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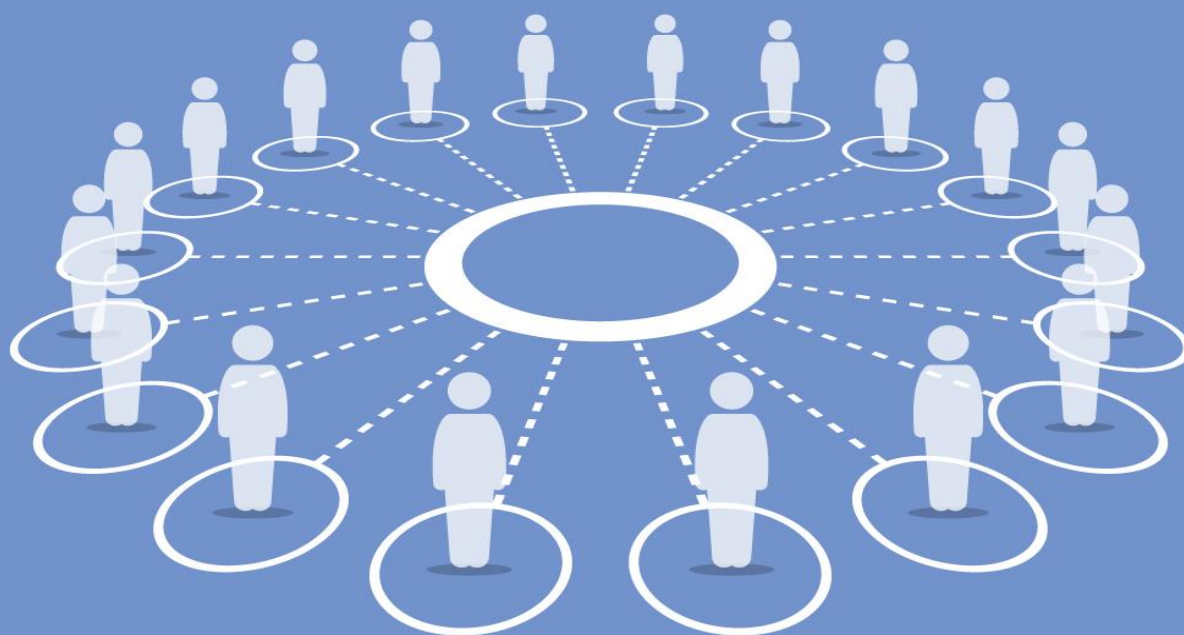
Youth, Education and Erasmus+



Stakeholder Engagement in Quality Assurance Processes

Interim Report by the Education and Training 2020 Working Group Schools

April 2019



Under its 2018-20 mandate, the Education and Training 2020 Working Group on Schools is exploring the **governance of school education systems** to support **high quality inclusive education across a European Education Area**. The work focuses on two interlinked topics, namely quality assurance and teacher and school leader careers.

In relation to **quality assurance**, the Group is focusing its work in response to the question: 'How can quality assurance policies at the system level support school- and teacher-led culture of quality enhancement?'

And, within that:

- 1) How to best generate and use knowledge across the school education system to support continuous improvement?
- 2) What conditions are needed for meaningful stakeholder engagement in quality assurance processes?
- 3) How can quality assurance processes support broad competence development?

This report sets out key messages to guide policy-making on **engaging stakeholders in quality assurance processes**. These messages are further illustrated with country and stakeholder examples. These elements were developed in a series of Working Group meetings in Brussels and a Peer Learning Activity in Zagreb.

Peer Learning Activity participants: Croatia (host), Albania, Belgium (Flemish Community), Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland). Three European stakeholder organisations were also represented: Eurocities, the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) and the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE).

The report has been compiled and edited by Janet Looney (European Institute of Education and Social Policy – EIESP) and Dita Kudelova (European Commission) in February-March 2019 with review and validation by Working Group Schools members in March-April 2019.

1. Context

The **Education and Training 2020 Working Group Schools**¹ considers stakeholder engagement in quality assurance processes to be important to explore in order to support a culture of quality enhancement and to contribute to the building of the **European Education Area**.

A culture of quality enhancement in school education places an emphasis on continuous improvement, with the overall objective of improving all children's and young people's learning and wellbeing. It is a collaborative culture based on trust and a sense of ownership, with all relevant stakeholders engaged. A culture of quality enhancement operates at all levels of the school education system. It highlights the importance of appropriate transparency while avoiding the counter-productive pressures of high-stakes accountability approaches. There is an openness to new ideas, including from outside the school education system. In a culture of quality enhancement, all stakeholders have a responsibility to contribute to achieving a shared vision and objectives for young people's learning and wellbeing.

Evaluation processes as a part of quality assurance include school self-evaluation, external evaluation, evaluation of teachers and school leaders, stakeholder surveys and consultations, and student assessment. In relation to stakeholder engagement in these processes, the focus of the Working Group has been mainly on self-evaluation, external evaluation and stakeholder surveys and consultations. This focus underlines the importance of processes that are open and inclusive.

Alongside stakeholder engagement in evaluation processes, engagement of stakeholders in quality assurance and **educational processes more broadly** is also necessary for building a culture of quality enhancement.

The Working Group has defined **stakeholders** as individuals, groups, or formal organisations that have an interest in and/or responsibility towards improving school education. They include students, parents, teachers, school leaders, local authorities, social partners, employer organisations, researchers, non-governmental organisations, and others.

The 2018-20 Working Group Schools builds on the outputs of the 2016-18 cycle², in particular on the overarching principles regarding the governance of school education and the work on quality assurance for **school development** including the eight guiding principles.

One of the overarching principles highlights the importance of 'collaborative decision-making processes, involving the trust and supported dialogue of a range of stakeholders at all levels of the system, and fostering a sense of ownership, responsibility and accountability'.

¹ Representatives from all EU Member State, EFTA and candidate countries, plus social partners and stakeholder organisations.

² ET2020 Working Group Schools (2018), [European ideas for better learning: the governance of school education systems](#), Brussels;

ET2020 Working Group Schools (2017), [Thematic report on quality assurance for school development](#), Brussels.

As regards the guiding principles on quality assurance for school development, this report builds particularly on the following principles:

- **Coherence:** Systems should strive over time to achieve balance and coherence across different mechanisms that have been developed to try to meet the demands and expectations of stakeholders working within schools and in the wider school education system.
- **Trust and shared accountability:** Trust and respect between and among internal and external actors are fundamental for quality assurance and school development.
- **Shared understanding and dialogue:** Quality assurance approaches should support the development of a common language and shared understanding among internal and external actors.

The final report of the 2018 expert work on quality assurance led by the European Commission³ also underlined that: 'If carried out well, stakeholder engagement can help to build mutual **trust and transparency** at every level of the education system – between individual schools and their local stakeholders, and between national government and the public at large. Stakeholder engagement also helps build mutual trust amongst Member States if they can be assured that the quality assurance arrangements of their peers ensure that stakeholder views are taken fully into account.'

2. Key messages

'Stakeholder engagement in quality assurance processes is important to supporting the quality of learning and wellbeing for all children and young people in schools. It contributes to building trust and ownership.

Policy makers can create the conditions for meaningful stakeholder engagement in quality assurance processes by:

1. *accentuating that the purpose is to improve all children's and young people's learning and wellbeing;*

Countries may set out a shared vision and values for their education system. A vision statement is the opportunity to set out values on inclusiveness and a holistic view of learning and wellbeing.

2. *building a shared understanding of quality education;*

A shared understanding of quality education may begin with clear definition of priorities for children's and young people's learning, how to nurture them as capable, creative and curious learners and active, competent and self-confident citizens. Stakeholders may then help to define the specific characteristics of 'the good school', and the learning and teaching environments that can best support quality education.

³ Maxwell, B. and F. Staring (2018), [Better learning for Europe's young people: Developing coherent quality assurance strategies for school education](#), European Commission, Brussels.

3. *involving stakeholders in the design of quality assurance processes;*

Stakeholder engagement in the design of quality assurance processes allows for a grassroots approach to identifying local needs and resources, and to identifying the types of qualitative and quantitative data that may be used to measure improvement. Stakeholder engagement in the design of quality assurance processes also ensures that expertise of parents, students, teachers, school leaders, civil society, the private sector and others is utilised.

4. *ensuring clarity of expectations, roles and responsibilities for stakeholder engagement;*

Stakeholder engagement should go beyond simple consultation. Stakeholders should also be actively engaged in the design, implementation and evaluation of a programme or policy. Expectations for stakeholder engagement and their specific role in different processes should be made clear. The role division between stakeholders and policy makers should also be made clear.

5. *investing in capacity building for effective stakeholder engagement and use of its results;*

Government representatives (such as national ministries or local education authorities) as well as school leaders need to develop the capacities to facilitate effective stakeholder engagement processes, to gather and respond to input, and to manage differences constructively. Stakeholder representatives may also need to develop capacities and processes to ensure they are sharing the viewpoints of the broad membership of their groups.

6. *ensuring that all voices are heard and that representativeness is ensured, including through transparency of stakeholder selection and engagement processes;*

Guidelines on selection of and engagement with stakeholder representatives can support transparency of processes. Efforts should be made to ensure that disadvantaged groups are included and that they are supported to fully participate. It is important to use different methods for gathering stakeholder input such as consultations, which allow for in-depth discussions of issues, and large-scale surveys, which allow for more voices to be heard.

At the school level, informal and non-formal methods of engaging stakeholders (e.g. through community activities, opportunities for parents to support classroom learning, and so on) may also support relationship-building and trust that are needed for open dialogue and discussion in formal consultations. Informal and non-formal methods can provide the opportunity for meaningful engagement with children and young people and ensure that their voices are heard.

7. *providing the appropriate time, human and financial resources;*

Effective stakeholder engagement will require investment of time, dedicated staff (government staff at national and local level, school staff), and budgetary resources.

Stakeholders should be engaged early enough in the process so that they have an opportunity to influence decisions. These investments also ensure that stakeholder engagement is valued and seen as a priority.

8. *evaluating and improving the processes of stakeholder engagement and use of their input over time.*

Evaluations of stakeholder engagement may measure whether and how principles for effective engagement are followed, stakeholder satisfaction with processes, and evidence of the use of stakeholder input. Studies on the impact of stakeholder engagement in schools may also be conducted.

Beyond these key messages, it is also important to highlight that stakeholders, too, hold responsibilities for effective engagement:

- Stakeholders who participate in consultation processes and give input need to ensure they are informed of the issues at stake and have considered their positions carefully.
- Representatives of stakeholder groups should ensure they have gathered input from their membership and that their positions reflect the contributions of the full group.
- Stakeholders participating in consultations need to be ready to commit time and resources needed to fully engage.

While it is important for those leading stakeholder processes to demonstrate whether and how they have been able to take stakeholder input into account, stakeholders also need to respect the fact that policy makers and school leaders have responsibility for decision making.

Stakeholder engagement in broad educational processes

Alongside stakeholder engagement in quality assurance processes as such, engagement of stakeholders in educational processes more broadly is also considered crucial for building a culture of quality enhancement. Stakeholders need to be involved in setting out the vision and values for education to support all children's and young people's learning and wellbeing, and in developing a shared understanding of quality education. They also need to be involved in the design and implementation of other educational reforms and processes. The introduction of new curricula, increasing inclusion of pupils with special educational needs, or reforms of initial teacher education are some examples.

Figure 1: Stakeholder engagement in quality assurance processes



3. Country and stakeholder examples

This section sets out examples of how different countries and stakeholder organisations address the key messages on effective stakeholder engagement in quality assurance processes. The examples illustrate a common commitment across countries with very different governance structures to ensuring stakeholders have an active role, and to strengthening the quality and inclusion in their education systems.

The section first sets out specific examples on stakeholder engagement in quality assurance processes. These are followed by examples of stakeholder engagement in education processes more broadly.

KEY MESSAGE 1: Accentuating that the purpose is to improve all children's and young people's learning and wellbeing

The **Swedish** Education Act and the national curricula clearly state that quality assurance work should be implemented with the participation of pre-primary and school teachers and other staff. Children in pre-primary education and their guardians and school students and their guardians should be offered the opportunity to participate (Education Act). According to primary education curricula, activities in schools must be developed to meet the national targets. A prerequisite is that the activities in schools are continuously evaluated, the results are followed up, and that new methods are piloted and developed. This work must be carried

out as an active interaction between school staff and students in close cooperation with families as well as the wider community (curricula for primary schools).

In **Malta**, the School Internal Review and Support Unit within the Directorate for Educational Service at the Ministry for Education and Employment supports schools in their ongoing cyclical reflective process, with the aim of improving educational outcomes for all learners. Schools identify priority targets and school action plans to support improvement. All schools are externally reviewed by the Quality Assurance Department. The aim is to evaluate the quality of planning and equity in achievement of required quality standards set out in the curricula.

In **Italy**, school evaluation is improvement-oriented. Both school self-evaluation and external evaluation share the same framework which allows for transparency and involvement of the whole school community. It is articulated along three dimensions: context, results and processes which in turn are specific areas for evaluation. The transversal guiding principles backing the whole process are equity, participation, quality and differentiation. Equity regards the necessity to guarantee the achievement of key competences to all students and is related to the dimension of results. Participation is related to assuring all students have the same learning opportunities regardless their social background. Quality relates to the characteristics of activities and processes in view of assuring all students' learning and well-being. Differentiation concerns the flexibility to organise processes and activities according to students' needs.

Stakeholder engagement is foreseen throughout the various phases that make up the evaluation cycle. During the self-evaluation phase when schools complete the self-evaluation report they may involve students, families, teachers, administrative and ancillary staff, as well as local bodies and network representatives. If an open consultation does not occur reference is made in any case to the different stakeholders' interests. School external evaluation envisages interviews with students, parents, teachers, administrative and ancillary staff in order to get their point of view in the different areas covered. Finally through the social reporting activity the school opens to all stakeholders by explaining and justifying the results. At the same time, the school is ready to start a local dialogue with stakeholders with the ultimate purpose of school improvement.

The 2006 **Spanish** Education Act sets out that stakeholder engagement is of paramount importance in order to achieve a quality education system that allows all citizens to develop their potential fully, while ensuring an effective promotion of equal opportunities, providing the necessary support both to students who require it and to schools in which they are enrolled.

Thus, the first article of the law points out that the participation of the educational community and the shared effort that must be made by students, families, teachers, schools, administrations, institutions and society as a whole constitute the necessary complement to ensure a quality education with equity. Furthermore in Title V of the Education Act, Autonomous Communities are entrusted with the task of ensuring the participation of the

educational community in the organisation, governance, operation and evaluation of schools in their territories.

KEY MESSAGE 2: Building a shared understanding of quality education

In **Latvia**, the Ministry of Education and Science (in cooperation with the National Centre for Education, State Education Quality Service, State Education Development Agency and Academic Information Centre) has launched the implementation of the European Social Fund project 'Development and Implementation of Education Quality Monitoring System'. As part of this project, a common framework for a comprehensive assessment of the quality of education will be created. The framework will link all the elements related to the quality of education to the local level and from the local to the national level. One of the project activities is to organise targeted collaboration, strategic communication and learning activities on monitoring of quality assessment in education and its use in education policy making and implementation. It will also contribute to informing and facilitating involvement of society in order to encourage joint agreement on indicators characterising education quality.

In **Ireland**, in recognition of the need for all to have a common understanding of what excellence in teaching and learning looks like, the Department of Education and Skills, following extensive consultation with teachers, learners, parents, school management bodies and other professional bodies, developed a Quality Framework for each of the following sectors: early years, primary and secondary level. The Quality Frameworks are designed to give a clear picture of what good and very good practice looks like in teaching and learning and leadership. The common language provided by the Frameworks facilitates meaningful dialogue between key stakeholders in terms of a common understanding of quality in our schools and early years settings. The Framework sees children's well-being as both an outcome and an enabler of learning. It recognises the crucial role of schools in promoting and nurturing students' well-being through their practices in the key areas of school environment, curriculum, policies, and partnerships. *(Also related to Key message 3: Involving stakeholders in the design of quality assurance processes)*

In **Belgium (French Community)**, each school (teachers, directors, etc.) is asked to develop "a steering plan" which encompasses:

- The school diagnostic: analysing quantitative and qualitative evidence provided by the central authorities or gathered by each school team (teachers and management),
- School objectives, as defined by school teams, and a plan on how to attain them.

These plans are used as a contract between the school organising authorities and central authorities. They are to be aligned with objectives for improvement of the educational system, as defined by a central authority. They are closely monitored and evaluated for accountability purposes.

In **Turkey**, the Ministry of National Education encourages stakeholder engagement in educational quality processes. In order to build a shared understanding of quality education among stakeholders:

- The 'Quality Framework of National Education' is currently under development. Schools and institutions will be evaluated with regard to specific criteria and remedial improvement will be planned to secure quality among schools and institutions where there are differences.
- Within the framework of self- and external evaluation, pre-primary and primary schools take into account the views of children and young people, parents, teachers and school principals. In vocational and technical education, the views of student representatives, parents, and representatives of industry sectors cooperating with VET schools are sought.
- Both internal and external stakeholders were included in designing the Ministry's regulations. The drafts are open to inputs from all the units in the Ministry, non-governmental organisations, the provincial directorates under the Ministry, other education institutions as well as to comments by the wider public.

KEY MESSAGE 3: Involving stakeholders in the design of quality assurance processes

In **Latvia**, stakeholders are involved in the school accreditation process as experts in the quality evaluation of educational institutions and the implementation of educational programmes: school heads, representatives of higher education institutions, NGO's, education boards in municipalities. Involved experts must participate in special courses on evaluation of education quality, which are organised by the State Education Quality Service. The courses are organised on a regular basis. By strengthening co-operation to ensure a qualitative education process, a representative of the Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees and the Latvian National Cultural Centre may participate in the accreditation as observers and provide conclusions to the head of the expert commission on the findings of the accreditation process. *(Also related to Key message 5: investing into capacity building for effective stakeholder engagement and use of its results)*

In **Malta**, for the process of school internal review, the senior management/leadership team uses different research tools to analyse performance. These include, among others, lesson observations, communication with parents, interviews and focus groups involving learners, teachers and parents, analysis of national results and school tests, questionnaires with stakeholders and feedback from staff. School heads try to ensure that feedback is triangulated between learners, parents and staff before action plans are adopted to improve key areas. Triangulation of feedback is carried out through the use of different research tools to ensure that the obtained feedback is accurate. Triangulation is also carried out among learners, teachers and parents. This is done through questionnaires that are targeted to the different stakeholders and covering the same areas.

During the external reviews carried out using a developmental approach, the Quality Assurance Department uses various strategies to include as many stakeholders as possible. These include interviews, focus group meetings, questionnaires that are distributed to parents, learners and teachers prior to the external review, post- review meetings and follow up visits.

In **Belgium (Flemish Community)**, the reference framework for Quality in Education sets out expectations for good quality that education providers can agree on and which respects the autonomy of each school. The core of the reference framework consists of quality

expectations. These are divided into four categories: 'results and effects', 'development of learners', 'quality development' and 'policy'.

The reference framework is the result of a partnership between the Catholic Education Flanders, GO! Education in the Flemish Community, Provincial Education Flanders (POV), the Education Umbrella Organisation of Towns and Municipalities (OVSG), Consultative Body of Small Education Providers (OKO) and the Schools Inspectorate. The Framework was developed in a process of co-creation involving many stakeholders including pupils, parents, teachers, teaching supervisors, school inspectors, other education experts, researchers, trade unions etc.

The **Flemish Steiner schools** made an active contribution to the development of the Framework. The Flemish Steiner schools are organised in OKO, a Consultative Body of Small Education Providers. This consultative body gets the means from the Flemish Ministry for a part time coordinator. Each partner offers some voluntary work to be able to take part in the consultation processes the Ministry organises. The Steiner schools are closely involved in this work. This helps to safeguard the interests and specific needs of the educational approach of every partner in negotiations with authorities and other stakeholders. For further information please see: <http://mijnschoolisok.be/professionals>; <https://www.oko.be>.

Recent changes to legislation in **Greece** (Law 4547/2018) led to the restructuring of support authorities and organisations for primary and secondary education. Moreover, schools are asked to make their own planning and review of educational work on an annual basis by using appropriate tools and forms provided by the Ministry (effective from school year 2019-2020). Within this context, in order to create conditions to improve quality in primary and secondary education and move towards a more interactive and responsive model, a number of support structures are available for students and teachers, such as:

- Educational and Counselling Centres (KESY)
- Centres for Sustainability Education (KEA)
- Regional Centres for Educational Planning (PEKES).

New support structures are designed to respond efficiently to local needs and simultaneously act as a connection for the implementation of educational policy and reforms at the regional level. Overall, autonomy is enhanced as school planning and pedagogical practices are, to a greater extent, shaped at the school level.

In **Turkey**, all stakeholders and particularly students, teachers, parent-school partners, non-governmental organisations and universities are included in the design of quality assurance processes. For example, advisory boards for schools were established and cooperation protocols were signed for encouraging stakeholder engagement.

KEY MESSAGE 4: Ensuring clarity of expectations, roles and responsibilities for stakeholder engagement

In **Hungary**, teachers, school management and schools are assessed in two ways: self-assessment tools and monitoring visits. The external evaluators themselves are experienced and practicing teachers – specially trained and part-time experts. School self-assessment is

done online in nine areas of competence with 66 indicators. After the verification visits, the evaluator and the staff concerned discuss the findings and how they have been developed in the observation notes. Professional dialogue provides feedback to all stakeholders and focuses on mutual trust and ownership.

Regarding formal engagement of internal stakeholders, in **Slovakia** parents' and students' rights and responsibilities are defined by the Law. Parents have the right to participate in the educational process at school, to stay in the classroom as needed, to be present during the testing exams commission of their child etc. Formal cooperation of the family and school takes place within the self-governing bodies (school board, municipal school board and regional school board). Every school also cooperates closely with the Association of Parents and Friends of the School. The School Council in particular is a real means of communication between the student, the family and the school.

In **Albania**, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth considers of particular priority the building of self-assessment mechanisms for educational institutions. In this regard, since the school year 2012-2013, all educational institutions complete the “School Performance Card”. This card serves as an internal assessment mechanism for schools. The School Performance Card’s Indicators are divided into two groups – central indicators and indicators selected by the local education units according to their priorities in the respective school year. The central indicators are determined by the Ministry and may vary from year to year depending on the priorities, policies and strategic plans. The School Performance Card enables performance-based school ranking for every school year. School ranking is published at regional level by regional education directorates and offices on their respective websites. In this way, it is available for parents, students and educational staff concerned to be informed about the performance level of their respective school.

KEY MESSAGE 5: Investing into capacity building for effective stakeholder engagement and use of its results

In **Finland**, education providers (in many cases municipalities) are encouraged to make a local development plan either by themselves or together with other education providers in their area. The making of this strategic plan is supported for example by arranging government-funded training programmes. Some programmes require that each education provider sends a whole team to the training, including an education leader of the municipality, a chair of the education board, or the whole management team. The goal is to increase the knowledge of the strategic process and add common understanding of all members involved.

In **Croatia**, a recent pilot project *External evaluation of primary and secondary (gymnasium/grammar) schools* is in the first phase of implementation. It has been conducted in 20 primary and 10 secondary schools by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (NCEE) in accordance with the *Strategy for Education, Science and Technology*.

The aim of this pilot is to analyse and evaluate an experimental model of external evaluation, to prepare and launch a systematic (nationwide) external evaluation programme, to strengthen internal capacities for school self-evaluation, and to provide an (external)

support network for school self-evaluation. The participating schools are working with the NCEE project team, critical friends and external evaluators according to the projects' methodology. Each school appoints a school quality team and its coordinator. Critical friends have several significant roles: create feedback about the applicability of the suggested model for external evaluation, support schools during the preparatory process for external evaluation (concept, aim and process of external evaluation), support self-evaluation of schools, build capacity for long-term school development. The suggested model encompasses school management, working conditions, teachers/educators professional development, cooperation with parents and local community, international cooperation, school curriculum, quality of teaching and learning, evaluation of learning outcomes and students' wellbeing.

KEY MESSAGE 6: Ensuring that all voices are heard and that representativeness is ensured, including through transparency of stakeholder selection and engagement processes

In **Estonia**, national satisfaction surveys for stakeholders engaged in different education sectors (from basic education to adult training) are used to ensure that voices of different stakeholders at national, local and school level are heard. The surveys involve students, parents, and teachers. The media is used to raise awareness of all stakeholder groups about the surveys, to explain the importance of participating, and to reach all stakeholders. The surveys were piloted in autumn 2016, further tested in 2017 and fully implemented in 2018. The results are comparable across schools and different regions.

In **Sweden**, the School Inspectorate implements a school questionnaire twice a year. The questionnaire is one part of the school evaluation. The survey is used to gather views from students, parents and the pedagogical staff as a basis for the school evaluation. Parts of the survey results are also reported on the Swedish National Agency for Education website. Over one year, approximately 330,000 persons in half of the country's schools answer the questionnaire. The survey is answered by pupils in primary school year 5, year 9 and year 2 in secondary school, educational staff in primary and secondary schools, guardians of children in pre-primary, primary and lower and upper secondary schools.

In **Ireland**, the importance of student voice is articulated in the Quality Framework for primary and post-primary schools which was published by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills in 2016. That Quality Framework, which is called *Looking at Our Schools*, is designed to support the efforts of teachers and school leaders, as well as the school system more generally, to strive for excellence in our schools. The Quality Framework places an emphasis on valuing the views of students, on recognising students as stakeholders, and on supporting students in taking leadership roles in the life of the school. At the level of the classroom, the Quality Framework highlights the importance of enabling students to contribute their opinions and experiences to class discussion as well as the importance of listening to and respecting the opinions and experiences of others.

KEY MESSAGE 7: Providing the appropriate time, human and financial resources

In **Hungary**, a new system of teacher career management and advancement was introduced in 2013. In this system, teachers can be promoted from “Novice Teacher” to “Teacher I”, “Teacher II”, “Master Teacher” or “Researcher Teacher”. Master Teachers operate as experts, working on the quality assurance of schools and advising teacher colleagues, in close collaboration with the Educational Authority of Hungary. There are also school leaders who work as Master Teachers mentoring and advising their peers. Master Teachers cover educators and leaders working with students at ISCED levels 0-3⁴. Master teachers are provided training to get them prepared for working as advisors and supervisors. They also receive a higher wage. The time they regularly spend on expert activity is built in their working hours. Moreover, they are regularly involved in expert boards revising or formulating teacher competences or other school-related assessment criteria. Therefore time, staff and budget are provided to improve the engagement of stakeholders to work for quality assurance in public education.

In **Finland**, different kinds of development programmes funded by the government are important mechanisms for improving the quality of education. Education providers, who want to receive these subsidies, need to make programme plans and include them in their funding application. Typically, plans must describe how different stakeholders will be included in the process, before the funding can be granted.

KEY MESSAGE 8: Evaluating and improving the processes of stakeholder engagement and use of their input over time

In **Italy**, the Framework of the School System of Evaluation foresees a dedicated field related to the interaction of the school with the stakeholders of its pertaining area and relationships with families. During the self-evaluation phase, the school reports how stakeholders other than students – families, local authorities and businesses in particular – are involved in shaping the school policy and the respective actions the school will implement. The external evaluation phase foresees interviews with different stakeholders in order to triangulate the information gathered in the school self-evaluation report. This makes stakeholders more aware about the potential of their contribution and helps reinforce stakeholder engagement.

In **Turkey**, the quality cycle consists of four phases (plan, do, check and act). Improvement is achieved with the participation of stakeholders within the check phase. The Quality Framework of National Education and Corporate Performance Management System consists of inputs by stakeholders and data from internal sources of the Ministry. It is aimed at collecting data about Quality Framework of National Education indicators and using them for improving educational quality.

⁴ International Standard Classification of Education (2011)

ADDITIONAL COUNTRY EXAMPLES ON STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES MORE BROADLY:

In the **Czech Republic**, while preparing the School Act amendment concerning a new financial support system for the inclusion of special needs children in mainstream schools proposals were discussed with experts in special educational needs (SEN), their associations and other stakeholder representatives. Stakeholders also participated in an international exchange of good SEN practices with Austria. Policy makers and stakeholder representatives from both countries met to share their experience and participated in school visits. This opportunity for direct exchange ensured that the amendment was the result of a vision shared by both policy makers and stakeholders.

In **Estonia**, the Lifelong Learning Strategy guides the education policy development. It aims to introduce changes to several important fields of education, with a focus on the different stakeholders involved. One of its main goals is to implement an approach towards learning that supports each learner's individual and social development, learning skills, creativity and entrepreneurship in the work of all levels and types of education. Implementation of the Estonian Lifelong Learning strategy should lead to growth in the education participation rate, improvements in the skills of students and better matches to the needs of the labour market. One of the key indicators in assessing the changes is the 'satisfaction of different parties with lifelong learning'.

In **Finland** the 2012-2014 curriculum reform involved multiple forms of stakeholder engagement processes. The national core curriculum was prepared through broad stakeholder cooperation and interaction with education providers. A national steering group, consisting of all the key stakeholders at national level, guided the work. In addition, more than 30 working groups were formed, and more stakeholders – including teachers, education leaders, teacher trainers and researchers – joined the teams. Different stakeholder groups and individuals were heard, pupils were involved, web pages were developed to support communication and at three different points during the process, the drafts were put on internet for broad public comment. At the end of the work, an official round of referrals and consultations were made. Local curriculum work in municipalities was carried out during this same time period. It was guided from the national level, and also supported by broad stakeholder engagement at local levels.

Another example from **Finland** relates to the national Comprehensive Education Development programme which was launched in 2016 as a part of the government programme. The programme used multiple forms of methodologies with a mixed set of stakeholders and levels. The work was guided by a national steering group composed of key stakeholders and experts. The work was done at national level, education provider level, school and student level, and community level. A Comprehensive School Forum, Researcher-and expert group, Parliamentary group, Working group and Follow-up group were founded. Workshops were organised in different parts of the country, best ideas and examples were collected and published, networks were launched and the local development work was supported by government subsidies. The work brought together all stakeholders in the basic education system to formulate a vision for the future of comprehensive schools. Teachers,

school principals, students, parents, researchers and experts, municipalities, teacher unions, decision-makers, companies and other stakeholders were all invited to take part.

In **Belgium (French Community)**, the Platform for Educational Resources (PREN) is an initiative of the Digital Strategy for Education approved in October 2018. It aims to provide the entire educational community of the French Community in Belgium with an interface for consultation, and ultimately for sharing, validated resources that can be used to carry out or design learning activities, as well as to enrich knowledge and/or practices. A first version of the Platform was put online in April 2019. It offers an interface for consulting various resource banks: publications, tools and research produced or coordinated by the General Administration of Education, resources identified and evaluated by the scientific community, and contextualised audio-visual content. A second version of the Platform, planned for 2021 will be constructed in a collaborative way with shared contents by and for the educational community. From 2022 e-learning modules for teachers will become part of the Platform. It is a numeric platform for consulting and sharing validated educational resources, which will support and create learning activities. Stakeholders will be actively involved to propose or further develop tools.

In **Greece**, according to Law 4485/4-8-2017 a National and a Technical Committee are set up with main responsibilities to put into action the Strategic Planning Framework for VET (Vocational Education & Training) and coordinate relevant governance issues and actions. The VET Technical Committee, whose main responsibility is to prepare well-grounded proposals for the VET National Committee, takes into account: a) national, regional and local priorities concerning economic growth, b) proposals of regional Committees for VET, alliances for apprenticeship, social partners and other involved stakeholders c) output from the Mechanism for the Diagnosis of labour market needs. Additionally, the VET Technical Committee may invite representatives from the Institute of Educational Policy, social partners and representatives from organisations supervised by Ministries other than those under the Ministries of Education and Employment to its working sessions.

Moreover, according to Law 4386/11-5-2016, ministerial decisions concerning which sectors and specialisations will be offered in each public vocational high school are issued after taking into account national and regional economic needs and the proposals of: a) regional VET Committees operating at the level of prefecture, b) chambers, c) scientific unions and d) Ministries other than the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs (e.g. Ministries of Employment, Tourism, Culture, Health, Rural Development or Maritime Affairs).

In **Norway**, in spring 2017 the government launched *Teacher Education 2025: National Strategy for Quality and Cooperation in Teacher Education*. The strategy places big emphasis on cooperation between all stakeholders in the field of teacher education. To follow up the strategy, two new forums have been established: a party-based *National Forum for Teacher Education and Professional Development (NFLP)* and an expert body called the Professional Council for Teacher Education 2025.

The national forum was established by the Minister of Research and Higher Education Nybø and Minister of Knowledge and Integration Sanner to follow up the strategy *Teacher*

Education 2025. The forum is an arena where national authorities, educational institutions and owners, teacher unions and school leaders, student organisations, managers and teachers in kindergartens and schools discuss and participate in the development of teacher education together.

The forum covers all teacher education, from kindergarten to upper secondary education. In the strategy *Teacher Education 2025*, there are specific measures, goals and ambitions that constitute a common map for the development of teacher education, professional development and cooperation between stakeholders. The forum meets approximately three times per year.

Another example from **Norway** is the 2015 partnership of the Norwegian government, universities and stakeholder organisations who have signed a strategy for further education for teachers and school leaders till 2025 *Competence for quality*. The partnership has been important to develop a common strategy, to uphold a shared vision and engagement in the programmes that are developed. The stakeholders signed to promoting and supporting the programmes, and participate in regular meetings in order to coordinate and support their efforts.