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# REFORM OF THE NETWORK OF TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN LITHUANIA

FINAL REPORT

October 2020, Vilnius

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## Executive Summary

In 2017, Lithuania introduced a revised teacher education model. The new model has introduced structural changes in the teacher education system by establishing three teacher education excellence centres. To facilitate this process, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MoESS) decided to submit a request to the European Commission for support through the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP).

In the beginning of the process a Working group (WG) of Lithuanian experts was formed. The group brings together representatives from Vilnius University, Vilnius University of Applied Sciences, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas University of Technology, Šiauliai University, The Association of Education Centres in Municipalities, the “Teach for All” programme, as well as officials from the Ministry and Government.

Based on the discussions in the Working Group and the study visits, which took place in 2019-2020, this report presents a set of thematic challenges, analysis of policy alternatives and policy recommendations covering three topics: **The Quality and Flexibility of Initial Teacher Education (ITE)**, **Building Research Networks** and **A System of Teacher-Centred Continuous Professional Development**.

The greatest present challenge in The Quality and Flexibility of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is that there is almost no competition to enrol to teacher education studies (except for “Teach for All” programme) because a small number of students see the teacher profession as attractive. Teacher preparation is not flexible, based exclusively on formal requirements and attention to non-formal competencies is very low. Teachers are usually provided by single subject qualification.

The greatest present challenge in Building Research Networks is that there is no long-term (longitudinal) research and little planning for future research. Large research groups do not exist, and there is no cross-institutional cooperation. All of this prevents researchers from providing visible research results. The educational process is not based on the latest scientific research, teachers do not improve the curriculum themselves, and cooperation between teachers and researchers is almost non-existent.

The greatest present challenge in A System of Teacher-Centred Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is that the current system is scattered, with many different actors who have unclear roles. National CPD priorities are not covered by funds, thus, they exist more or less “on paper”. Current incentives do not support CPD providers to develop longer, more coherent and relevant programmes answering educational system needs. What is more, teachers are not encouraged to participate in more demanding, but also more useful, CPD activities.

Working Group meetings and discussions were complemented with study visits to the Netherlands (Utrecht University) and Ireland (Dublin City University). Particular points of interest were reflective practice in initial teacher education, emphasis on student placement, the Teaching Council, the teacher register, induction, scientific knowledge for

improving teacher practice, PhD grants for teachers, mentorship, the centre for evaluation of teacher competencies, and Education Research Labs. The reports discusses their relevance for the Lithuanian context.

At the end of the project, a final conference took place as a virtual event, where Lithuanian experts presented final outcomes and recommendations from the project. International experts shared their experience and practice in related topics and provided some useful insights on the implementation of recommendations.

One of the lessons learned is importance of long-term funding for educational research. New research connections require a lot of effort and also sufficient time to become self-sustaining.

Another lesson is that teacher agency should not be underestimated. If you want teachers to be professionals, work with them as professionals, and provide enough room to make their own decision. Moreover, it is important to involve more stakeholders, and of society at large, in a debate on the teaching profession, which in some cases might include key documents and frameworks to capture a shared vision and understanding. This provides feeling of ownership and necessary support for further implementation into practice.

At the end of the report you will find a set of policy recommendations. They are divided between recommendations for national policymakers (national) and ITE centres (institutional).

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# 1. Introduction

Lithuania introduced a revised teacher education model in 2017. The model describes teacher education as a continuum, which begins with initial teacher education and encompasses regular, continuous professional development activities. Clearer pathways towards acquiring teacher qualification are defined through both consecutive and concurrent study programmes, which are complemented by an official induction period for beginning teachers.

Moreover, the new model has introduced structural changes to the whole teacher education system by establishing three teacher education excellence centres. Prior to this, there were 17 higher education institutions which had at least one initial teacher education programme.

New legislation adopted in 2018 provided a set of criteria for teacher education centres to be evaluated. All concrete criteria fall under three major categories: quality, eligibility and efficiency.

**Quality:** Under the category of quality, criteria are as follows: (1) the centre concentrates the permanent research potential of education sciences and specific subjects (pedagogical specialisation), (2) the centre provides PhD in education sciences, (3) the centre brings together high-level international partners in education science and specific subjects (pedagogical specialisation), (4) the study programmes have been prepared or updated in accordance with the principles of modern didactics, based on the latest national and international educational research, (5) there are opportunities to acquire international experience, the mobility window is integrated in initial teacher education study programmes, (6) the centre invests into andragogical and (or) pedagogical competencies of teacher trainers.

**Eligibility:** Under the eligibility category criteria are as follows: (1) the centre offers a wide range of study and non-formal education programmes: study programmes that provide teacher qualification; teacher and teacher educator professional competence development programmes, they carry out national and international projects on teacher professional competence development, (2) the supply of study programmes every four years is based on the national forecast of teacher needs, long-term demographic forecasts, analysis of labour market needs and national and regional development strategies, (3) the centre participates in the development and implementation of Lithuanian education policy: updating the curriculum, improving the educational process, developing a lifelong learning system, developing quality education culture.

**Efficiency:** Under the efficiency category criteria are as follows: (1) the centre and other higher education institutions operating in the region on the basis of cooperation do not duplicate study programmes, except in cases when the higher need for teachers of the

respective specialisation is based on data of teacher needs or when higher education institutions offer study programmes with different degrees (bachelor, professional bachelor), (2) the centre, in cooperation with other higher education institutions in the region, makes sustainable use of educational science infrastructures and human resources, which ensure the development of educational sciences and related fields of science, the highest quality of studies and international competitiveness, (3) the plan for the establishment and operation of the centre is based on the available financial resources and coordinated with the investment programmes of the country, region and city.

After enacting the new legislation, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania (MoESS) decided to leave many practical, administrative and, in some cases systematic, questions open, with the expectation that centres of initial teacher education (ITE) would propose the solutions needed in a bottom-up fashion. It was expected that the universities which were put in charge of each teacher education excellence centres would take an active role in co-creating the whole system.

To facilitate this process, MoESS decided to submit a request to the European Commission for support through the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP). This thematic report is a part of the support provided by the European Union to MoESS on initial teacher education reform in Lithuania.

On 21-22 January 2019, a workshop on the support for the reform of the teacher education institutions took place in Vilnius. Experts from Ireland, Scotland (UK), Finland and the Netherlands presented their expertise in the teacher education field. Many stakeholders from Lithuanian institutions participated in this event. On the occasion an expert working group (WG) of Lithuanian experts was formed. The group brings together representatives from Vilnius University, Vilnius University of Applied Sciences, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas University of Technology, Šiauliai University, The Association of Education Centres in Municipalities, the “Teach for All” programme, as well as officials from the Ministry and Government.

After thorough deliberation, the members of the working group decided to focus on those areas in teacher education, which were related to existing challenges, and which had led to establishing the three excellence centres in the first place. The working group decided to focus on three topics:

1. The Quality and Flexibility of ITE Studies: How the quality and relevance of ITE could be increased? How could we cooperate and together solve the problem of small student groups? How can the flexibility of ITE programmes be increased?
2. Building Research Networks: The cooperation among researchers from universities, universities of applied sciences and teachers from schools.
3. Teacher-centred continuous professional development as part of institutional excellence: what is ITE institutions role in CPD?

To formulate policy recommendations, the Working Group met physically six times (excluding the study visit) and conducted part of the work via online collaboration. The

discussions were facilitated using future-thinking methods. Following this approach, in each topic four distinctive domains were discussed:

- a) the expectations about the future situation,
- b) the limiting factors,
- c) how to bridge the gap and
- d) questions on international experience and the know-how.

Before each study visit, an initial agenda was agreed among the Ministry, the WG members, the hosting institution and the European Commission. Relevant background information about education both in Lithuania and the host country of the study visit was prepared and disseminated to the participants from both countries. Additionally, the hosting country experts were provided with initial questions for the study visit, which were prepared by the Lithuanian Working Group.

The first study visit took place on June 24-25, 2019, in the Netherlands. It was organised in cooperation with Utrecht University and was led by Prof. Jan van Tartwijk. During the study visit, the group of Lithuanian representatives met with experts from the Association of Universities in the Netherlands, the Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (NRO), the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Association of Secondary Education Schools “Ons Middelbaar Ondewijs”, researchers, practitioners and PhD students from Utrecht University.

The second study visit took place on October 7-8, 2019, in Ireland. It was organised in cooperation with Dublin City University and was led by Prof. Anne Looney. During the visit, the group of Lithuanian representatives met with different experts from DCU’s Institute of Education who presented various nuances of ITE study programmes and detailed processes both in Ireland, and at DCU, specifically. The WG also met with experts from the Teaching Council of Ireland.


Following the study visits, the thematic reports were drafted, and the lessons learned were presented back to those Working Group members, who had not participated in the study visits. Alongside with the specific examples, the WG also presented, discussed and agreed on the initial recommendations on each theme.

The structure of this report.

In the beginning, the broad context of the current educational situation in Lithuania is presented as a backdrop to the reform of teacher education. This also includes information that is more specifically linked to the three thematic areas.

This will be followed by three separate chapters, each linked to one of the thematic focus areas selected by the working group. For each topic, the qualitative results of discussions are presented, based on future-thinking methods, and the most relevant lessons learned through both study visits and work with experts are elaborated.

Reflections from the final conference are presented in a separate chapter. It provides observations on two main aspects: i) know-how on reform implementation presented by international experts in relation to the Working Group prepared recommendations; ii)



reflections offered by stakeholders who participated in the final conference, emphasising areas which they actively support and agree upon and also those where most questions or discussions arise.

Recommendations are provided in the final chapter of the report. Each recommendation is followed by a short explanation in order to provide the necessary context. Recommendations are split according to whom they are addressed.

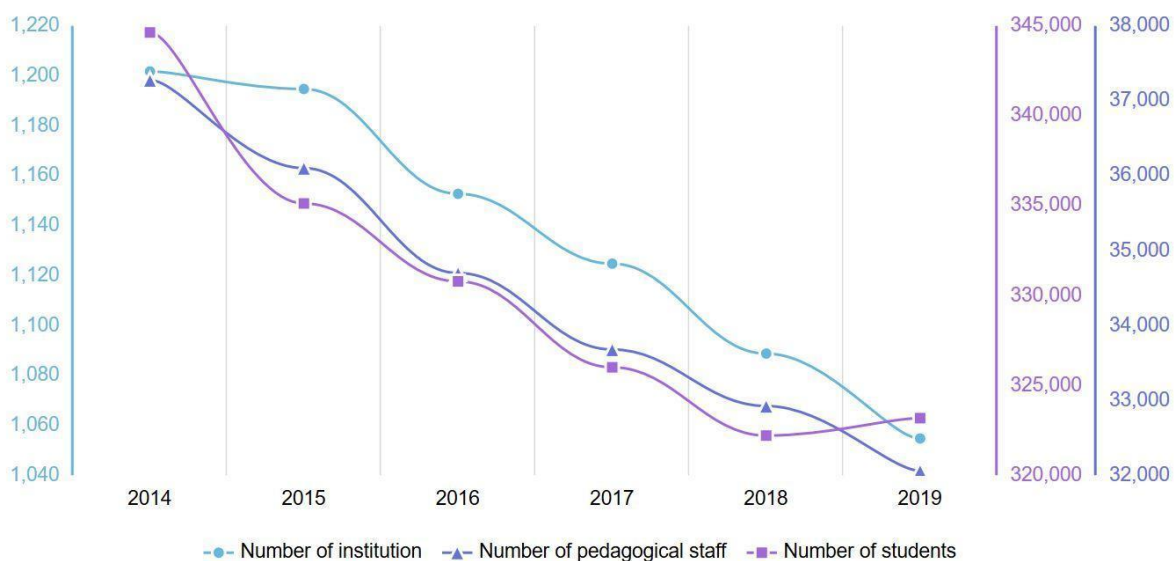
## 2. The Current Situation

Before preparing the new model for a network of teacher education institutions, 17 higher education institutions had at least one study programme for initial teacher education. This dispersion of the resources was one of the reasons that led to the decline in the quality of initial teacher education, and it was inevitably connected to the diminishment of the prestige of the teaching profession. In order to survive, the universities that were specialised in teacher education even admitted pupils to their studies who had the lowest levels of attainment in general education.

This trend was reinforced by another historical issue in Lithuania, the emigration, that drove various problems in all spheres of life. Since 1990, Lithuania has lost 0.7 million people due to migration only and now has a population of 2.7 million habitants.

Not surprisingly, this has tremendous effects on schools. The trends of the past five years can be seen in this graph:

**General education institutions data**



Long-term trends in Lithuanian are revealing:

- From 2001 to 2018, the number of schools has decreased from 2 270 to 1 122 (-51%)
- From 2001 to 2018, the number of pupils has decreased from 602 643 to 326 041 (-46%)

- From 2009 to 2018, the number of teachers who are 25 years old and younger has decreased from 828 to 237 (-71%)
- From 2009 to 2018, the number of teachers who are 55 years old and older has increased from 7 903 to 11 708 (+48%)

In recent years, the demographic changes are less visible as the emigration has slowed down and for the first time in 28 years the population in Lithuania has increased in the last year. However, it is important to stress that the situation in Lithuania widely differs by region. In some municipalities, the student population has decreased, from 2014 to 2017, by 22%, while in some municipalities it has increased by 6%. The ratio of student-teacher varies from 6 to 13. There are municipalities where there are no teachers under 30 years old and in some municipalities that percentage reaches 8%. The number of teachers who are of retirement age and are still working in schools varies from 1% to 8%.

The long-term population decrease and the age of teachers together have created a very complex issue of teachers' supply and demand. While at the moment there is a surplus of teachers, it is quickly turning into a shortage, especially in specific fields. In 2018, the a project on forecasting needs for the teaching workforce was implemented with support through the EU's Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP). The project helped The Government Strategic Analysis Centre "STRATA" to create a forecasting tool. Their model forecasted that 3 077 teachers who were working at schools in 2017–2018 would quit due to retirement within the next four years. The most significant nominal number of teachers who are likely to retire are pre-school tutors (680) and primary education teachers (306). In contrast, due to high dropouts of ITE students, it is predicted that during the same time, only 126 students will become teachers after their studies. The shortages will be mostly visible among the primary school teachers (177) as well as pre-school teachers (55), Lithuanian language teachers (29), Mathematics teachers (25), teachers of foreign languages (29) and other teachers.

### Teachers' Age Groups (2017-2018)

Age group	<25	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	>65
%	0.52	2.17	4.58	7.79	12.67	16.87	18.62	21.41	12.43	2.94
		14.54				56.9			15.37	

These forecasts suggest that radical changes to the attractiveness of ITE will be needed in order to tackle these complex problems.

## **The ways to become a teacher – the quality and flexibility of the preparation of teachers**

External quality evaluation results show that frontal instruction is still dominating in Lithuanian schools. This is reflected in PISA and other international comparison results, especially the fact that Lithuanian pupils have poor problem-solving and other higher order thinking skills.

Furthermore, it is supported by OECD findings which are presented in Reviews of School Resources: Lithuania 2016. An expert group interviewed Lithuanian teachers and found out that their “preparation had focused mostly on acquiring knowledge in the specific subject matter they were teaching”. The WG referred to this as “subject purism”, which means that ITE was strongly based on a single programme – single specialisation idea.

Such ITE model led to the situation in which majority of teachers currently working in schools are only able to teach a single subject. Such narrow-mindedness increases the subject theoretical focus and leads to diminishing ties with real-life problems and theory application. “Subject purism” also provides challenges for teachers as they do not get enough workload and reasonable payment, especially in regional schools.

The aforementioned OECD report also emphasises that in Lithuania, the focus on didactics is narrow and there is a lack of practical knowledge. A decree by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport requires that each ITE study programme is made out of not less than 30 ECTS, but as shown by previous examples it might be not enough in order to bridge the current gap. Moreover, it is important that teacher practitioners are either not at all involved in the initial teacher education or are involved very little and more as on ad hoc basis. This further deepens the gap between theoretical teacher preparation and understanding of real situation in schools.

During the establishment of three teacher education excellence centres, the necessity for teacher educators who have practical experience from working in schools in the recent years was noticed. Before this legislation, there were no requirements for that and usually teacher educators would have little or no experience working in or with schools.

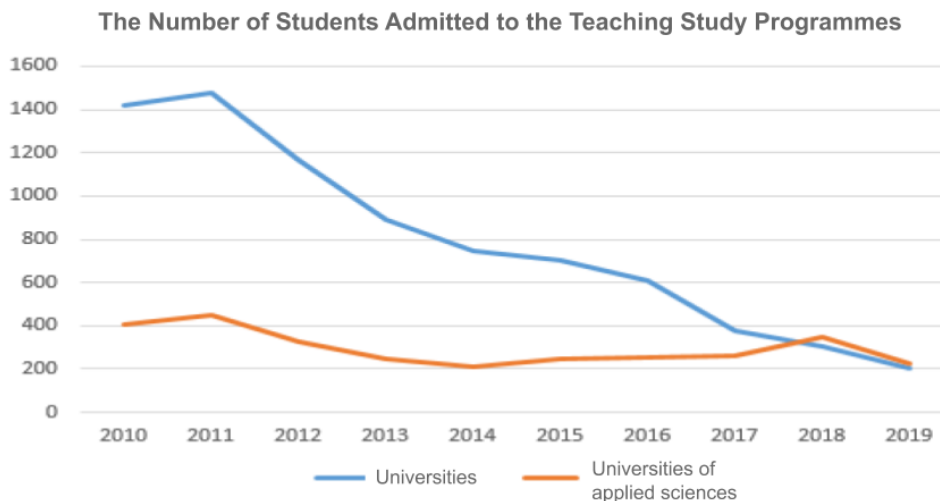
The 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) showed that only 14.1% (17.7% at EU level) of teachers believe that teaching is a valued profession in the society. It is reflected in the low number of high school graduates who enter the profession and the small share of male teachers as well as early childhood education and care staff (11% versus 23% at EU level). This trend is long-lasting and might be traced back for many years. The reason for that might be the lack of attractive opportunities available for career growth.

In Lithuania, there are three main ways to become a teacher: a concurrent model, a consecutive model and a minor programme at a university. Historically, the concurrent model is widely recognised as the best or the “proper” way to become a teacher. A majority of currently working teachers gained their qualification this way. In contrast, while numbers of the other two ways to become a teacher are increasing, they are still perceived as inferior to the concurrent model.

There is also the programme “Teach for All”, which currently is exceptional in such a way that there are more candidates than places (around 10 to 1). However, this programme only admits around 20 participants each year.

It is also worth noting that teachers in Lithuania are not allowed to work without a teaching qualification. However, there is a possibility for a person who holds a certain bachelor degree to start teaching a subject at school and gain the teacher qualification through a consecutive model within two years.

The graph below shows the declining number of students in ITE studies from 2010 to 2019 (blue line – universities, orange line – universities of applied sciences). It does not reflect the number of students who are attaining teacher qualification through other than concurrent teacher education programmes (i.e. consecutive or minor programme students, the participants of the programme “Teach for All”, one-year non-degree programme for providing teacher qualification).



To put this into context, in 2019 346 students have entered the one-year non-degree programme, 20 students each year participate in the “Teach for All” programme and around 50 students are studying in the consecutive or minor programmes, compared with 429 students that have been admitted to the major programmes for teacher education.

For example, the numbers of one-year non-degree students are slowly increasing (2017 – 295 students, 2018 – 315 students, 2019 – 346 students), yet, due to the sharp decrease in the numbers of the major programmes, the overall numbers have shrunk significantly.

On the other hand, it is also worth noting that, up to 2016, around 120 students each year were admitted to the Physical education programme, which was closed due to the surplus of teachers. At the same time, such fields as Physics or Chemistry have had close to zero students since 2014.

The low number of students creates wrong incentives in the selection process. As by regulation, in order to deliver a study programme, a minimum number of students need to select a specific study programme for it to be set up. Such a system pushes institutions towards aiming at accepting everyone in order to gather needed numbers in each study programme.

A motivational test (as a part of the selection procedure) exists in initial teacher education. Yet, it lacks objective criteria and tools which could improve the selection procedure and could evaluate not only the motivation, but also whether the candidate is fit enough for the job – their attitudes, skills, etc.

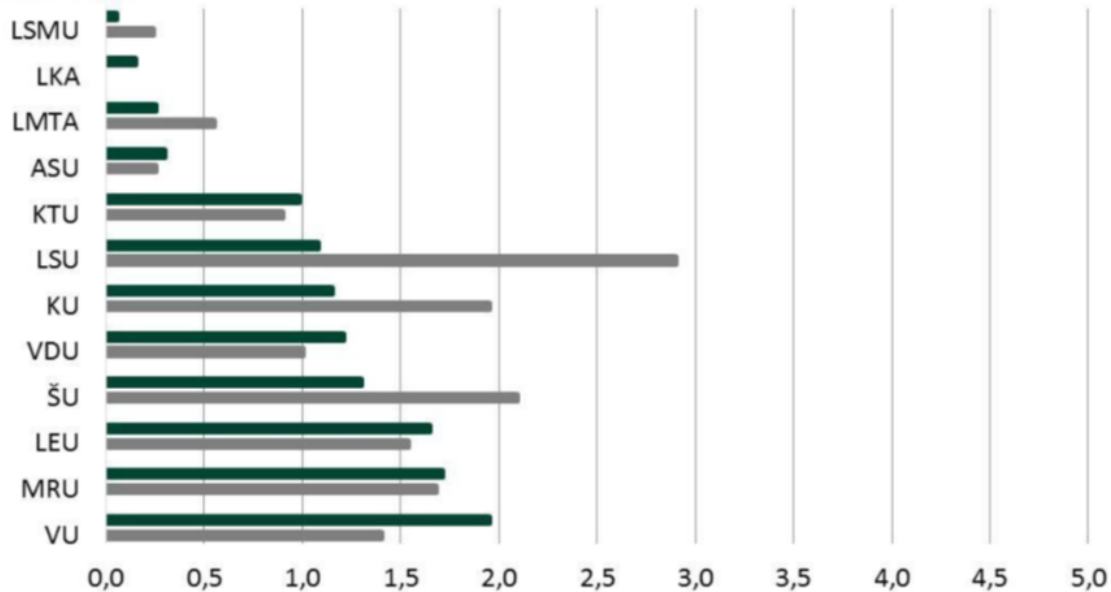
Considering the factors, such as the selection process, the possibility of not collecting enough students to form a group (which afterwards leads to the closure of the study programme in that year and if situation persists – permanently) and a low number of applications, it is hard to expect that the selection process could work properly.

## **Education science research and link with practice**

Scattered academic and research potential did not allow to tackle these challenges effectively. The Annual report of Research Council of Lithuania in 2015 noted that 14 higher education institutions had submitted works in the field of Educational Science, from which only seven had more than seven papers that received at least 1 point out of 5. Only three of them received more than 1.5 points, but all of the papers have received less than 2 points. In comparison, for example, in the field of Psychology, there were only nine institutions that submitted works, and 4 of them had more than seven works that have received more than 2 points.

The graph below shows the evaluation of the field of Educational Research (the scientific foundation of modernisation of education) among Lithuanian institutions in 2015 (grey lines) and in 2016 (green lines).

### Education sciences



Each year, there are only around 12 state-funded PhD places in Educational Sciences across all universities in Lithuania. In 2019, the Research Council of Lithuania even recommended to the Ministry not to allow PhD studies in Educational Sciences at all due to the poor level of research.

Moreover, the Comparative Expert Assessment of *R&D* Activities in 2018 organised by “STRATA” revealed that from all Social Sciences, Educational Research is especially problematic. International experts summarise the situation as following: “Education research should cover a number of different themes and the mission to support educational practice requires experts at each area of development, but several timely topics are missing from the research portfolios of the evaluated units. Empirical studies and quantitative methods are even more strongly underrepresented in Lithuanian educational research than in other social sciences compared to the international tendencies”<sup>1</sup> (STRATA, p. 118, 2018).

It is also worth noting that in Lithuania, the idea of the teacher as a researcher is not widely recognised. This ignores the growing recognition that in many domains of present-day societies, using the latest research findings in core processes is not a luxury but a matter of survival. It is inconceivable that, for instance, in Industry and Health care, the professionals would not update their news about scientific developments in their domains and would not update or change their routines although it leads to better results. The advancements in the Educational Sciences and Technology also have the potential to

<sup>1</sup> Lithuania: Comparative Expert Assessment of R&D Activities, 2018, Panel S: Social Sciences, p. 118: [https://strata.gov.lt/images/vertinimas/Benchmarkingo\\_ataskaitos/2018/2018%20LITHUANIA-COMPARATIVE%20EXPERT%20ASSESSMENT%20OF%20RD%20ACTIVITIES-SOCIAL%20SCIENCES.pdf?v=5](https://strata.gov.lt/images/vertinimas/Benchmarkingo_ataskaitos/2018/2018%20LITHUANIA-COMPARATIVE%20EXPERT%20ASSESSMENT%20OF%20RD%20ACTIVITIES-SOCIAL%20SCIENCES.pdf?v=5).

fundamentally change what and how we teach to prepare students for tomorrow's society (Susskind & Susskind, 2015).

## **The system of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), teachers' professional situation and recent changes**

In Lithuania, CPD is provided by around 60 teacher centres, which are established by municipalities, few private organisations and several higher education institutions. The choice of courses is made by teachers individually. Many reports (e.g. National Audit on CPD system, 2016<sup>2</sup>) stress that the systems seem to be scattered and not coherent.

CPD is mandatory for every teacher. For that, each teacher has a right to use at least 5 days a year to participate in training and the employee must allow it.

Despite the fact that CPD is a personal responsibility of each teacher, the recently adopted Teacher education regulation has strengthened role of ITE centres. The legislation emphasises the possibility for teachers to enrol in modules provided by ITE centres and to receive formal credits and receive additional qualification later on. The Ministry supports this by financing these studies for teachers.

The Education law envisages that teacher centres can provide CPD only in cooperation with ITE centres. However, concrete mechanisms of cooperation and collaboration need to be developed yet.

There are different funding sources for teachers' CPD: through state funding which is provided for schools, other state and municipality funding, EU structural funds or teachers' personal resources. In the absolute majority of cases CPD is financed using school and EU structural funds, thus free of charge for teachers (in 2012-2014, €4m were provided through school funds and €66m using EU structural funds).

43 percent of teachers (at lower secondary education level) consider that the offered CPD is not relevant (compared to 38.9 percent across EU countries) (TALIS, 2018<sup>3</sup>). The main form of CPD, chosen by teachers, are seminars (69 percent of cases) and conference (15 percent of cases). Modern forms of CPD such as action research, formal degree studies are still uncommon among teachers, and teachers make little use of online learning opportunities. Teachers perceive seminars<sup>4</sup> as most convenient CPD form for them, despite the fact that research shows that seminars are not that useful of a form to acquire knowledge, compared to courses<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Pedagogų kvalifikacijos tobulinimas, Valstybinio audito ataskaita, 2016: <https://www.vkontrole.lt/failas.aspx?id=3526>.

<sup>3</sup> TALIS, 2018, Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals: <http://www.oecd.org/education/talis-2018-results-volume-ii-19cf08df-en.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> In the referenced source, seminars are understood as CPD activities oriented to provide practical recommendations for teachers, while courses are usually longer in time and combine both theoretical knowledge and practical application.

<sup>5</sup> Albinas Kalvaitis, Kvalifikacijos tobulinimo paslaugų įtaka praktinei bendrojo ugdymo mokyklos mokytojo veiklai (English title: Influence of in-service training services on the practical activities of a general education school teacher), 2014:

Teachers tend not to choose long forms of CPD: 74 percent chose one day events, and an additional 15 percent of teachers chose events that last a few hours. However, the same teachers evaluate CPD that last two days or longer as most useful<sup>6</sup>.

Lithuanian teachers report the biggest need in the EU for professional development in ICT skills for teaching (23.6 percent in Lithuania versus 16.1 percent at EU level) (TALIS, 2018). But most common CPD topics are didactics, psychology and management. The least attention in CPD is paid concerning low attainment pupils' education, individual learner improvement and general literacy<sup>7</sup>.

The analysis shows that the continuous professional development of a teacher is not a systematically planned and implemented process aimed at improving and / or changing educational practice and developing students' achievements. The survey data shows that most teachers do not associate the development of competencies with the ability to solve difficulties on their own. It was found that teachers' expectations towards what could help them overcome challenges are focused on external assistance (specialists, school administration, preparation of teaching aids and tasks, changing the content of the curriculum, etc.) and not on professional growth based on the teacher's personal responsibility<sup>8</sup>.

Until 2012, not less than 60 percent of funds designated to CPD for schools needed to be used for CPD (other parts could be transferred to cover other school needs. From 2013, schools had the right to use funds for CPD at their own discretion, with the recommendation that at least 40 percent of that amount was spent on CPD activities. State audit report showed that in 2014 almost 20 percent of municipalities had spent less than recommended 40 percent. Together with school funding changes in 2017, stricter rules were applied and now all funds designated to CPD must be used for CPD.

2016 state audit report on CPD has also provided recommendation to decide on national CPD priorities and provide funds for implementing CPD in relation to those priorities. Although ministry of Science and Education began providing national priorities since 2016, funds that help to implement them have never been provided.

In addition to general CPD activities, the current government has recently released a new programme called "Tęsk" ("Continue"). This was done in order to tackle the problem of small schools in which a single subject teacher is not able to work full-time. This programme offered teachers the required qualification to teach more than one subject at a school for free. This programme has been widely popular, and over the course of three years has been offered to 821 teachers.

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<https://www.upc.smm.lt/ekspertavimas/tyrimai/failai/A-Kalvaitis-Mokytoju-kvalifikacijos-tobulinimas-tyrimo-ataskaita.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Stanislav Sabaliauskas et al., Dalykinių kompetencijų tobulinimo poreikio ir turinio analizė (English title: Analysis of the need and content of the development of subject competencies), 2018: <https://www.upc.smm.lt/projektai/bendal/failai/Tyrimo-ataskaita-Dalykines-kompetencijos.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

To address the low teacher motivation (only 70.8 percent of beginner teachers report that if they could decide again, they would still become a teacher (compared to EU average of 83.7 percent's); the share falls lower with more than five years of service (63.9 percent in Lithuania versus 83.7 percent at EU level) (TALIS, 2018) and to strengthen the retention of new teachers and provide them with more support at the beginning of their careers, an official induction period has been introduced. It helps to ensure the professional and personal development of a starting teacher.

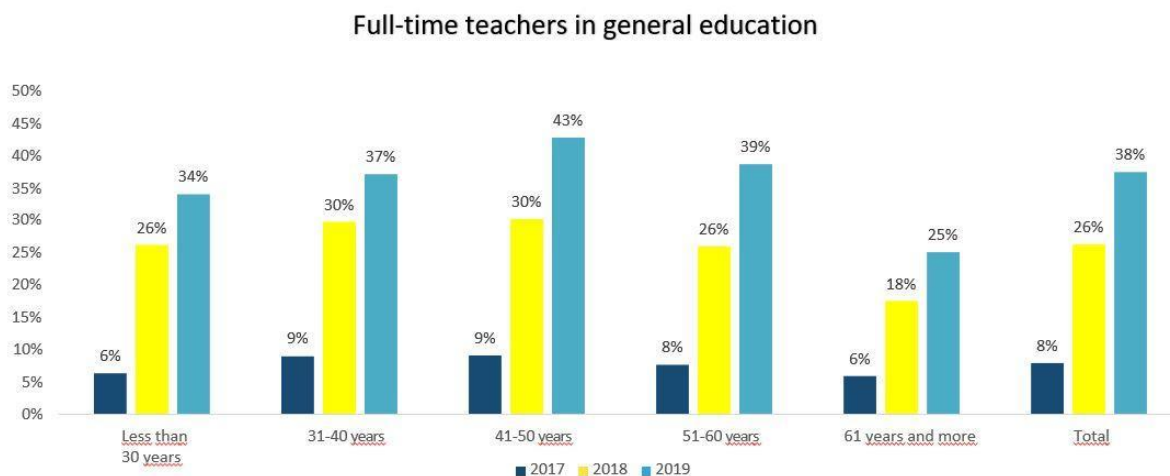
## Other related policy changes in Lithuania

The number of students was decreasing faster than the number of institutions (especially in regional areas). As a result, the number of small schools (below 120 students) has increased. It also meant that teachers were not able to work full time and received even lower salaries due to the lack of contact hours.

To address this, a change was introduced to the teacher payment scheme in 2018. Up until this reform, teacher payment was based on an hourly rate rather than on a full-time equivalent basis. This had left many teachers paid and employed on a part-time basis. Moreover, other education-related activities, undertaken in addition to classroom teaching, were not included into the scheme. Overall goals of the new teacher payment scheme are: (1) to enable schools to effectively plan human resources for educational purposes and changes in the educational process; (2) to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession by providing adequate remuneration to the teachers for all activities/work performed; (3) to establish the conditions for building professional careers for experienced teachers and for beginners; (4) to create the preconditions for teachers' social security.

The changes have helped to increase the number of teachers who are working full time: in 2017 there were 1 out of 12 (~ 8 %) teachers working full-time; in 2018 there were 1 out of 4 (~ 26 % or three times more than in 2017); in 2019 there were 2 out of 5 (~ 38% or five times more than in 2017) teachers who work full time.

The graph below shows these percentages divided by the age groups:



The new payment scheme might increase the attractiveness of teacher profession as with other decisions it creates the pressure for schools and municipalities to be more effective, which ultimately leads to teachers having higher workload and a bigger pay.

Another change which is beginning right now in Lithuania is the Curriculum Reform, which should come into effect in the next several years. The main goals of this reform are: to update the curriculum subject-wise, reflecting the most recent scientific knowledge and to put greater emphasis on inter-relation and integration between subjects and on general competences. In that way, it should strengthen trust and accountability.

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## 3. The Quality and Flexibility of ITE Studies

The focus of this chapter is **The Quality and Flexibility of ITE Studies**. The chapter presents a set of thematic challenges and the discussion of alternatives for implementation based on the discussions in the Working Group and a study visit.

In the beginning, the WG raised three questions concerning this issue, in order to narrow down the scope of exploration: How could the quality and relevance of ITE be increased? How could we cooperate and solve the problem of small student groups together? How can the flexibility of ITE programmes be increased?

For the purpose of this work quality is considered to be reflected in graduates' preparedness for work in school after ITE studies and their ability to use modern technological and pedagogical tools in everyday activities. Moreover, quality is strongly related to practical understanding of existing challenges in school education and the ability to take an active role as a teacher both in the classroom and in the broader school community.

In Lithuania, the Minister of Education, Science and Sport sets minimal requirements for the number of students in order to form a study programme group. If a higher education institution does not enrol enough students and is not able to form a group, it is not authorised to deliver the particular study programme. This regulation affects initial teacher education, especially the preparation of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) subject teachers. Since in Lithuania, historically, teachers of separate subjects were prepared through separate study programmes, it became very hard to form a group for ITE in Physics, Biology and Chemistry. For several years, no students in formerly existing Lithuanian Education Science University were enrolled in any of the aforementioned programmes. With the creation of three teacher education excellence centres, this has started changing, but further expansion in this direction is needed.

The flexibility aspect is threefold. Firstly, it relates to catering for the needs of different student profiles. Secondly, it is linked with different means of delivery of ITE. Thirdly, it covers the recognition of non-formally acquired competences in ITE. All these aspects were further elaborated and discussed by the WG.

### 3.1. The Evaluation of the Current Situation by the Working Group Experts

The Working Group's reflections and discussions are summarised below. The discussions were facilitated using future-thinking methods. Following this approach, the

results will be presented in four categories: a) the expectations about the future situation, b) the limiting factors, c) how to bridge the gap and d) questions on international experience and the know-how.

The greatest present challenge: there is almost no competition to enrol to teacher education studies (except for “Teach for All” programme) because a small number of students see the teacher profession as attractive. Teacher preparation is not flexible, based exclusively on formal requirements and attention to non-formal competencies is very low. Teachers are usually provided by single subject qualification.

Future expectations	Limiting factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be more flexible possibilities to acquire teacher profession: easier ways to recognise the competences gained in “Renkuosi mokyti” (“Teach for All”); the recognition of non-formal competencies; the recognition should be based on what the person can do, rather than on what formal certificates they have; also the recognition of subject-related experiences (e.g. an Environmental protection bachelor graduate is working as a chemist);</li> <li>• Initial teacher education should be based on preparing two or more subject teachers at once and the society, the general public and teachers should take it seriously, understanding that it is a successful international practice, rather than being suspicious about how it is possible to have a quality teacher for several subjects (the same attitude should be taken in while talking about pursuing an additional qualification);</li> <li>• The selection process should be based not solely on evaluating motivation (as it is now), but also on assessing whether the candidate is fit enough for the job (their attitudes, skills, etc.);</li> <li>• ITE programmes should include age-related (i.e. teacher for primary or secondary school) content;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strict requirements for specialisations;</li> <li>• Very strong “subject purism“;</li> <li>• Subjects in schools are not grouped adequately, as a result, it reduces flexibility.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ITE content should be consistent with school content;- There should be competition to get into ITE programmes (higher numbers of participants);</li> <li>• There should be competition to get into ITE programmes (higher numbers of participants);</li> <li>• Teachers should be evaluated (certified) every five years to re-evaluate if a person is able to work as a teacher further;</li> <li>• The funding of teacher education should not impact the decisions concerning quality (for example, keeping weak students, just not to lose funds).</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How to bridge the gap</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Questions on international experience and know-how</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing more flexible solutions for mid-career switchers to get teacher qualification and join school;</li> <li>• Creating a joint framework for the recognition of non-formal competencies to alleviate the possibility to get the teacher qualification;</li> <li>• Distinguishing a clear minimum of credits needed for teacher qualification in a selected subject (this concerns subject descriptors, e.g. physicists need 60 credits to be a physicist; it should be done for other subjects as well);</li> <li>• Recognising similar specialisations more flexibly (e.g. engineers could receive adapted subject content to achieve the teacher qualification in a related field);</li> <li>• Creating a common framework for the selection of perspective students for all ITEs, which would evaluate not only their academic achievements but also</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the concrete qualification needed for teaching particular subjects (e.g. Mathematics, Physics)? Is it regulated nationally or left for each institution to decide?</li> <li>• Is there any orientation in ITE related to pupils' age (primary or secondary school teacher)? If yes, how is it implemented?</li> <li>• Are there any very focused, but short in time programmes to receive qualification (intensive courses for the whole summer, as an example)?</li> <li>• What comes first – is the teacher training that changes the practice in schools or should the training adapt to the new curriculum?</li> <li>• How does the selection process work (Motivational interview): Is the framework for all ITE centralised/common? Or should institutions have their own criteria for accepting the students?</li> </ul>

<p>how fit are they for the profession, as well as other achievements, volunteering activities, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the eligibility (candidates' fitness) for studies assessed, if there is any? Are volunteering activities or other non-formal experiences considered?</li> <li>• How can the institutions ensure strong subject didactics in their programmes? How should they invest in this and manage the process?</li> <li>• What is the rate of drop-offs in teacher education? How is it perceived: low or high?</li> <li>• Are there any licensing for teachers? How does it work? What are the benefits and problems?</li> <li>• How are the ITE programmes constructed (the structure of the curriculum, what kind of approach is used)? What is the length of the programme?</li> <li>• How can different departments within an institution collaborate to raise the quality and flexibility of ITE studies? And how can they do that cross-institutionally?</li> <li>• How can the "internationalisation" be integrated into the initial teacher education?</li> </ul>
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### 3.2. Alternative policy options

During the WG meetings and the study visit to Ireland, several alternatives for the improvement of the situation were formulated. Ireland was chosen because they have recently implemented a reform of teacher education and similarly as Lithuania, decided to establish several teacher education centres. Specifically, Dublin City University, several years ago, was merged with few separate institutions and fully renewed the package of teacher education programmes.

In this section, the report presents the options and provides more details about them. It also provides insights about their usefulness and the possibility to implement them in Lithuania.

## Teacher Education in Ireland – focus on reflective practice

Design of ITE programmes in Dublin City University includes three areas: foundation discipline, professional studies and practical teaching programme. These areas are indicated in the guidelines for ITE and developed by Teaching Council. DCU Institute of Education implements concurrent and consecutive programmes that emphasise research and reflection components in a curriculum. It follows the recommendations of Sahlberg review (2018), makes stronger links between research and teaching in the programmes by implementing the reflective practice. Accreditation of these programmes is done by an academic (Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education) and professional (Teaching Council) bodies.

Tutorials for reflection and portfolio. The first-year students of teacher education programmes in the DCU are provided with opportunities to critically reflect on their own experiences as learners, to develop expertise in subject-specific methodologies, to gain insight into the social contexts of education and to build their philosophy of teaching and values concerning teaching. Reflection and reflective practices are implemented through a series of weekly small group tutorials that run throughout the academic year. In the context of further implementation of reflection and reflective practices, the students build their own personal Programme Learning Portfolios across the academic year. This Programme Learning Portfolio is built on the Loop Reflect (Mahara) e-portfolio platform. It includes artefacts representing key aspects of students' gained competences across the programme and comprehensive reflections on these artefacts to indicate their meaning for them in terms of their learning and development as teachers. The artefacts are chosen from ongoing coursework, the reflection tutorials and school experiences.

Although the concurrent ITE programme is meeting requirement of Teaching Council documentation, 20 percent for electives make the programme distinctive by creating opportunities for teacher education students to develop expertise in one area which is indicated by the entry pathway.

As changes are happening in Lithuania, it is worth to use this opportunity and include reflective practices into already existing and newly developed study programmes. Although some higher education institutions are familiar and use this approach, the method is not common and widespread in Lithuania yet.

Moreover, to address the needs to focus on a particular age group or development stage in ITE programmes, building on the Irish experience, elective courses for students should be provided. It would also diversify teacher career options and would swiftly complement other structural reforms implemented in Lithuania (namely, the teacher payment scheme changes). However, the specialisation that is too high should be avoided. DCU and other ITE institutions in Ireland consciously push students to not specialise with a specific age group or class, because a teacher who works with different pupils each year is versatile.

## More emphasis and ECTS for student placement

DCU Institute of Education established a Board for Placement as an advisory council for the Committee of the ITE programme. Members of this Board represent all stakeholders of ITE. It is worth mentioning that in Ireland, there is a very different relationship between ITE institutions and schools. Thus, such board helps to create more substantial commitment and better cooperation networks. Historically, many schools are willingly cooperate with ITE institutions in Lithuania, so there is no need to search for new cooperation forms.

Teacher education in Ireland has a significant focus on teachers' placement that relies on the reconceptualisation of this practice by providing more structured roles and new ways of partnership. Recently, placement time was prolonged to 20 weeks, providing extended and more holistic placements (e.g. ten-week-long breaks towards the latter part of the programme; experiences of attending staff meetings, learning the school policies; co-planning and co-teaching). It allows shifting responsibility with reflective practices and robust research base gradually.

Moreover, a significant finding was the guidelines on school placement, which include roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. Students do not know about placement visits (by supervisors) in advance, and the feedback is given according to previously discussed criteria.

For many years in Lithuania, professionals have discussed the need to provide more learning through practice. Thus, using the Irish experience, a number of credits designated to practical learning could take up one fourth of the study time, which would account for one academic year or 60 ECTS.

## Teaching Council

The Teaching Council is a body of professional standards for teachers. The role of the Teaching Council is to promote and regulate the teacher profession. It includes establishing and promoting professional standards, as well as the criteria and guidelines for ITE programme providers<sup>9</sup> and supporting teachers' learning. Teaching Council coordinates the development and review of national guidelines on school placement<sup>10</sup>, promotes teaching as a profession and is a part of the review process (it may visit schools, seek for feedback, consult and carry out other functions).

Although such practice for WG was fascinating, there are doubts if such a system could be transferred to the Lithuanian context. It is crucial to underline that such bodies, which at the present moment in Europe only exist in the United Kingdom and the Republic of

<sup>9</sup> Guidelines for Initial teacher education providers:  
<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Initial-Teacher-Education-Criteria-and-Guidelines-for-Programme-Providers.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Guidelines for placement:  
<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/Website/en/fileupload/Teacher-Education/School-Placement/Guidelines-on-School-Placement.pdf>.

Ireland, are the result of considerable structural investment and development over time. In the context of ITE, the idea of a similar body could be considered in greater details, but in later stages of ITE centres development in Lithuania. However, what should be transferred in principle level is the practice of teachers' involvement in education process (teachers teach teachers, teachers are partners). Irish colleagues have found this principle one of the critical success factors.

One of the documents which are adopted by Teacher Council is Curricular Subject Requirements for post-primary education. This document sets out the requirements for each of the approved curricular subjects at post-primary level. In Lithuania, there are only requirements set for pedagogical part of teacher education and subject-based requirements are provided solely for some subjects. Thus, it would be beneficial to integrate requirements in the descriptors existing at the moment, especially given the fact that many of them are renewed right now.

## **The Teacher Register**

In Ireland, there is a requirement for teachers to register with the Teaching Council to be paid salary by the State. Registration is a mark of professional recognition as a teacher. It ensures that standards of entry to the profession are maintained. In Lithuania, there is no teacher register. It seems that so far, the same model should not be considered for Lithuania as it would not provide any additional value. However, some parts of it should be integrated into the development of the teacher certification system (more information on this is provided in the third thematic report on CPD).

## **Teacher prestige initiatives**

The project “Teachers inspire Ireland”, which serves as a platform for keeping the teaching profession respected. Over the course of this project, more than 400 stories were collected and disseminated. A private donor funded the initiative. In Lithuania, there are several initiatives oriented to the promotion of teacher profession, showcasing the best examples and recognition of the importance of the teacher profession. Thus, new initiative should not be considered, but coherence and communication among existing ones should be strengthened.

## **Induction**

In Ireland, the National Induction Programme for Teachers is a flexible learning programme, funded by the Department of Education and Skills, and designed to meet the professional learning needs of newly qualified teachers. The 20-hour Workshop Programme, coordinated by the National Induction Programme for Teachers, builds on the learning that took place during initial teacher education. The programme could be

delivered as evening, day-time or online workshops. More information about induction might be found here: [www.teacherinduction.ie](http://www.teacherinduction.ie).

As mentioned previously, Lithuania recently introduced an induction period for teachers. However, after close evaluation of Irish practice and reflection in the Working Group about induction implementation, the WG proposes changes to this process. The WG and other stakeholders in Lithuania evaluated the induction favourably as it provides benefits for beginning teachers. Currently, higher education institutions in Lithuania are heavily involved in this process – they provide mentors for each teacher, participating in induction. But experience shows that the absolute majority of workload falls on the mentor from the school side while the mentor from the higher education institution is involved only in exceptional cases. In comparison, in Ireland induction is solely left to teachers and schools (with some supervision of Teacher Council).

Thus, the WG recommends to either shrink responsibilities and resources for higher education institutions in the induction process or entirely exclude them from the process. More responsibility and resources should be shifted towards schools and mentors provided by the school. ITE centres could be involved in increasing the competencies of school mentors.

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## 4. Building Research Networks

The focus of this chapter is Building Research Networks. The chapter presents a set of thematic challenges and alternative analysis based on the discussions in the Working Group and a study visit.

The chapter address two distinctive domains under the theme of Building Research Networks. The first domain is the collaboration among scientists from different higher education institutions. The second domain is the collaboration between scientists and teachers (or in other words, the collaboration between universities and schools).

### 4.1. The Evaluation of the Current Situation by the Working Group Experts

The Working Group's reflections and discussions are summarised below. Firstly, the situation on the collaboration among the scientists from different higher education institutions is detailed. Secondly, the focus is on the co-operation between scientists and teachers (or in other words, between universities and schools).

The discussions were facilitated using future-thinking methods. Following this approach, the results will be presented in four categories: a) the expectations about the future situation, b) the limiting factors, c) how to bridge the gap and d) questions on international experience and the know-how.

#### 1. Science-science (collaboration networks among scientists)

The greatest present challenge: there are no long-term (longitudinal) research and little planning for future research. Large research groups do not exist, and there is no cross-institutional cooperation. All of this prevents researchers from providing visible research results.

Future expectations	Limiting factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research would have an impact on (1) the decisions of education policy; (2)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The evaluation of scientific results: the didactic research at the moment does</li></ul>

<p>teacher educators and ITE (research-based initial teacher education); (3) schools (teachers' activities, opportunities for children);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scientists would join cross-institutional research teams to use everyone's strengths;</li> <li>• More co-operation with international research teams;</li> <li>• There would be a research funding programme aimed at strong cross-institutional group funding (Horizon for Lithuania or Baltic Sea Region Education Research Programme).</li> </ul>	<p>not bring any practical value to scientists. It does not encourage co-operation between disciplines. Also, methodological tools are not counted as eligible R&amp;D output for the attestation procedure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The prestige of the Educational Sciences among different fields of science: at national and institutional levels, this type of research is not recognised or valued.</li> <li>• There are no national strategy, priorities or long-term goals for the development of the Educational Sciences. There is no purification of excellence. There is a tension between different perspectives: do we form our system, or do we take it from others?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How to bridge the gap</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Questions on international experience and know-how</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate and recognise cross-disciplinary scientific work (for the attestation, etc.);</li> <li>• Provide finances for extended periods;</li> <li>• Create a clear consensus - where are we going and how will we get there?</li> <li>• Establish Research Networks (science promotion articles, support at the national level)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do scientists perform research activities in schools? If yes, who encourages it – is it left for the responsibility of ITE, or has the national/regional Government any role in this? Or maybe schools themselves are proactive and invite researchers on their own?</li> <li>• How is interdisciplinary research promoted? How to attract researchers from the field of Didactic Research? How well are international research and applied research balanced (can ITEs manage to do both)? Are there any existing scientific evaluation criteria for doing this (related to the attestation procedure)?</li> <li>• Who decides (and how) on the Educational Research priorities (what roles have the national and regional governments, an institution, a faculty, and a researcher)? How is the local dimension covered? How is the cross-institutional cooperation promoted – is</li> </ul>

it left for the responsibility of ITEs, or the national Government has some tricks for that?

## 2. Science-teacher (collaboration networks between scientists and teachers)

The greatest present challenge: the educational process is not based on the latest scientific research, teachers do not improve the curriculum themselves, and cooperation between teachers and researchers is almost non-existent.

Future expectations	Limiting factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers would value the importance of research, would understand it and would want to expand their knowledge;</li> <li>• The educational process would be research-based, the content would be developed by teachers, learning would be student-centred and teachers would conduct their performance evaluation through action research;</li> <li>• School would be a scientific research platform (experimental methods, professional observation);</li> <li>• Teachers would consult with scientists and would perform research activities, either independently or together.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unattractive presentation of the research results (it is unclear what practical value it creates);</li> <li>• Lack of clear and established communication channels on how to present research results to policymakers, and to society in general;</li> <li>• Teachers lack basic scientific literacy (what to focus on, what is relevant, what is feasible);</li> <li>• There are no learning communities, and teachers are not inclined to share the information with peers;</li> <li>• Teachers have poor knowledge of foreign languages (limited access to the resources);</li> <li>• Teachers plan their time poorly, so the research interest and the application in practice is too time-consuming;</li> <li>• Scientists have not enough practical experience from/about school;</li> <li>• A lack of applied and experimental research in Lithuania (both in schools and in ITE).</li> </ul>
How to bridge the gap	Questions on international experience and know-how
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validate classroom research as a method for the improvement of competences;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we ensure that scientists have practical knowledge of school education, and who is responsible for</li> </ul>

- Encourage teachers to use classroom research as a method;
- Promote different roles of teachers;
- Increase the focus on classroom research during ITE students' internships;
- Provide a possibility for researchers to go to schools for research activities;
- Include schools in the selection of the topics for final thesis for student teachers;
- Take classroom research activities into account in school evaluation;
- Support more mutual feedback between teachers and researchers.

this? How do research results reach teachers, parents, students (is it left for the interest of the stakeholders? Is there a support system at the institutional or the national level)?

- Do quality indicators have links to the activity of classroom research? Are there any specific research related CPD activities, and how are they funded? Can teachers recognise their practical research in school at ITE and get a formal qualification (recognition of non-formal competences)? Does initial teacher education introduce students to the approach of classroom research?

## 4.2. Alternative policy options

During the Working Group meetings and the study visit in the Netherlands, several alternatives for improvement of the situation were formulated. The Netherlands were chosen because they have highly developed and internationally recognised educational sciences centres; Utrecht University is the leader in educational research among the universities in Europe where English is the second language. Moreover, the country has experience with running and implementing various initiatives oriented towards the transfer of research results to the school sector.

This section presents policy options and provides more details about them. It also provides insights about their usefulness and the possibility to implement them in Lithuania.

### **The Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (Dutch acronym: NRO)**

NRO contributes to the innovation and improvement of education by coordinating and funding educational research as well as by facilitating the connection between educational practice, policy and research. NRO has three programme councils: the fundamental research council, the policy-oriented research council and the practice-oriented research council. At the moment, most of the funding goes to the policy-oriented and the practice-oriented research councils.

Around ten years ago, the Netherlands identified that there was a lot of educational research performed but that not much was being done with its results. NRO was established in 2012 to bring all types of funding together, to integrate them and make more use of results for policymakers and practitioners.

Practice-oriented research should involve practitioners. The number of proposals in the practice-oriented research is very high compared to the budget available. The practice-oriented projects are limited to several institutions (which implement the project) although the results of each research project should be externalised, i.e. transferred to all schools or educational institutions.

The projects of policy-oriented research might be more generalised research as well as critical research of laws or national initiatives.

To disseminate the results of research and to foster research-informed practices in schools, NRO runs several initiatives. The most novel and adaptive to the Lithuanian context are these:

- The online initiative “The Knowledge Roundabout” (nl. “De Kennisrotonde”) works as a support service for teachers, school principals, education policymakers and other educational staff. It allows 1) to submit questions on which they would like to receive a scientifically based answer; 2) to enrich their education practice with knowledge from research. “The Knowledge Roundabout” as an online resource has already accumulated more than 200 responses to the questions they have received.
- The online magazine for education “Didactief”, which regularly presents the results of NRO projects, brings research and practice together. Here teachers can find the latest research results and trends, discover how the ideas and the solutions presented by science are applied in a classroom, gain more insight into students’ behaviour and interests and learn about many new ideas.
- The NRO provides every research team with ongoing support, carries out the monitoring, and is not limited to funding and research activities.
- NRO holds its own awards –one award for a teacher and one for a researcher. The Teacher Award goes to the teacher who implements research-based results in their daily practice the best.

Now Lithuanian research funding already has some specific funding programmes, although the target of these programmes are not Educational Sciences. However, it provides a precedent in the system, which creates a more favourable environment to transfer the NRO practice. Given the Lithuanian context, it should be necessary to narrow down and start with a greater focus and fewer initiatives. Thus, in the beginning, it should be only a long-term research programme (without establishing a separate office in the Lithuanian Research Council). Other “exploitation” activities could be provided by universities or in cooperation with other existing institutions under the Ministry; namely, the National Education Agency established in 2019.

As the recent *Comparative Expert Assessment of R&D Activities*, organised by “STRATA” in 2018<sup>11</sup>, revealed, from all Social Sciences, Educational Research (the scientific

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<sup>11</sup> Lithuania: Comparative Expert Assessment of R&D Activities, 2018, Panel S: Social Sciences: [https://strata.gov.lt/images/vertinimas/Benchmarkingo\\_ataskaitos/2018/2018%20LITHUANIA-COMPARATIVE%20EXPERT%20ASSESSMENT%20OF%20RD%20ACTIVITIES-SOCIAL%20SCIENCES.pdf?v=5](https://strata.gov.lt/images/vertinimas/Benchmarkingo_ataskaitos/2018/2018%20LITHUANIA-COMPARATIVE%20EXPERT%20ASSESSMENT%20OF%20RD%20ACTIVITIES-SOCIAL%20SCIENCES.pdf?v=5).

foundation of modernisation of Education) is especially problematic. It is the second weakest field and there was no unit at the internationally strong or leading levels. The recommendations for this field included additional resources that should be allocated for establishing new research groups, because, as international experts have put it “the numbers of researchers in each unit are too small to be able to meet the multiple expectations”.

What is more, such a programme should pay attention to the previous experience in Lithuania of other thematic funding, i.e. the Baltic Research Programme, and include a prerequisite to acquire the funding for establishing an international cooperation (at least in the Baltic Sea Region). The international collaboration would strengthen the transfer of knowledge from more developed research centres to newly established centres in Lithuania. Moreover, this would create the basis for further international cooperation by working together on other projects, applying for EU funding, etc. According to the *Comparative Expert Assessment*, it is necessary that this research funding would support the collaboration among the researchers in different Lithuanian institutions as well. Thus, it would foster the cooperation between research groups by exploiting the strengths of each of them.

## PhD Grants for Teachers

At the moment, the Netherlands have five initiatives for PhD grants: 1) “PhD for teachers”; 2) “Dudoc Alfa”, 3) “Dudoc Beta”, 4) “Postdoc VO”, 5) “Pilot Promodoc”. A grant enables qualified primary, secondary and special education teachers to conduct doctoral research at a university and to write a doctoral dissertation. Teachers are free to choose their subject area and the topic of the research (the topic is not tied to the field of Educational Sciences). The Government of the Netherlands allocates special funds for such studies: according to preliminary figures there are 13 places for postdoc researchers every year and around 100 places for PhD students every year.

Teachers who qualify for a PhD grant are exempted from teaching duties for two-three days a week, they stay on a full salary, and have to finish their studies with five years. Their school receives funding for a replacement during the teacher’s absence. Teachers who are seeking for a PhD grant must have an idea for the research. When the teacher seeking for the PhD grant has identified a research idea, he/she has to find a professor at a Dutch university. Together they both have to develop the idea into a research proposal. An assessment committee evaluates the applications for the grant on several criteria. The assessment procedure approximately takes four months.

It is necessary to acknowledge that in all universities of Lithuania there are around 2000 PhD students in total. And each year only a few state-funded places are designated for the educational sciences PhD programmes. There is no doubt that the number of PhD students overall, and specifically in the field of Educational Sciences should be increased over time because it is the only way of how the scientific corpus can be renewed. Considering this, it would be more realistic to apply only one scheme of PhD grants at this time. So, new state-funded PhD places in Educational Sciences and better conditions for the teachers, who decide to pursue the PhD (no matter if it is in the field of Educational

Sciences or in the field of any particular subject of studies) could be combined. The new teacher payment scheme allows introducing a flexible approach for such teachers. Moreover, the idea of a small amount of additional funding for the schools that employ the teachers pursuing the PhD should be considered as well.

## **VSNU (Dutch University Association) is an Active Stakeholder in the Process**

In the Netherlands there is a “Dutch Interuniversity Committee for Teacher Education” that unites 12 universities in total. The Committee is affiliated to VSNU. The goals of the Committee are: a) sharing of knowledge and experiences, b) aligning policy and procedures, joint lobbying and action plans. The collegiate committee involves representatives from each institution. VSNU funds the committee and the staff who are working on issues of teacher education (two persons working full-time).

The Universities care and think strategically about how to strengthen teachers’ skill set and improve teacher education programmes. This translates into several specific objectives: “(a) to improve the accessibility and appeal of the teacher education programmes; for example, by revising the admission policy; b) to create more flexible, modular teacher education programmes; for example, by creating ‘stackable’ routes to the teaching profession, aided by the module for teaching (pedagogy); c) to improve the visibility and attractiveness of the teacher education programmes and the teaching profession itself, by working with schools to shape and organise a further increase in the professionalism of teachers and in continuous learning pathways; d) to investigate the financial position of the teacher education programmes, and to ensure that the funding available to the teacher education programmes is a good reflection of their tasks and responsibilities; e) to strengthen the range of programmes on offer in relation to primary education and f) to explore possibilities for expansion)”<sup>12</sup>.

Even though this approach is producing results, it is not practical to consider its implementation in Lithuania. Mainly, because the *Lithuanian University Rectors’ Conference* (the match for the VSNU in Lithuania) operates quite differently and has only some technicians at their disposal. The Vice-rectors responsible do all the policy-related work in the universities. Thus, it is not possible to reach such impressive results, or to conduct thorough analysis of the policy. Therefore, only little impact could be expected. Alternatively, establishing the Working Group as a permanent body with the function of advice to the Ministry could effectively be considered as an alternative to the replace the Dutch version.

## **A Degree for Teachers**

In the Netherlands, teacher education is provided both in universities and in universities of applied sciences. The most significant number of teachers are taught at universities of

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<sup>12</sup> VSNU 2018-2022 teachers action plan: [https://www.vsnu.nl/en\\_GB/2018-2022-action-plan](https://www.vsnu.nl/en_GB/2018-2022-action-plan).

applied sciences. The research shows that they type of institution has no impact on students' learning outcomes. The only difference is that the teachers who graduate from a research university are more capable of creating innovations. On the other hand, in Finland, the subject teacher programme is 5-year long (3 years of B.A. + 2 years of M.A.). It allows to major in one subject and minor in one or two subjects (in addition to the teacher qualification), i.e. a major in Mathematics, a minor in Chemistry + Physics and a minor in Education.

There is an ongoing discussion in Lithuania whether teachers can be prepared at universities of applied sciences, whether a bachelor's degree is enough to begin the career of teacher. At this point, the Working group could not agree on shared recommendation. Nevertheless, what is agreed by everyone is that programmes of ITE should be research-informed and that they should provide broader qualification rather than just sticking to only one subject.

## **Mentorship**

In the Netherlands, there is a separate position for mentorship at school. The teacher, who has been recruited for this position, is responsible for new teachers, and has, in turn, fewer contact hours. This helps strengthen the integration of novices and also to provide them with the necessary support.

The new teacher payment scheme in Lithuania offers such opportunities as well, so there would not be any need for legal or administrative changes. Instead, the Ministry could foster the adoption of different roles for teachers in school. But this is reflected in more details in another thematic report linked to this project, which focuses on the quality and flexibility of ITE studies.

## **All Teacher Educators Do Research – All Researchers Teach**

Research-based teacher education consists of teacher educator research communities; teacher education programmes are based on research; student teachers learn to produce and consume research-based knowledge; national teacher education strategies are based on research. All teaching is based on research: all teacher educators are required to do research, and teaching is based on their own research or that of others. In Lithuania, there is no established strong focus on a research-informed approach, neither in initial teacher education (ITE) nor in Continuous Professional Development (CPD). However, the three ITE centres acknowledge that ITE programmes should be research-informed and teacher education should include practical research activities for students in schools, such as classroom research.

## The Centre for Evaluation of Teacher Competences

This centre is a group initiative by all universities offering ITE programmes. It allows them to centralise the competence assessment of prospective candidates for teacher education (of those who have previous experience, etc.). By doing this assessment, ITE can make better decisions on which competences need to be further developed and which non-formal experience could be recognised. It enables to pool resources and to provide services of higher quality and efficiency.

In Lithuania, considering the low number of people who are interested in the teaching profession, it would not be possible to establish such a coordination centre. It might be regarded as a reasonable solution in the mid-term future after other policy measures have been implemented, and the impact created will allow a re-assessment of the *status quo*.

## Education Research Labs

In Utrecht, 15 schools for primary education and five higher education institutions work together in the “Utrecht Educational Research Lab” (*ERL*) to create a sustainable *knowledge infrastructure*. A sufficient *knowledge infrastructure* works two-ways: it supports primary school teachers and school leaders in developing a scholarly or *research-minded* attitude, and it helps to tackle the issues that teachers experience in their daily work. At the same time, educational researchers can incorporate the concerns of teachers into the research questions that they address in their work.

The Utrecht *ERL* takes a bottom-up approach. First, a school discusses and decides on the main issues. Next, the researchers support the schools by turning these issues into research questions. They subsequently help to design a feasible study and supervise the research. In the end, the everyday practice of teachers is being transformed. Moreover, it enhances teachers’ positive outlook on the research-informed practice.

In Lithuania, ITE providers should consider creating regional “science to practice” networks, which would include higher education institutions, the representatives from schools, municipality and NGO’s working in this field. The National Government should foster the creation of such research network by running a tailored programme, providing the targeted funding and the support needed. The importance of having a “broker” – a person who defines research issues/topics, designs intervention in the classroom/school during the implementation of such an initiative, should not be underestimated by the ITE centres.

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## 5. Building Research Networks

The focus of this chapter is A System of Teacher-Centred Continuous Professional Development. The chapter presents a set of thematic challenges and alternative analysis based on the discussions in the Working Group and the study visits.

In the beginning, the WG had formulated a third topic of interest relating to criteria for Institutional Excellence. Although crucial, the WG understood that most criteria which are presented in the previous section are covered by the other two thematic reports linked to their work, namely, Quality and Flexibility of ITE studies and Building Research Networks. However, a part of criteria which were not reflected elsewhere, were related to continuous professional development activities. Thus, in order to ensure coherence between all thematic reports, avoiding repetition and emphasising each topic separately, the WG decided to focus this report on CPD activities. Additionally, all of the reports make reference to criteria of institutional excellence.

### 5.1. The Evaluation of the Current Situation by the Working Group Experts

The Working Group's reflections and discussions are summarised below. The discussions were facilitated using future-thinking methods. Following this approach, the results will be presented in four categories: a) the expectations about the future situation, b) the limiting factors, c) how to bridge the gap and d) questions on international experience and the know-how.

The biggest present challenge: scattered CPD system with many different actors who have unclear roles. National CPD priorities are not covered by funds, thus, they exist more or less "on paper". Current incentives does not support CPD providers to develop longer, more coherent and relevant programmes answering educational system needs and also teachers are not encouraged to participate in more demanding, but also more useful, CPD activities.

**Future expectations**

**Limiting factors**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is the right balance between state's defined national CPD priorities and own teacher needs;</li> <li>• Most teachers are able to teach several subjects;</li> <li>• Teachers are evaluated (certified) every five years to re-evaluate if a person is still able to further work as a teacher;</li> <li>• CPD answers to current education system needs (i.e. weak system points are addressed);</li> <li>• Teacher understands what CPD topics and forms are most relevant and effective to them;</li> <li>• Teachers are motivated to continuously grow and build learning communities to share their practices;</li> <li>• CPD is constantly evaluated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No designated funding to national CPD priorities;</li> <li>• No funding to research and analysis of the needs of teachers and effectiveness of CPD;</li> <li>• Wrong incentives for CPD providers and teachers;</li> <li>• Lack of understanding which topics are most relevant and which forms are most effective;</li> <li>• Very strong "subject purism".</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How to bridge the gap</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Questions on international experience and know-how</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide separate funding for the implementation of national CPD priorities;</li> <li>• Provide funding to research and analysis on CPD effectiveness;</li> <li>• Legalise action research as an eligible CPD practice (so the costs would be eligible as well);</li> <li>• Provide more diverse CPD forms to teachers;</li> <li>• Agree on clearer roles of different actors involved in CPD;</li> <li>• Strengthen the role of teacher education centres in CPD provision.</li> <li>• Fund opportunities for teachers to get another subject qualification (to teach several subjects).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the concrete qualification needed for teaching particular subjects (e.g. Mathematics, Physics)? Is it regulated nationally or left for each institution to decide?</li> <li>• What are the most common CPD forms used by teachers? Which of them are the most effective?</li> <li>• Who is responsible for evaluating teachers' CPD needs?</li> <li>• How is CPD funded?</li> <li>• Who can provide CPD? Are there any restrictions, criteria?</li> <li>• Is your CPD system constantly evaluated? If no, how do you know it is good? If yes, by whom?</li> <li>• Are there any licensing for teachers? How does it work? What are the benefits and problems?</li> <li>• How nation-wide challenges are integrated to CPD (i.e. PISA results, national assessment)?</li> </ul>

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|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the incentives for teachers to develop continuously?</li></ul> |
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## 5.2. Alternative policy options

During the WG meetings and the study visits to the Netherlands and Ireland, several alternatives for the improvement of the situation were formulated. The Netherlands and Ireland were chosen because of their know-how and current developments in teacher education related fields. Primary purpose of both visits were research (the Netherlands) and ITE studies (Ireland), but during the visit many CPD related practices were presented and discussed.

In this section, the report presents the options and provides more details about them. It also provides insights about their usefulness and the possibility to implement them in Lithuania. Most options are presented in detail in previous sections of this report. Some options are not repeated (Induction, Teaching Council, The Teacher Register) because there is no additional information. In other cases, only main aspects related to CPD are mentioned.

### Scientific knowledge for improving teacher practice

The Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (NRO) provides many services for teachers and researchers and a couple of them are related to CPD in a broader sense. Namely the online initiative "The Knowledge Roundabout" (nl. "De Kennisrotonde") and the online magazine for education "Didactief".

These activities could be provided by universities or in cooperation with other existing institutions under the Ministry; namely, the National Education Agency established in 2019.

### PhD Grants for Teachers

It is worth mentioning that substitute teachers are important in CPD activities (two or more days), because now it is one of the obstacles and reasons why teachers tend to choose even shorter (one day or few hours) CPD activities. Thus, additionally funding for schools to employ them should be considered.

## Education Research Labs

This could stimulate implementation of *action research* as relevant and effective CPD practice in schools.

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## 6. Reflections from the final conference

The final conference for this project took place on 10-11 of September as a virtual event. On the first day, the Working Group had a meeting with international experts where they discussed final feedback on the recommendations developed.

On the second day, more national stakeholders (ministry representatives, higher education institutions, school leaders and teacher unions, Lithuanian Parliament members) were invited to participate in the event, where Lithuanian experts presented final outcomes and recommendations from project. International experts shared their experience and practice in related topics and provided some useful insights on implementation of recommendations.

In this section, a short summary will be presented of the main points raised at the conference, avoiding repetition with aspects previously elaborated on in this report. Some new recommendations were added, or modified, as a result of those discussions. The final list of recommendations is presented in the following section.

Most discussions evolved around the topic of educational research. Lithuania's Vice-minister for higher education and science, who was present on both days, also stressed the importance of investment needed to strengthen long-term development of this area. Moreover, he shared information about the upcoming Baltic Sea Science and Education ministries' meeting in which he would propose the establishment of a joint research programme for educational sciences.

Some additional questions which were raised in relation to this topic are: how to meet the needs of researchers to collect valid data and more and balanced, coordinated data collection at school? How to reconcile the need of researchers to publish research results in scientific publications and turn those results into solutions that improve educational practice? How to keep teachers researching their performance at school and use the data of these studies in further research? How do you get researchers to broaden their networks and collaborate with other researchers and institutions, outside of their initial network?

Claudia Hartman from the Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (NRO) provided some insights and lessons learnt from their experience. To foster collaboration between existing networks they launch calls not for research ideas, but for new research teams. Appointed juries select those teams and then provide time and support so they can find and prepare relevant proposals for joint research. In addition, NRO has also started work with the NordForsk institution from Norway on the specific topic of inclusive education.

For this funding, research teams could only apply if they involved at least three different countries. It allowed to provide more international collaboration opportunities.

But long-term funding is a requirement here. If you put a lot of effort into creating new research connections, they require time to consolidate and become self-sustaining.

Funding is always limited, so there is a need to prioritise topics. Make a dialogue with different stakeholders (practitioners, researchers, and policy makers), visit institutions, collect all the answers, and draw up a multi-year research programme. A lot of small questions translated into bigger themes in the research agenda, then publish calls for proposals, and get applications dealing with smaller questions – but not necessarily the same as the ones collected in the first place. Also, emphasising most pressing issues might also be a solution (i.e. in the context of COVID-19 pandemic research on online education is on high demand).

There should be both applied or practice-oriented materials and scientific literature. If focused on first without the second, first is not trusted. However, to develop these different materials require different skills, not always up to the same people. Funding institution need to free up additional resources to ‘translate’ findings and sometimes even to research how knowledge materials are used in practice and redevelop accordingly.

Participation in research activities is time-consuming for teachers. Thus, headmasters need to provide favourable conditions for that. To do so, they need to understand why participation in R&D activities is useful at school level. It is important to remember, that you cannot reach everyone directly with limited funds. Some teachers and educational professionals are more drawn to learning and incorporating research than others. Key is to find these. Another incentive which could be transferred from experience Ireland has is consider favourable practice during school evaluation if school has participated in the research.

Participants also discussed the results of the Working Group with regard to its two other themes (Quality and flexibility of Initial Teacher Education studies and teacher-centered Continuing Professional Development). In a discussion that took a comprehensive look at all phases of teacher education, and the roles of government and individual institutions, a number of new insights were added. Professor Jan van Tartwijk put very strong focus on teacher agency saying that if you want teachers to be professionals, work with them as professionals, and provide enough room to make their own decision. He also argued for teacher professional development to be better rooted in school practice and to connect to a continuum of development. Encouraging teachers to engage in such methods as action research and lesson studies had often proven more effective and powerful than large centralised CPD programmes.

This point was further discussed in relation to national CPD priorities with participants arguing that teachers should be involved in decision-making processes among other stakeholders in order to strengthen trust and commitment.

Another aspect emphasised was the notion of a framework that would capture teachers’ different roles. Such a tool would be beneficial in showing teachers (including beginning teachers as well) what different roles for educators can exist in the school context. An

additional point of discussion was which competences are required to be able to take on a concrete role, and how guidance can be provided for the planning of related CPD activities. It should also have clear connection with human resource policy in school.

Lastly, Professor Anne Looney from Dublin City University, Ireland, encouraged the involvement of more stakeholders, and of society at large, in a debate on the teaching profession, which in some cases might include key documents and frameworks to capture a shared vision around the teaching profession. As a specific example, she mentioned the framework for the process of student selection. Professor Looney suggested that such a framework should be co-created together with teachers and other practitioners, researchers, headmasters, but also students of initial teacher education, pupils and other socio-economical partners as well. Such an approach could increase the feeling of ownership and would eventually also increase trust in quality of this process, which would ultimately lead to strengthening the prestige of the profession in society.

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# THE FINAL LIST OF RECOMENDATIONS

The final recommendations by the Working Group are divided to national and institutional recommendations.

## Recommendations for national level:

### **1 Establish a long-term National Educational Research funding scheme**

To unify the timeline with other strategic documents, it should be extended through the period of 2021-2030.

### **2 Consider establishing a scheme as the joint Baltic Sea Region initiative.**

It would increase the competitiveness and lead to more rigorous research. It would also strengthen regional cooperation, which would be beneficial for all countries in many education domains.

### **3 Provide more state-funded PhD places in the field of Educational Sciences.**

The Ministry could consider relating additional PhD grants to topics which are financed under the funding scheme of the National Educational Research to strengthen the impact of multiple policy

options. More state-funded PhD places are necessary to renew the Educational Research groups and to build a strong basis for the future work.

### **4 Provide more favourable opportunities for teachers to pursue master's and PhD degrees.**

The teacher payment scheme which was recently implemented allows introducing a flexible approach for such teachers. Although, in order to facilitate the numbers, provision of positive incentives for schools should be considered, i.e. additional funding for a particular school to cover costs of the teacher being absent during two or three days per week.

### **5 Cultivate different pathways for becoming a teacher, showing that all of them provide the same quality and necessary competences.**

Provide equal incentives and support for students who decide to pursue teacher qualification, no matter either in concurrent or consecutive way. Also, equally promote different pathways at national level communication.

### **6 Expand existing „TEŠK“ project, which funds the acquisition of additional subject qualifications for practicing teachers.**

Provide further funding for teachers who seeks to acquire additional subject qualification.

**7 Include 60 ECTS needed for students to get a subject teacher qualification in each area (subject) descriptor (nationally legislated by Ministry).**

It should provide more coherent framework among different subjects and also it could foster flexibility for students to become teachers from related fields (i.e. mechatronics for physics and etc.).

**8 Include didactic oriented and similar research as suitable field publications.**

Include didactic oriented and similar research as suitable field publications.

**9 Provide targeted funding for the establishment of Educational Research Labs.**

Educational Research Labs should be established by the ITE centres. A single lab should accommodate a dozen of schools. It is worth considering creating a separate Educational Research Lab for each education level. The regional aspect and especially schools that are socio-economically disadvantaged should be considered while implementing this initiative. Additional support should be provided if needed.

**10 Legitimise action research practice as an official CPD activity for teachers.**

Allow to use funds designated to CPD in school for action research activities.

**11 The identification of national priorities for teacher CPD needs to be more transparent and clearer. Even more important, the priorities should receive separate funding for their implementation.**

is especially important that the identification process would involve more stakeholders, so teachers would better understand why concrete priorities have been selected. Teacher-agency should be encouraged, and teachers should have decisive voice in this process. It could raise their motivation and willingness to participate in these CPD activities.

**12 Create and nationally approve a competencies framework for teachers' CPD which would focus on long-term programmes and guide individual teachers and school leaders to plan and implement CPD in a consistent and coherent way.**

The Ministry should provide enough funding for programmes aimed at more qualitative than quantitative approach. This framework would provide more guidance, especially focusing on long-term tendencies, which would help to teachers to plan their continuous

professional development. Relate this framework with possible teacher roles in school and provide guidance and support how teachers could develop themselves to better fit in those roles.

### **13 Create a system of substitute teachers in municipalities.**

It would be easier for teachers to take longer-term CPD courses if school leaders could have better opportunities to find substitution for required time.

### **14 Fund assessment of CPD effectiveness and also the implementation success of national CPD priorities.**

It would provide better understanding of what kind of activities provides best opportunities for teachers. Using this data ministry could provide more tailored support for teachers.

### **15 Introduce mandatory teacher certification.**

Introduction of such system should be implemented through reasonable time and also it should be complemented by incentives for teachers to adopt this practice earlier (i.e. giving higher pay).

### **16 Fund research and analysis aimed at understanding teachers' CPD needs.**

In order to better answer the needs of teachers and tailor CPD programmes more research is needed. It should allow to evaluate differences among different teacher groups as well (by subject, by geographical zone, etc.).

### **17 Better define the roles and responsibilities of system actors – initial teacher education centres, teacher centres in municipalities, state, schools and other stakeholders.**

This would allow clearer understanding on what a certain type institution needs to do.

### **18 Minimise influence of ITE centres in the induction process, shifting more responsibility towards schools.**

Schools should take more responsibility in induction process as it should be more closely related to general CPD activities and professional development provided on sites.

### **19 Develop national guidelines for the student selection process for pedagogical studies.**

Guidelines should allow selecting students not solely on the basis of academic achievements, but also based on the evaluation of their motivation, prior non-formal experiences, skills and attitudes. Involve wide spectrum of stakeholders in this process.

## **20 Re-assess the existing initiatives related to dissemination and exploitation of scientific knowledge in the field of education.**

Using the opportunity of merging several institutions of the Ministry into the „National Education Agency“, the effectiveness of existing tools, namely „www.svietimonaujienos.lt“, „MokytojoTV“, „Ugdymo Sodas“, „E-mokykla“ and others should be evaluated.

### **Recommendations for institutional level:**

#### **1 Designate at least one quarter of each ITE programme for practical learning (placements).**

Now usually in initial teacher training study programmes there is 30 ECTS designated to practical learning. Practical skill application is necessary to prepare young teachers for classroom work. Thus, ITE centres should double the time load which is spent on these activities.

#### **2 Include practitioners (teachers) in the development and delivery of study programmes (not only through mentoring interns, but also carrying out lectures, seminars, workshops).**

Early relationship with practitioners might provide needed know-how for new teachers

and also raise their aspirations and willingness to go to school after studies.

#### **3 Ensure that non-formal competences are recognised and those people receive more flexible acquisition of formal qualification possibilities.**

It would help to attract mid-age professionals who have useful know-how and only need some additional guidance and support with pedagogical skills.

#### **4 Include reflective practices into already existing and newly developed ITE programmes.**

Include reflective practices into already existing and newly developed ITE programmes.

#### **5 The ITE centres should commit to integrating more research-oriented practice in ITE programmes.**

Teaching process should be based on newest existing research on student development. It is necessary that these skills would be built in teacher education programmes and develop routines which could be transferred to school.

#### **6 Teacher education centres should develop**

**"packages" for schools and teachers, which would include different CPD types and support.**

These should answer national CPD priorities, among other topics, and provide more in-house experiential learning for teachers; individual mentoring forms.

**7 Focus on long-term CPD programmes, less ad hoc, fragmentation.**

The ITE should develop a more continuous CPD programme and provide this service systematically.

**8 Diversify newly prepared teacher profiles by providing opportunities for students to select elective courses.**

This is to ensure that on the basis of a broad, general teacher profile, there are also attractive opportunities for student teachers to specialise according to their preferences and abilities.

**9 Each ITE should develop institutional research "metro" plan and afterwards make joint national scheme.**

It would allow to see how different educational research topics are covered, who is working on what and where institutions should cooperate or where pockets of excellence exist.