in the SEDA competencies field exist in Portugal, a common framework for these trainings and more systematic support for this framework should be considered.

Slovenia

Current state

According to the findings of Chapter 6 and the Education and Monitoring Report (European Commission, 2023e), Slovenia's education system faces challenges regarding the teaching profession, including: a) data from the Employment Service of Slovenia point to challenges when recruiting qualified teachers;

still, no comprehensive dataset on teacher shortages is centrally available; b) somewhat over 25% of Slovenian teachers reported that they wish to leave teaching within the next 5 years (OECD, 2020a), namely, higher than the OECD average. Slovenia is one of the top five countries in which teachers who reported experiencing stress at work are a lot more likely to want to leave teaching within the next 5 years; c) the small percentage of teachers who perceive that their work is appreciated by society; and d) the discriminatory behaviour of teachers as well as non-supportive relationships with students are issues exposed by international comparative assessment studies.

Recommendations

To help future professionals in education acquire new competencies, including digital and sustainable development competencies, the Ministry of Education plans to develop a proposal for updated pedagogic study programmes that will be tested and evaluated in at least 92 pilot studies. This could present an excellent opportunity for developing the SEDA competencies to be involved in the experiment as well.

As concerns digital skills and competencies for environmental sustainability, the Ministry of Education should consider options for supporting large-scale training in the field of a safe and supporting school environment, which also encompasses teachers' SEDA competencies, with the Recovery and Resilience Plan.

The need for high-quality, long-term and empirically tested continuous professional development programmes targeting teachers' SEDA competencies should be recognised. The evaluation of the existing programmes in this regard should be provided.

Greater time in the curriculum should be devoted to activities for developing students' SEDA competencies and specific support should be given to develop class teachers' SEDA competencies.

The transfer from university to work, along with mentoring and supervising for early-career teachers, should also be better supported in the field of SEDA competencies development.

The involvement of teachers' well-being and SEDA competencies as an indicator of quality education in the new framework for identifying and ensuring quality in education should be considered.

The whole-school approach and positive school climate should be enhanced by:

- supporting whole school teams, including principals in the development of SEDA competencies;
- considering opportunities for meaningfully including SEDA learning in School Education Plans; and

– further relieving school counselling service staff of administrative tasks so they can fully use their competencies to support teachers in the field of occupational stress, well-being and SEDA competencies development.

Sweden

Current state

According to the findings of Chapter 7 and the Education and Monitoring Report (European Commission, 2023f), Sweden's education system faces several challenges involving the teaching profession, including teacher shortages in most education sectors, and teachers not believing that their profession is valued in society.

Recommendations

In Sweden, the preparation of a national professional programme for teachers is in progress. It is aimed at teachers' competence development, increasing the quality of teaching, and making the profession more attractive. At this point, it is important to stress the importance of quality (evidence-based) programme implementation and to advocate the need to develop teachers' SEDA competencies as part of continuous professional development.

The Swedish National Agency for Education should provide long-term, national in-service training for teachers and other school staff concerning the understanding and development of SEDA competencies to support teachers in their personal and professional development. This could be organised in the same manner as the investment in in-service training in reading, science and mathematics areas in Sweden.

The responsibility for organising and running compulsory schools in Sweden is held by the main organisers (public or independent) while initiatives for focusing on SEDA competencies to some extent depend on individual schools or municipalities. Raising awareness among principals and local authorities about the importance of SEDA competencies is therefore needed.

In Sweden, continuous professional development of whole-school teams is already practised in the fields of reading, science and mathematics literacy. Recognising the importance of SEDA competencies, such a framework of trainings could be established in this field as well.

References

Biesta, G. (2009). Good education in an age of measurement: on the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 21*, 33–46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9064-9

Brady, J., & Wilson, E. (2021). Teacher wellbeing in England: teacher responses to school-level initiatives. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 51*(1), 45–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2020.1775789

Brust Nemet, M., & Velki, T. (2016). The Social, Emotional and Educational Competences of Teachers as Predictors of Various Aspects of the School Culture. *Croatian Journal of Education, 18*(4), 1087–1119. https://doi.org/10.15516/cje.v18i4.2006

Carstensen, B., & Klusmann, U. (2021). Assertiveness and adaptation: Prospective teachers' social competence development and its significance for occupational well-being. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 91*, 500–526. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12377

Cefai, C., Bartolo, P. A., Cavioni, V., & Downes, P. (2018). *Strengthening social and emotional education as a core curricular area across the EU. A review of the international evidence, NESET II report.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c7fae112-1529-11e8-9253-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

Collie, R. J. (2017). Teachers' Social and Emotional Competence: Links with Social and Emotional Learning and Positive Workplace Outcomes. In E. Frydenberg, A. J. Martin & R. J. Collie (Eds.), *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific* (pp. 167–184). Springer.

Council of the EU (2021). *Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030).* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)

Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational researcher, 38*(3), 181–199. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08331140

Donahue-Keegan, D., Villegas-Reimers, E., & Cressey, J. M. (2019). Integrating social emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching in teacher education preparation programs: The Massachusetts experience so far. *Teacher Education Quarterly, Fall 2019,* 150–168. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1231504.pdf

Durlak, J. A. (2016). Programme implementation in social and emotional learning. Basic issues and research findings. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 46*(3), 333–345. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2016.1142504

European Commission (2020). *Supporting teacher and school leader careers: A Policy Guide*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://op.europa.eu/sl/publication-detail/-/publication/f02d4648-7a07-11ea-b75f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

European Commission (2023a). *Education and Training Monitor 2023*. https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2023/en/

European Commission (2023b). *Education and Training Monitor 2023*. Austria. https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2023/en/country-reports/austria.html

European Commission (2023c). *Education and Training Monitor 2023*. Croatia. https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2023/en/country-reports/croatia.html

European Commission (2023d). *Education and Training Monitor 2023*. Portugal. https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2023/en/country-reports/portugal.html

European Commission (2023e). *Education and Training Monitor 2023*. Slovenia. https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2023/en/country-reports/slovenia.html

European Commission (2023f). *Education and Training Monitor 2023*. Sweden. https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2023/en/country-reports/sweden.html

Eurydice (2021). *Teachers in Europe, Careers, Development and Well-being. Eurydice Report.* https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/teachers_in_europe_2020_chapter_6.pdf

Forcella, L., Di Donato A., Reversi S., Fattorini E., & Boscolo P. (2009). Occupational stress, job insecurity and perception of the health status in Italian teachers with stable or temporary employment. *Journal of Biological Regulators and Homeostatic Agents, Apr-Jun*(2), 85–93.

Gaikhorst L., Beishuizen, J., Roosenboom, B., & Volman, M. (2017). The challenges of beginning teachers in urban primary schools. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(1), 46–61. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2016.1251900

Good, A., Fox Barocas, S., Chávez-Moreno, L. C., Feldman, R. C., & Canela, C. (2017). A Seat at the Table: How the Work of Teaching Impacts Teachers as Policy Agents. *Peabody Journal of Education, 92*, 505–520. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2017.1349490

Henry, G. T., Bastian, K. C., & Smith, A. A. (2012). Scholarships to Recruit the "Best and Brightest" Into Teaching: Who Is Recruited, Where Do They Teach, How Effective Are They, and How Long Do They Stay? *Educational Researcher, 41*(3), 83–92. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X124372

Hogwood, B. W., & Gunn, L. A. (1984). *Policy analysis for the real world*. Oxford University Press.

Huggett, K. N., Greenberg, R. B., Rao, D., Richards, B., Chauvin, S. W., Fulton, T. B., Kalishman, S., Littlefield, J., Perkowski, L., Robins, L., & Simpson, D. (2012). The design and utility of institutional teaching awards: A literature review. *Medical Teacher, 34*(11), 907–919. https://doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2012.731102

Jennings, P. A., Frank, J. L., Snowberg, K. E., Coccia, M. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2013). Improving classroom learning environments by Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE): results of a randomized controlled trial. *School Psychology Quarterly, 28*(4), 374–390. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000035

Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom out-

comes. *Review of educational research, 79*(1), 491–525. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693

Jensen, H. (2024). Foreword. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 7–12). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Jones, S. M., Bouffard, S. M., & Weissbourd, R. (2013). Educators' Social and Emotional Skills Vital to Learning. *Phi Delta Kappan, 94*(8), 62–65. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171309400815

Juul, J., & Jensen, H. (2017). *Relational Competence – Towards a New Culture in Education.* Edition + Plus.

Kozina, A. (Ed.). (2024). *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges. Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives.* Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Kozina, A., & Vršnik Perše, T. (2024). Conceptual Framework of the Project HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 21–40). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Lund Nielsen, B. (2020). Implementing the HAND in HAND programme for school staff and students. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Social, emotional, and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe – Relationships matter* (pp. 107–129). Verlag Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/open-access/11406/11406_Kozina%20ED%20-%20Social%20emotional%20and%20intercultural%20competencies%20for%20inclusive%20school%20environments%20across%20Europe.pdf

Lund Nielsen, B., Laursen, H. D., Andersen Reol, L., Jensen, H., Kozina, A., Vidmar, M., Rasmusson, M., Marušić, I., Denk, A., Roczen, N., Jurko, S., & Ojsteršek, A. (2019). Social, emotional and intercultural competencies: a literature review with a particular focus on the school staff. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 42*(3), 410–428. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2019.1604670

Matić Bojić, J., Pikić Jugović, J., & Puzić, S. (2024). "Why Didn't Anyone Tell us this Before?!" Integrating Social, Emotional and Diversity Awareness Competencies into Teacher Professional Development. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 41–58). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Meyers, D. C., Domitrovich, C. E., Dissi, R., Trejo J., & Greenberg, M. T. (2018). Supporting systemic social and emotional learning with a schoolwide implementation model. *Evaluation and Program Planning, 73*, 53–61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2018.11.005

Odescalchi, C., Fredericks, V., Riedner, L., Gasteiger-Klicpera, B., & Paleczek, L. (2024). Realising Quality Assurance in the HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Career Challenges Project. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with*

Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives (pp. 137–160). Waxmann Verlag. https://www.waxmann.com/index.php?eID=download&buchnr=4859

OECD (2019). *TALIS 2018 results (Volume I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners.* OECD Publishing.

OECD (2020a). *TALIS 2018 results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals.* OECD Publishing.

OECD (2020b). *Teachers' well-being: a framework for data collection and analysis, OECD Education Working Paper No. 213.* https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/c36fc9d3-en.pdf?expires=1695808315&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=626FF96FD5945A820D62AA5ABBA410E3

Oskarsson, M., & Gøtzsche, K. (2024). Train-the-Trainers and Implementation of the HAND:ET System in Five Countries from the Trainers' Perspective. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 89–107). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Osman, D. J. & Warner, J. R. (2020). Measuring teacher motivation: The missing link between professional development and practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 92*, 103064. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103064

Roczen, N., Endale, W., Vieluf, S., & Rožman, M. (2020). Development of the assessment for use in evaluation of the HAND in HAND programme. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe* (pp. 131–156). Verlag Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/open-access/11406/11406_Kozina%20ED%20-%20Social%20emotional%20and%20intercultural%20competencies%20for%20inclusive%20school%20environments%20across%20Europe.pdf

Roczen, N., Rožman, M., Delgado-Osorio, X., & Hartig, J. (2024). Developing the Assessment for the External Evaluation of the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers System. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 161–182). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Roczen, N., Rožman, M., Delgado-Osorio, X., Nguyen T. M., & Hartig, J. (2024b). Evaluation of the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity Awareness Career Challenges. Findings from the Participants' Perspective. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 203–230). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Rodriguez, V., Lynneth Solis, S., Mascio, B., Kiely Gouley, K., Jennings, P. A., & Brotman, L. M. (2020). With awareness comes competency: The Five awarenesses of teaching as a framework for understanding teacher social-emotional competence and well-being. *Early Education and Development, 31*(7), 940–972. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2020.1794496

Rožman, M., Roczen, N., & Hartig, J. (2024). Evaluation of the HAND:ET System – Results of the Questionnaire Scales. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers*

Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives (pp. 181–200). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Schleicher, A. (2011). *Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession: Lessons from around the World, International Summit on the Teaching Profession.* OECD Publishing. https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264113046-en

Scheirlinckx J., Van Raemdonck L., Abrahams L., Teixeira K. C., Alves G., Primi R., John O.-P., & De Fruyt, F. (2023). Social–emotional skills of teachers: Mapping the content space and defining taxonomy requirements. *Frontiers in Education.* 8:1094888. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1094888

Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Hanson-Peterson, J. L., & Hymel, S. (2015). SEL and preservice teacher education. In J. A. Durlak, C. E. Domitrovich, R. P. Weissberg & T. P. Gullotta (Eds.), *Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice* (pp. 406–421). The Guilford Press.

Seppala, N., & Smith, C. (2020). Teaching awards in higher education: a qualitative study of motivation and outcomes. *Studies in Higher Education, 45*(7), 1398–1412. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1593349

Symeonidis, V. (2021). *Europeanisation in Teacher Education. A Comparative Case Study of Teacher Education Policies and Practices.* Routledge.

Štremfel, U. (2020). The embeddedness of social, emotional and intercultural/transcultural learning in European and national educational policies and practices. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Social, emotional, and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe – Relationships matter* (pp. 39–58). Verlag Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/open-access/11406/11406_Kozina%20ED%20-%20Social%20emotional%20and%20intercultural%20competencies%20for%20inclusive%20school%20environments%20across%20Europe.pdf

Štremfel, U. (2024). Teachers Social, Emotional, and Diversity Awareness Competencies, From Policy Experimentation to Policy Recommendations. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity-Related Challenges, Volume 1: Experimentation Perspectives* (pp. 229–243). Waxmann Verlag. https://doi.org/10.31244/9783830998594

Štremfel, U., Vršnik Perše, T., & Mlekuž, A. (2020). Mainstreaming social, emotional and intercultural/transcultural learning in European and national educational policies and practices: The way forward. In A. Kozina (Ed.), *Social, emotional, and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe – Relationships matter* (pp. 235–244). Verlag Dr. Kovač. https://www.verlagdrkovac.de/open-access/11406/11406_Kozina%20ED%20-%20Social%20emotional%20and%20intercultural%20competencies%20for%20inclusive%20school%20environments%20across%20Europe.pdf

Tekavc J., & Vončina T. (2023). Parental Involvement in the Educational Process as a Potential Factor in Teachers' Experience of Work Stress. *Journal of Elementary Education, 16*(3), 339–355. https://doi.org/10.18690/rei.16.3.3089

Vorhaus, J. (2010). Social and Emotional Outcomes of Learning. In P. Peterson, E. Baker & B. McGaw (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* (3rd ed., pp. 673–684). Elsevier Ltd.

Willis, A., Thiele, C., Dwyer, R., Grainger, P., & Simon, S. (2021). The Pressing Need to Raise the Status of the Teaching Profession: The Launch Story of the Teachers of Australia Social Media Campaign. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *46*(2), 16–28. https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/aeipt.228952

Zins, J. E., Bloodworth, M. R., Weissberg, R. P., & Walberg, H. J. (2007). The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 17*(2–3), 191–210. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474410701413145

About the Contributors

About the Editor

Urška Štremfel, PhD, is a scientific associate at the Educational Research Institute in Ljubljana, Slovenia. She holds a PhD in public policy analysis from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. Her research interests include the European aspects of policy analysis, especially new modes of governance in the European Union. In that framework, her research is focused on analysing the formation, implementation and evaluation of education policies. This involves the critical assessment of policy frameworks from institutional and ideational perspectives, and educational reforms in Slovenia from an internationally comparative perspective. In studying the Europeanisation and internationalisation of the Slovenian education system, she studied the role that international comparative assessment plays in national education policymaking. In recent years, she has devoted considerable research attention to examining educational policies for supporting equity, social and emotional competencies and positive youth development; namely, all the fields explicitly related to well-being in education. She has been involved in several national and international projects in the field. She is the co-author of several scientific monographs, book chapters and scientific articles in the field. She has been a guest lecturer at the Department for Policy Analysis and Public Administration at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana since 2010. She is president of the governing board of the Network of Education Policy Centres.

About the Authors

Pascoal Amaral. A PhD student in Education (speciality in Health Education), an MSc in Public Health, a specialist in Acupuncture, Herbal Medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine and a BA in Dance. Professor at the Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon and Traditional Chinese Medicine School of Lisbon (ESMTC). Traditional Chinese Medicine technical director at the Central Medical Clinic and Clinical supervisor at ESMTC. Works in health promotion, lifestyles in healthcare, mindfulness, oriental mind-body practices such as Taiji, Qigong and Yoga, movement neuropsychology and kinesiology.

Fabian Aufreiter, BA, is currently finishing his master's degree in Inclusive Education. He has been writing his master's thesis in the HAND in HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Di-

versity-Related Career Challenges project (HAND:ET project) on the effects of implementing the HAND:ET system in Austria.

Hrvoje Bakić. Since 2007, he has been working at the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia. From 2012 to 2018, he was the Head of the EU Programmes and Projects Service, which functions as an accredited unit in charge of preparing and implementing the operational programme financed by the European Social Fund. Between 2018 and 2021, he worked in the Vocational Education Service and was involved in establishing regional centres of competence in vocational education, and since 2021 he has held the position of Head of the Sector for Improvement of the Education System.

Cátia Branquinho. She holds a PhD in Education Sciences from the University of Lisbon and has been an assistant professor at the Faculty of Human Sciences of the Catholic University of Portugal (FCH-UCP) since 2023. Integrated researcher at the Catolica Research Centre for Psychological, Family, and Social Wellbeing, she is a member of the Development and Health across Lifespan and Lifespace study group. A member of the international network Health Behaviour in School-aged Children/World Health Organization, she has been co-chair of the Youth Engagement Group since 2017. Executive coordinator of the Observatory of Psychological Health and Well-being and Directorate-General for Education and Science Statistics, she was also executive coordinator of projects funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Dream Teens, #GeraçõesComVoz, Learn to Fly). She is the author of several scientific publications focusing on social participation, positive development, and the psychological health and well-being of children and adolescents. A specialist in Clinical and Health Psychology by the Order of Portuguese Psychologists, she is trained in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy/3rd Generation Cognitive-Behavioural Therapies. Clinical practice at the ACT4HealthClinic. A member of the board of Aventura Social Associação.

Inês Camacho, PhD in Educational Sciences, Health Education, from the University of Lisbon (Faculty of Human Motricity). Since 2023, she has been a guest assistant professor at the Faculty of Human Sciences of the Catholic University of Portugal (FCH-UCP) and an integrated researcher at the Católica Research Centre for Psychological, Family and Social Wellbeing (CRC-W). She is a collaborating researcher at the Environmental Health Institute (ISAMB) of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lisbon (FMUL). She has participated in different teacher training projects, promoting socio-emotional skills and healthy behaviours in children and adolescents. She is part of the Portuguese and international team at HBSC (Health Behaviour in School Aged Children). Her main areas of research are the contexts (family, school, peer group) and risk and health behaviours of children and adolescents. She is the author of several national and international publications in this area.

Helene Dahlström has over 20 years' teacher experience in secondary school and teacher education. As a researcher, various conditions for students' meaning-making and text-making in multimodal and digital settings have been in focus in the area of literacy. Dahlström has been engaged as a writer on behalf of the Swedish National Board of Education. Her recent research encompasses issues related to social and emotional learning, higher education, second language and academic literacy as well as diversity and equity. Dahlström has experience with different research projects, including qualitative methods and mixed methods.

Nina Eliasson, PhD in Science Education, Department of Engineering, Mathematics and Science Education, Mid Sweden University. Her special focus is on science education, gender issues and students' scientific conceptual understanding. Eliasson has considerable experience from project management of large-scale international student assessments (e.g., Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)) which today includes responsibility for leading and ensuring the quality of the work with the national scientific tests in TIMSS which requires experience of research that includes qualitative as well as quantitative data. Recent research also includes issues also related to social and emotional learning and digital textbooks in science and mathematics classrooms.

Yvonne Fasching, BA, is currently finishing her master's degree in inclusive education and working as an assistant in the ERASMUS+ projects HAND:ET and SAID: School Assistance – Inclusive & Digital at the University of Graz, Austria.

Valerie Fredericks, BA MSc, holds a master's degree in Inclusive Education and works as a university assistant at the Department of Education Research and Teacher Education of the University of Graz, Austria. In the HAND:ET project, she also worked as a trainer. Her research considers social-emotional competencies and diversity awareness in the context of schools as well as digitalisation in schools, analogue and digital teaching materials, and inclusion. She is a member of the Research Centre for Inclusive Education at the University of Graz, Austria.

Gordana Galić. Master of Children's and Adolescent Psychiatry, Master of Educational Rehabilitation and Master of Library Science, she worked as a public official at the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia. She currently works as a librarian at the Centre for Education in Rijeka.

Margarida Gaspar de Matos. Clinical and Health Psychologist.
Professor at the Catholic University, Faculty of Human Sciences, Católica Research Centre for Psychological, Family and Social Wellbeing member. Member of the Scientific Council of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and

Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). Coordinator of various national and international projects in the field of health promotion for children and young people. She is a member of the coordination team of the international network of the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children/World Health Organization (HBSC/WHO) study, where she coordinates the Planetary Health Group.

Barbara Gasteiger-Klicpera is a professor of inclusive education and special needs psychology at the University of Graz, Austria. She chairs the Inclusive Education Unit and the Research Centre for Inclusive Education. Her research focuses on the promotion of inclusion at all age levels, inclusive education, and teaching in classes with highly diverse students, diagnostics and intervention for reading and spelling difficulties as well as for behavioural difficulties, intervention research and digital health literacy.

Mija Javornik is an advisor at the Office for Development and Quality of Education in the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Slovenia.

Ana Kozina is a researcher, associate professor and head of the Evaluation Studies Centre at the Educational Research Institute. She holds a PhD in psychology from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Her research work concerns the field of developmental, educational and positive psychology. She is interested in exploring the developmental and time-related patterns of emotional and behavioural challenges in childhood and adolescence. Her focus revolves around support for social and emotional competencies, stressing both prevention and intervention strategies. Beyond her emphasis on individual level support, she is intrigued by contextual supports that foster positive development in children and the adults they interact within the context of education. She is vice-president of the Slovenian Educational Research Association (SLODRE), a council member of the European Education Research Association (EERA), and the Slovenian representative at the International Association of Educators (INASED).

Stanka Lunder Verlič holds a PhD in educational science in the field of multiculturalism. She is a senior advisor at the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Slovenia.

Catarina Noronha. Clinical psychologist and junior researcher for the Aventura Social team. An MSc since 2020 in Clinical and Health Psychology – Faculty of Psychology, University of Lisbon, and a Postgraduate in Family and Couple's Therapy since 2021. Catarina completed an advanced course in Third Generation Cognitive-Behavioural Therapies for children and adolescents, and is also a certified trainer. Areas of interest include family-based interventions and research, as well as the development of projects and programmes with children and young people linked to social participation and the promotion of socio-emotional and life skills.

Iva Odak is a research associate and head of the Centre for Educational Research and Development at the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia. She holds a PhD in sociology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. She has worked on various research projects in the field of education, exploring the quality of compulsory education, the social dimension of secondary education, financing of higher education, and equity in higher education. She has (co-) authored book chapters and journal articles in the field of sociology of education.

Christina Odescalchi, BA MSc, studied inclusive education as well as adult education and lifelong learning. She works at the Department of Education Research and Teacher Education in the Inclusive Education Unit at the University of Graz, Austria. Her research focuses on teachers' and students' social-emotional competencies and ways of promoting the social participation of students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties (SEBD) in primary and lower secondary school. In the HAND:ET project, she worked as a research assistant and a trainer.

Aleš Ojsteršek is director of the Education Development Office at the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Slovenia.

Lisa Paleczek, PhD (MSc in special education and psychology), completed her PhD in inclusive education in 2017 before working as a professor at the Private University College of Teacher Education Augustinum for 2 years. Since then, she has been an assistant professor at the Department of Education Research and Teacher Education in the Inclusive Education Unit at the University of Graz, Austria. In the HAND:ET project, she was the project manager at the University of Graz. Her research focuses on inclusive lessons and social-emotional skills in students and teachers.

Iva Perković is a project coordinator at the Network of Education Policy Centres. In the HAND:ET project, she was responsible for dissemination.

Ivana Pikić Jugović is a senior research associate at the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia. She holds a PhD in psychology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. She has worked on various research projects in the field of education, exploring teacher professional development, students' and teachers' social and emotional competencies and well-being, along with gender inequality in education and family. She teaches the psychology of gender at the University of Zagreb and has experience conducting educational workshops on motivation and social and emotional competencies for teachers and students. She has (co-)authored book chapters and journal articles in the fields of educational psychology and the psychology of gender.

Marta Reis, psychologist. Master's degree in Sexology, PhD in Educational Sciences specialising in Health Education, researcher at the Institute of Environmental Health (ISAMB) at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Lisbon (FMUL); visiting lecturer at the Faculty of Human Motricity, University of Lisbon, and visiting lecturer at the Egas Moniz School of Health & Science. Coordinator of the HBSC/JunP Project – Health Behaviours of Young Portuguese University Students/Social Adventure Team, Faculty of Human Motricity/University of Lisbon. Member of the international network Health Behaviour in School-aged Children/World Health Organization (HBSC/WHO). Founding member of the project ES'COOL – Promotion of Mental health in Schools.

Nina Roczen is a postdoctoral researcher at the Educational Measurement Unit in the Department of Teacher and Teaching Quality at the DIPF | Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education in Frankfurt, Germany. She studied psychology at Goethe University Frankfurt and received her PhD from the Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands. Her research focuses on assessment and evaluation in the field of education for sustainable development.

Mojca Rožman is a senior research analyst at the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (Research and Analysis Unit) in Hamburg and a postdoctoral researcher at the Educational Measurement Unit in the Department of Teacher and Teaching Quality at the DIPF | Leibniz Institute for Research Information in Education in Frankfurt, Germany. She studied psychology and holds a PhD in statistics. She has experience in questionnaire development, and psychometric analysis, including the scaling of questionnaire data, along with test data concentrating on international largescale assessments.

Agnes Söllradl is currently studying educational sciences at the University of Graz. In the HAND:ET project, she worked as an assistant.

Klaudija Šterman Ivančič is a research associate at the Educational Research Institute in Ljubljana. She obtained her PhD at the Department of Psychology, University of Ljubljana, with a dissertation entitled "An explanatory model of academic achievement and behaviour in terms of quality of interpersonal relations". Her research interests include the study of predictors of reading, mathematical and science literacy in international large-scale assessment studies, as well as the study of students' socio-emotional predictors of learning behaviour and achievement. Since 2017, she has also been the national project manager of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study.

Gina Tomé, educational psychologist, clinical and health psychologist. Master's degree in Behavioural and Cognitive Therapies, PhD in Educational Sci-

ences specialising in Health Education from the Faculty of Human Motricity, University of Lisbon (FMH, UL). Post-doctorate in Psychology with a scholarship from the Foundation for Science and Technology, realised at the FMH. Assistant Professor at the European University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Lisbon. Researcher in the Social Adventure project team. Coordinator of the ES'COOL Project – Promotion of Mental health in Schools/Social Adventure Team. A collaborating researcher at the Environmental Health Institute (ISAMB) at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lisbon (FMUL). Participated in different teacher training projects, promoting socio-emotional skills and healthy behaviours in children and adolescents. Part of the Portuguese and international team at HBSC (Health Behaviour in School Aged Children).

Tina Vršnik Perše holds a PhD in educational sciences and serves as an associate professor in the Department of Basic Pedagogical Studies at the Faculty of Education, University of Maribor, Slovenia. In addition, she is a scientific associate at the Evaluation Studies Centre, Educational Research Institute, Slovenia. Her primary research areas encompass the inclusion of children from marginalised groups, the professional development of teachers, and collaboration between schools and parents. In her role as a project manager and researcher, she has actively participated in several international comparative evaluation studies, applied research projects, and national evaluation studies. She is also involved as a coordinator and collaborator in various teacher training programmes. Currently, Tina Vršnik Perše holds the position of vice dean for quality development at the Faculty of Education of the University of Maribor.

Marlene Williere, BSc, is currently finishing her master's degree in psychology at the University of Graz. She worked as an assistant in the HAND:ET project.