



Knowledge hub
-
Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

Mainstreaming educator ESD competences

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Hungary

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

Lead: Ministry of Human Capacities of Hungary
Partner: Educational Authority of Hungary

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

sustainability
formal education
educator competences
multi-stakeholder process
in-service teachers
initial teacher education
professional learning
career model
ESD

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Initiated as a top-down approach, the practice used contemporary research results, filtered through a multistakeholder consultation process. It took a holistic approach to teachers' professional learning in ESD, from initial teacher training to creating learning opportunities for in-service teachers. Standards and indicators along with guidance documents were established and harmonised with an existing framework of teachers' training, assessment, evaluation, appraisal and career model in the country.

Description of the best practice

7.

Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

An amendment to the Government Decree 326/2013. (VIII. 30.) into force from 2018 includes ESD competences in the competence portfolio of teachers. This meant that for teachers' qualification and advancement processes, their ESD competences needed to be proven with evidence from their daily work, in case of all teachers (from kindergarten to secondary and even VET education) and other related education professionals such as school therapists, special needs development specialists, school leaders.

This measure was a first step addressing international policy recommendations (of improving teachers' ESD competences and capacity building of educators, responding to the need of highly qualified and competent staff in formal education to advance ESD), followed by elaborating standards, indicators, guidance materials and developing learning opportunities for in-service, then pre-service teachers.

During the first phase of the process, the multi-stakeholder approach helped to tailor indicators and guidance materials to the needs of the very diverse professional group addressed, resulting in 31 types of guidance documents, among others. It was also important to take a holistic view on professional learning – therefore not only organising conferences, presentations and trainings, but to promote participatory methods and forms such as peer learning, mentoring and workshops.

In the following phases, universities were involved in several specific working groups revising their curricula and output criteria and requirements. The challenge (and the result) was to reach a consensus on a shared vision on ESD and to integrate them in the same sense (using the same standards and core quality criteria) at all universities in the country where initial teacher training (from early childhood to secondary level) is performed. This was a long series of negotiations, which finally had its result: the ESD competences were mainstreamed in initial and in-service teacher training, assessment, evaluation and qualification, with the same standards, competence areas and criteria.

With this, Hungary has implemented a forward-looking practice that also serves as a special and exemplary initiative in the European Union. As a result, educator ESD competences became part of the e-portfolios of all school educators, school leaders and teaching staff, they appear as an element of the training program and the output criteria of pre-service teachers, while target groups can access specific training and mentoring support. The initiative of developing teachers' ESD competences in Hungary received the GENE Certificate Exemplifying Quality in Global Education in 2021.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

*

The implementation had 4 major steps but is an ongoing effort.

(1) The ESD element of the national competence framework was developed using the research results of a European project (A Rounder Sense of Purpose) based on UNESCO's Learning for the Future Competence Framework, involving a mixed group of experts (consisting of teacher educators, educational researchers, qualification experts, heads of institutions and practicing teachers). Through the work of the multi-stakeholder expert group in 2018 and 2019, ESD competences were integrated into teacher trainings and teachers' assessment processes, while the necessary tools, guidelines and recommendations were developed.

(2) Many trainings were developed in this topic. Some of them support the operation of eco-schools, helping the professional development of school leaders and educators. These trainings, available to all educators, have provided a significant proportion of educators working in eco-schools with the theoretical foundations and practical skills to carry out their work more effectively. In addition, there are various teacher education courses preparing educators to motivate their students to take action for sustainability, both through information and didactic experience. From 2020, teachers' preparation was also supported by a multi-stage, free online mini-course system developed by the Educational Authority of Hungary. The multiplier trainings of Pedagogical Training Centre staff also started. The Educational Authority organized briefings on ESD for all school leaders in the country. These efforts are continuing since.

(4) Besides, other learning opportunities were also created, with emphasis on peer learning. As such, the Autumn and the Spring Pedagogical Days (organised by the regional bureaus of the Educational Authority) offer open lessons (for peer visit and critical reflection for peer teachers), school site visits, workshops and sample project expos in each region of the country. The programs had a participatory approach: with the help of workshops, good practice exchanges and open sessions, hundreds of teachers were reached in each region.

(4) The following steps helped to integrate ESD into the pre-service teacher training curricula and assessment criteria. The curricula and output criteria review of the teacher trainings began in 2020 with the involvement of every higher education institution involved in initial teacher education. By 2021, ESD competences got included in the training curricula and in the output requirements: it is gratifying to experience that there was a consensus among delegates from higher education institutions on the importance of these steps.

Resources were needed for mainstreaming the ESD competences in the existing system, for developing guidance material, for developing trainings and a concise system of supporting professional learning, finally for effectuating the trainings themselves and for implementing the evaluations and qualifications at a national scale.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

The practice is transformative as it contributes to quality ESD as a form of transformative education by capacity building of educators. As a policy initiative, it had an impact on related policies, on education monitoring and directly on teachers. Besides, it initiated discourse about existing practices in ESD and competences needed to perform quality ESD. It also had an impact on the learning of teacher training higher education institutions, initiating exchange of practices and experiences, encouraging those which had not yet excelled in ESD in the beginning of the process to place more emphasis on the issue.

As a result of the multi-stakeholder working group in the initial phase, the diverse professionals working in the public education system (early childhood educators, teachers of different disciplines, developmental educators, special education teachers, psychologists, school leaders, etc.) can be prepared on the basis of 31 different guidelines according to their field of expertise. Over the past two years, the Ministry of Human Capacities and the Educational Authority have reached around 18,000 teachers through trainings, briefings, and presentations. In the past years, Autumn and Spring Pedagogical Days were organised at over 60 venues throughout the country reaching over 5000 teachers per semester. The event was also organised during the pandemic, sometimes online or in a hybrid form. The Educational Authority trained over 1700 mentor teachers at 17 locations, and workshops on ESD and the extension and experiences of the Eco-School Program (organised in eco-schools with open lessons, site visit, discussions) were held at 16 sites reaching about 500 teachers per semester. Training programs strengthening ESD competences contributed to the successful qualification of 15,000 teachers in this competence area in 2020/2021, which served as the first phase of assessment of the initiative itself.

The strongest evidence is the yearly teacher qualification processes and evaluation reports, that support the notion of teachers' development and motivation in ESD competences. They also indicate that there are preference areas for teachers across the ESD competence palette, therefore (while also acknowledging these) further effort is needed to support the less favoured ones by creating yet more learning opportunities.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

The key trigger for transformation was the need of improving and assessing teachers' ESD competences. As often mentioned in literature, teachers and educators might act as change agents but also as bottleneck to transformative learning.

Also, as teachers average age ranges towards the middle aged in Hungary, many of them could not receive suitable training and preparation during their initial training (as the very concept had not existed yet). An organised form of free, available and meaningful trainings was urgently called for.

Teachers and teacher trainers have been very collaborative throughout the process – and that was also one of the triggers for transformation. Despite the pandemic, the trainings and the pedagogical professional learning days were followed by equal interest.

A marked challenge was to harmonise existing frameworks: first, to integrate the competence framework in the existing competence framework used in teachers' assessment and evaluation in Hungary, then to find consensus across higher education institutions in the country.

What did not yet work in the process is to provide a repository of practical experiences, practices and snapshots in schoolwork linked to ESD educator competences based on Hungarian teachers' work – however there are several others available, developed in various projects introducing practices from other countries (including Hungary).

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a "best practice".

What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented "best practice" or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

This policy intervention took a holistic approach on teachers' capacity building for ESD. It built on research results, allowed professional discussions, and considered the needs of the diverse groups involved in the process. It is coupled by monitoring processes and guided by research. Those who consider adopting the approach need to allocate financial and human resources and time to successfully implement the intervention. In exchange, the professional exchange may bring about nice results.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

Vare, P.; Arro, G.; de Hamer, A.; Del Gobbo, G.; de Vries, G.; Farioli, F.; Kadji-Beltran, C.; Kangur, M.; Mayer, M.; Millican, R.; Nijdam, C.; Réti, M.; Zachariou, A. Devising a Competence-Based Training Program for Educators of Sustainable Development: Lessons Learned. *Sustainability* 2019, 11, 1890. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11071890>

Réti, M., Lippai, E., Nemes, M. (2022). Framing the Frames: Integrating an ESD Approach Into an Existing National Framework. In: Vare, P., Lausselet, N., Rieckmann, M. (eds) *Competences in Education for Sustainable Development*. Sustainable Development Goals Series. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91055-6_12