



Information gathering template prepared for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2021 - Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia - Inclusion and education: All means all.

Latvia

This profile has been commissioned by EASNIE as an input for the 2021 regional report on inclusion and education in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. This version is a working draft and will be subject to further copy-editing. Its content has not been edited nor verified by the GEM Report team. The views and opinions expressed in this paper, including anecdotal evidence from interviews, are those of the interviewees or researchers of this profile and should not be attributed to the Global Education Monitoring Report, to UNESCO or to EASNIE. The information in this document was current in June 2020. The profile can be cited with the following reference: "Profile commissioned by EASNIE for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2021 - Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia - Inclusion and education: All means all". For further information, please contact gemreport@unesco.org.

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Introduction

The template for the Profiles was a survey designed to collect information from countries in order to collect structured information to be used as the basis for the GEM Regional Report analysis work.

The survey respondents were specifically requested to not focus exclusively on children with disabilities, but include information on all of the groups considered to be vulnerable to exclusion or at risk of being marginalised, stereotyped or subject to discrimination, including for reasons such as gender, location, poverty, ethnicity, language, beliefs and religion, migration or displacement status, sexual orientation or gender identity expression.

The overall goal for the Profile was that the information provided in relation to each country identifies:

1. challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for the implementation of inclusion in education policies;
2. the ways in which countries monitor inclusion and exclusion in education (at individual and system levels);
3. challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for supporting inclusion in education created by sectors other than education and arrangements needed to co-ordinate work among government sectors, tiers of government and with other stakeholders to overcome overlapping dimensions of exclusion;
4. key policy solutions that are being implemented and key drivers of policy change.

The Profile begins with background information on the people completing the template.

The next section provides a short descriptive overview of the country's system of inclusive education.

This is followed by main sections presenting quantitative and qualitative data linked to each of the seven themes for the report:

1. laws and policies;
2. governance and finance;
3. data;
4. curricula, learning materials and assessment;
5. teachers and support personnel;
6. schools;
7. communities, parents and students.

Each section begins with a key guiding question (marked in italic text) that frames the overall information provided. This is followed by the specific questions on the main issues for the topic that should be answered.

Sections 1 and 2 focus on information relating to legislation and policies.

Section 3 focuses upon available data and the aims and procedures for data collection.

Sections 4 to 7 focus on information relating to policies and policy implementation in practice.

The information provided focuses on compulsory education (i.e. potentially -pre-primary, primary and lower secondary, and possibly upper secondary education). Only specific issues related to inclusion in early childhood education and post-compulsory education were considered when necessary.

2. Survey reply and respondents

The following country representatives have contributed to this profile:

Ilze Ābelniece, National Centre for Education, Agency National Co-ordinator for Latvia.

Guntra Kaufmane National Centre for Education Director of Department of Curriculum Development

General education is coordinated by Unit of General Education Curriculum Development. Its main tasks are to provide curriculum development in general education, monitor its implementation and coordinate the development of educational books appropriate for general education standards.

The National Centre for Education (NCE) is a public administration institution directly subordinated to the Minister of Education and Science.

NCE primary functions are:

- to develop curriculum for pre-school, basic and general secondary education and vocational education; (NCE develops subject standards and sample teaching- learning programs);
- to provide unite development of national examinations in basic education, general secondary education and vocational education;
- to coordinate development of textbooks in accordance with national standards for general and vocational education;
- to coordinate support system for learners with special needs;
- to coordinate interest-related education system and implement support activities for development of learners' personalities and talents;
- to organize Latvian School Youth Song and Dance Celebration;
- to coordinate teacher continuing professional development activities;
- to organize state language proficiency testing

The main challenge for the preparation of the profile was:

Legislation have been changed in 2020.

The 5 most informative sources on inclusion in education (academic papers, policy reviews, evaluation studies etc.) for the country published since 2015:

1. European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. 2018. Country Policy Review and Analysis. <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/agency-projects/CPRA/Phase2/CPRA%20Latvia.pdf>
2. European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. Raising the Achievement of all Learners in Inclusive Education 2016 <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/agency->

[projects/RaisingAchievement/CountryReports/Raising%20Achievement%20Latvia%20Country%20Report.pdf](#)

3. OECD 2016. Education in Latvia <https://www.oecd.org/latvia/education-in-latvia-9789264250628-en.htm>
4. European Commission, European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination. 2019 County report non-discrimination. Latvia <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6d362040-1df8-11ea-95ab-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
5. University of Latvia study of the cost model of support services for children with special needs in the context of the implementation of inclusive education
https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba_visp/IZMiepirkumamLUPPMFgalaparskats08122017.pdf

Country system overview

(i) Provide a brief (maximum 1 page) narrative of the country's compulsory educational system. Specifically, provide information about:

a. the different types of schools, institutions and educational provision within the system and the age range / ISCED levels of learners they cater for

Latvia provides a legal entitlement to early childhood education and care (ECEC, pirmsskolas izglītība) for all children from 1.5 years of age. Municipalities are obliged to ensure that children who live in the municipality are able to access ECEC (pirmsskolas izglītības iestāde) close to their home. ECEC for five- and six-year-old children is compulsory.

The Cabinet of Ministers approved the amendments to the Education Law and the General Education Law which, among other things, lower the school age to six years. However, the change of primary education starting age has been postponed. Latvia's school environment is quite formal but the introduction of new curriculum and teaching and learning approaches (starting gradually from 2019/2020) should help make the school environment more adaptable to children of all ages. The current regulation allows parents to choose whether to enrol their 6-year-olds in primary school or continue for a year in pre-school.

Basic (integrated primary and lower secondary for ISCED 1 and 2) education or pamatizglītība is compulsory and begins at the age of 7 and lasts 9 years. It consists of 6 years of the first stage of pamatizglītība (sākumskola) (primary education) and 3 years of the second stage of pamatizglītība (lower secondary education).

According to the General Education Law children must start school in the calendar year when they attain 7 years of age. It is possible to start a year earlier or later in line with the decision of the family doctor and if the parents wish so. In this situation health and psychological preparedness is taken into account.

Basic education ends after grade 9 with final examinations in student's first language, the Latvian language for students in ethnic minority programmes, mathematics, history of Latvia and a foreign language, leading to the award of a certificate which is needed to entry into upper-secondary education.

Upper secondary education (vidējā izglītība) begins at the age of 16 and ends at the age of 19 and is provided in general and vocational pathways. Although upper-secondary education is not compulsory, the proportion of population with completed upper secondary education is high and above the OECD average.

Vocational programmes take between two to four years to complete and lead to different qualification levels. Only a few schools offer lower-secondary vocational education. (Eurydice)

Each learner with special needs has the possibility of receiving education in the most appropriate educational institution by ensuring they have:

- help from qualified specialists;
- acquisition of academic knowledge;
- development of social and work skills;
- practical orientation in education;
- preparation for working life and integration into society;
- remedial instruction and rehabilitation. (National Overview p7/8)

b. the different authorities responsible for different types of provision etc.

The **Ministry of Education and Science** is the leading state administration institution in the field of education and science, as well as in the fields of sports and official language policy. It oversees the following key institutions: State Education Development Agency, National Centre for Education, State Service of Education Quality, State Latvian Language Agency etc. The Ministry of Education and Science involves also non-governmental organisations in the work groups in the course of development of regulatory acts and policy planning documents.

Central government is directly responsible for most public special schools (including boarding schools) and vocational schools.

Latvia is divided into 110 municipalities and 9 cities. The functions of **local governments** include establishment and financing of educational institutions. According to Law on Local Governments they are responsible for education provision (ensuring the specified rights of residents to acquire primary and general secondary education near to their place of residence; ensuring children of pre-school and school age with places in training and educational institutions; organisational and financial assistance to extracurricular training and educational institutions and education support institutions, and others) and organisation of continuing education for teaching staff and pedagogical methodology work. Municipalities also provide youth with the opportunity to acquire upper-secondary education, as well to provide possibilities to realize informal education, support extracurricular work and camps for children.

Municipal administration of education is organized through the Education Boards. Municipalities establish and finance these Boards, appoint the head in co-ordination with the Ministry of Education and Science. Education boards assist schools by providing teaching and methodological materials, organize education for adults, ensure possibilities for teachers to improve their qualifications. The most important functions are to implement the local educational policy and allocate funds from the state budget to schools for salaries of pedagogical staff.

Administrative Territorial Reform has an impact on educational governance and administration as it has amalgamated local municipalities. This will require a new coordination and cooperation between the Boards or education specialists and the Ministry of Education and Science as well as a new subsidy's distribution system. (Eurydice)

A city local government and a municipality local government ensures the operation of the local government pedagogical-medical commission and its accessibility to children with special needs (Education Law, Section 17, 1999–2013). (CPRA p9)

Schools are independent in developing and implementing education programs, staff hiring and school management. In particular, the school head hires the teaching and non-teaching staff, manages the financial resources, ensures the implementation of the regulatory enactments concerning education.

The school board consists of the head, the founder of the institution, representatives of pedagogues, parents, municipality, sponsors and primary school. It has a consultative function in the drafting of the school development plan; it works with organizing school social life activities; manages accounting of received donations, decides on the use of these funds. (Eurydice)

c. any major external support programmes provided in the past 5 years e.g. bilateral - GIZ (German Society for International Cooperation) and USAID; or multi-lateral e.g. UNICEF, European Union, ADB (Asian Development Bank).

Latvia has financial support from the European Structural Funds, for improvement and development of education-related aspects and issues through tender procedure. (Eurydice)

ESF resources have been used for the preparation of diagnostic tools - also funding project on competence-based approaches (2016) and to develop the National Centre for Education in 2017.

(ii) Are there specific features of the compulsory education system that impact on inclusion that should be kept in mind when reading the country response?

Area	Yes/No	Description of the feature
Early tracking of learners into a particular educational pathway	No	There is no tracking until the start of upper-secondary education when there are general or vocational options. However, majority of schools implement Career education programs which help learners to develop skills in balancing their interests, abilities and opportunities, setting their career goals, career management; provide knowledge and understanding of the world of work, its links to education, career planning and further training opportunities, and ensure effective participation in working life.
'Double-shift' patterns to the school day (i.e. learners attend for either a morning or afternoon session)	No	
Grade retention	Yes	Classes are made up of pupils of the same age, and progression is usually automatic. However, pupils who have not adequately mastered curriculum (have received lower than "4" in more than one subject in grades 5-9) may be required to repeat the year. In order to decide about repeating the year, the board of teachers may set additional consultations and tests. <u>The Procedures for Enrolling Students in and Discharging from General Educational Institutions and Special Pre-school Educational Groups, and also for Moving Them up into the Next Grade (2015)</u> defines the criteria and procedures by which students are enrolled in and discharged from educational institutions. The regulation describes mandatory requirements for moving students up into the next grade, and mandatory support measures for pupils with learning difficulties so that they would repeat a year only in certain cases.
Multiple languages of instruction	Yes	The state develops and finances <u>ethnic minority</u> (bilingual) education providing publicly-funded education in seven ethnic minority languages: Estonian; Polish; Hebrew; Ukrainian; Belarusian; Russian; Lithuanian (OECD 2016) A new bilingual education model has been introduced from 2019/2020 in grades 1-6 of ethnic minority education programmes, ensuring that at least 50% of the education content is taught in Latvian, and in grades 7-9, ensuring that at least 80% of the education content, including foreign languages, is in Latvian. The final exams for the 9th grade pupils from spring 2020 will be held in Latvian.

		Several schools with Latvian as the language of instruction specialise in foreign languages and teach several subjects in a foreign language, for example, Riga English Grammar School and Riga Centre Humanitarian Secondary School (English), Riga French Lycée (French), Riga State German Grammar school (German), Riga Grammar School of Nordic Languages (Nordic languages). (Eurydice)
Policies on access to compulsory education in local schools	Yes	<u>Satversme</u> (the Constitution) determines the right to education for everybody. The <u>Children's Rights Protection Law</u> determines equal rights and possibilities for all children to acquire education according to personal abilities. It is a duty of every local government to ensure pre-school education for children from the age of 1.5 residing in the municipality. Every municipality is obligated to provide pamatizglītība (integrated primary and lower-secondary) education in the school closest to the dwelling-place for the children living in its administrative territory. (Eurydice)

(iii) In the country's system which groups are considered to be vulnerable to exclusion from education? Who has identified these groups as being vulnerable to exclusion?

The main target groups in need of support and inclusive education are groups at risk due to development, ability, health and social background conditions and problems. Third-country citizens, ethnic minorities and Roma children also are among target groups for inclusive education, as well as children of returned emigrant families and Latvia's citizens' children who were born abroad. (Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020)

There are also some support measures for talented children in general and vocational education programmes. However, talented children are not recognised by the main steering documents as a target group in need of special support. (Eurydice)

These groups are set out in the Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020 (page 19-20)

(iv) Please provide a brief (maximum 1 page) narrative overview of the historical development of inclusion of vulnerable groups in education in the country.

The movement towards inclusion of learners with special needs started in the mid-1990s. The Law on Education stated that every child has the right to be educated in a school of their parents' choice.

From 2011 –2013, the National Centre for Education – in the framework of the European Social Fund project, 'The Development of Support Systems for Learners with Disabilities' – attempted to develop support systems at individual and institutional levels. It established eight regional support centres for inclusive education that provide specialist assessment and support to individual pupils, their families, teachers and other stakeholders, as well as methodological support to the whole educational institution and local community. After the project, the regional centres continued to provide their services only in the municipalities where they were situated or to other municipalities where they had service provision contracts.

In 2007 National Centre for Special Education was established to support education for children with special needs. Unfortunately, due to the economic crisis in 2009, the National Centre for Special Education was reorganised. Its tasks and objectives were transferred to the Unit of Special Education in the National Centre for Education. More attention was paid to increasing the competence of mainstream teachers to work in inclusive settings, because more

and more parents of learners with SEN choose mainstream schools for their education. During the last few years, the number of special schools has decreased (there were 59 in 2016/1017) and more special schools will close in the near future. However, a number of special schools will remain, as there are many families – especially in rural areas – which are affected by the poor economy, unemployment and immigration. Special schools are in demand for families from disadvantaged backgrounds, as these schools provide not only educational services, but also social support.

In 2016, new Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers about the requirements and criteria how special education institution could gain the status of special education development centre were adopted. At present there are 12 Special Education Development Centres in Latvia.

In order to provide more objective assessment of learners' diverse needs new assessment tools were developed, standardised and validated for learners with special needs. Universities and higher education institutions developed new methodological materials to help teachers who work with pupils with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, behavioural disorders, hearing impairments (cochlear implants), visual impairments and autism.

Today, due to the diminishing number of learners in schools every school needs all the children from the local community to attend in order to prevent the closure of some classes or even the whole school. More mainstream schools and pre-primary institutions are adapting their curriculum or providing new curricula to offer to learners with different kinds of special needs and the numbers attending special schools has fallen.

At present, with the support of European Structural Funds financing, the National Centre for Education is working on developing teaching and learning materials and information and communication technology for learners with special needs. The European Structural Funds provides support to ensure adequate numbers of support staff in schools and pre-primary educational institutions.

Further work is being undertaken to improve teachers' skills to work in inclusive education. The pedagogical medical commission of the state and local government promote inclusion of learners with special needs in general education institutions.

The Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020 have further promoted inclusive education.

Section 1: Laws and policies

What is the framework of legislation, policy and guidelines for supporting the development of an inclusive education system?

1.1 Have international/UN conventions/declarations to protect the rights of groups who are potentially vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion been integrated into national and/or regional law?

Convention/declaration	Law	Comments
Child rights (UNCRC)	<u>Bērnu tiesību aizsardzības likums / Protection of the Rights of the Child Law (1998)</u>	<p>Ensures that all children have equal rights and opportunities to acquire education commensurate to their ability. (Section 11)</p> <p>Children have the right to free pre-primary preparation, primary and secondary education and vocational training.</p> <p>Children have right to protection of life and to development (Article 7)</p> <p>Children belonging to the ethnic minorities of Latvia have the right to acquire education in their native language in conformity with the Education Law (likumi.lv/doc.php?id=49096). (CPRA p6/7)</p> <p>A child has the right to freely express their opinions and, for this purpose, to receive and impart any kind of information, the right to be heard ... (3)</p> <p>A child has the right to participate in self-administration in the fields of education, culture and sports. In any other fields which affect the interests of the child, appropriate attention, corresponding to the age and maturity of the child, shall be paid to the opinion of the child.</p> <p>(Protection of the Rights of the Child Law; 2000–2014: likumi.lv/doc.php?id=49096) (CPRA p26)</p>
Disability (UNCRPD)		<p>The Ministry of Welfare is responsible for the implementation of the requirements of the UNCRPD. The latest policy document for the implementation of the UNCRPD for the period of 2014–2020 was approved on 22 November 2013 (polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/4559; likumi.lv/ta/id/205248-par-konvenciju-par-personu-ar-invaliditati-tiesibam). (CPRA p7)</p>

Gender (Convention on discrimination against women CEDAW)	<u>Satversme /</u> <u>The Constitution 1922</u>	<p>The main sources of gender equality law in practice are national measures implementing EU law, such as the Labour Law.</p> <p>According to the national legal doctrine, international agreements are higher than national laws. Article 89 of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia protects human rights according to the Constitution, national laws and binding international agreements. Article 91 bans discrimination. The EU gender equality directives and their interpretation provided in the case law of the CJEU are taken into account. (EC Country report on gender equality, 2019)</p>
Ethnicity or language (UN Declaration on Rights of persons belonging to National, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities)	Race Equality Directive	<p>Prohibits discrimination in education. The State implements the professional competency improvement programmes for teachers on bilingual education, integrated learning of content and language. Between 2012 and 2016, 8084 teachers participated in the programmes offered by the Latvian Language Agency. In 2014, the National Centre for Education organized workshops and conferences for teachers of minority schools regarding development of reading skills; approximately 420 teachers participated in these events. (International Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial discrimination. Combined 6th-12th Reports submitted by Latvia under article 9 of convention, 12 October 2017)</p>
People deprived of liberty		<p>In accordance with the provisions of the Education Law, all places of deprivation of liberty where underage inmates are placed provide the possibilities to acquire general education. Minors in the places of deprivation of liberty have a possibility to participate in both basic education as well as secondary education programmes.</p>
Roma		<p>Classes for Roma closed by 2016 but enrolment in special schools high compared to national average 34% in 2016/2017</p> <p>Ombudsman not addressing concerns of discrimination of Roma (NGO report on racial discrimination)</p>
Asylum seekers		<p>In accordance with the Asylum Law, adopted on 16 January 2016, and the Cabinet of Ministers</p>

		Regulation No. 488 Procedure According to Which a Possibility of Acquisition of Education for a Minor Asylum Seeker is Provided, issued on the basis of the above Law, underage asylum seeker is provided with a possibility not only to acquire the basic education and general education, but also to prepare for acquisition of the basic education from the age of 5.
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1.2 Provide an overview of general education legislation impacting on the inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups:

Name and link	Year and status (enacted, under preparation etc.)	Description of key content
Education Law	1998	Defines that people with special needs receive special education (special education- general and vocational education adapted for people with special needs and health disturbances (Article 1, Para. 24) Prohibits differential treatment - persons have the right to acquire education regardless of the material and social status, race, nationality, ethnic belonging, gender, religious and political affiliation, state of health, occupation and place of residence (Section 3). (Eurydice)
General Education Law http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20243 General Education Law, section 53 http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20243	1999 -with recent amendments	Basic education is mandatory. Basic education shall be commenced in the calendar year when the learner reaches the age of 7 years. A learner is entitled to commence the acquisition of the basic educational programme one year earlier or later, depending on their state of health and psychological preparedness in conformity with the wishes of parents and the opinion of the family doctor or the opinion of the psychologist. Institutions in which learners aged up to 18 years reside (childcare institutions, orphanages, medical treatment institutions, places of imprisonment, accommodation centres for asylum seekers, etc.) shall ensure the possibility for the acquisition of the basic educational programme. (CPRA p5) Duration of special educational programmes:

		<p>Special educational programmes for learners with intellectual development disorders and visual or hearing impairments may last 10 years, while special educational programmes for deaf learners with intellectual development disorders may last 11 years. Acquisition of basic education for deaf learners who acquire a special educational programme for learners with hearing impairments may last 11 years, while acquisition of secondary education may last three years.</p> <p>Acquisition of special basic education programmes for learners with difficulties in their studies or severe speech disturbances may last 10 years.</p> <p>Special educational programmes for learners with physical development disorders, mental health disorders or somatic symptom disorders for the acquisition of basic education are provided for nine years.</p> <p>Basic education for partially deaf learners who acquire a special educational programme or learners with hearing impairments may last 10 years, while secondary education may last three years.</p> <p>A special basic educational programme for learners with visual impairments may last 10 years, while acquisition of secondary education may last three years (General Education Law, 2005–2011). (CPRA P29)</p> <p>In 2018, the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers were adopted defining requirements for the enrolment of students with special needs in general education programmes implemented by general education institutions</p> <p>General basic educational and general secondary educational institutions, which have the appropriate provisions, may integrate students with special needs. The requirements to be brought forward for general basic educational and general secondary educational institutions in order to ensure integration of students with special needs in the abovementioned educational institutions shall be determined by the Cabinet.</p>
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		<p>Access to appropriate support measures for students with special needs who have been integrated in a general educational institution shall be ensured by the educational institution. The educational institutions shall draw up an individual plan for acquisition of an educational programme for each integrated student with special needs.</p> <p>The pupil might be integrated either in a general education class or in a special class only for pupils with special needs within a mainstream school. All provisions are divided into three categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutional facilities and utilities of premises (territory); • additional rehabilitation measures; and • additional pedagogical staff and support staff.
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1.3 Provide an overview of education policy or guidelines impacting on inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups:

Name and link	Year and status (enacted, under preparation etc.)	Description of key content
Guidelines on Education Development Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes 2014.–2020	2014-2020	<p>The guidelines set out measures to enact the National Development Plan which aims for high-quality and inclusive education for personal development, human welfare and reaching sustainable national growth.</p> <p>For reaching the objective, three sub-goals have been defined:</p> <p>Education environment: to increase the quality of education environment by optimising the content and developing a suitable infrastructure</p> <p>Individual skills: to promote development of an individual's professional and social skills based on values of education for life and competitiveness in the work environment</p> <p>Effective management: to improve efficiency of resource management by developing institutional excellence and resource consolidation of educational institutions.</p> <p>Actions include:</p> <p>Increasing the attractiveness of vocational education and strengthening the involvement of adults to enhance youth</p>

		<p>employment and adults' competitiveness in the labour market.</p> <p>Raising the professional competence of teachers, including establishment and implementation of effective resource management, and developing a new funding model and mechanism will increase the quality of education.</p> <p>In order to facilitate availability of education and implementation of the principle of inclusive education, development of a modern learning environment, including infrastructure, will be supported. Diverse opportunities to develop individual skills and capabilities will be ensured, and involvement in conservation of cultural and historical heritage and civic activities will be promoted. (CPRA p3)</p>
<p>Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 556,01.09.2020</p> <p>https://likumi.lv/ta/id/310939</p> <p>Requirements for general education institutions to admit students with special needs in the educational programs they implement</p> <p>https://likumi.lv/ta/id/310939-prasibas-visparejas-izglitibas-iestademe-lai-to-istenotajas-izglitibas-programmas-uznemt-izglitojamos-ar-specialam</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p> <p>November 19, 2019</p>	<p>Define the provisions needed to integrate children with special needs in mainstream educational institutions</p>
<p>Law on Disability</p> <p>http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=211494</p>	<p>2012</p>	<p>Article 12 of the Law on disability states that the disability consequences of people with disablement are decreased by:</p>

		<p>ensuring rights in preschool education, general basic education, vocational basic education, vocational education, general secondary education and vocational education institutions (except special education institutions that receive maintenance funding from the state budget for the learners – people with disabilities) to receive from the state paid services of the assistant for supporting moving and self-care;</p> <p>ensuring rights to receive from the state budget the services of an interpreter for the acquisition of the educational curriculum;</p> <p>implementing other support activities defined in legislative documents.</p>
<p><u>Procedures for Enrolling Students in and Discharging from General Educational Institutions and Special Pre-school Educational Groups, and also for Moving Them up into the Next Grade</u></p>	2015	<p>Sets out mandatory support measures for students with learning difficulties so that they would repeat a year only in certain cases. (Eurydice)</p>
<p>Cabinet Regulations no 709 – Regulations regarding Educational Medical Commissions’ http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=252162</p>	October 2012	<p>Outlines 9 different special education programs medical commission will not adopt a decision on the education of a child in a particular school but will recommend the educational programme most suitable to the special needs of the student and the necessary support measures</p>
<p>Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030</p>	June 2010	<p>Puts forward the need for a paradigm change in education. Education must be qualitative, available throughout life and creativity orientated. It must enable opportunities to respond to global competition and demographic challenges. Courses of action: access to education and changes in the organisation of the educational process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools as centres of social networking;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contextual education and a shift in the teaching profession; • e-schools and the use of information technologies; • lifelong education. (European Agency Raising Achievement report p2)
National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014–2020	December 2012	<p>Sets the medium-term priorities in the field of education and science, emphasising the development of competencies, research, innovation and higher education. The following are mentioned among the main tasks:</p> <p>high-quality pre-primary education; inclusive education; curriculum development; support for talent-nurturing; training and involvement of creative and skilled teachers; development of vocational education in accordance with labour market trends; access to higher education, export capacity, competitiveness and consolidation; involvement of young people in non-formal education and voluntary work; promotion of youth employment, including the development of a career education system; improvement of educational institutions, including the preservation of small rural schools, providing support for the expansion of their functions and emphasising the NDP 2020 principle of distribution of the education services set according to the territorial placement. (European Agency Raising Achievement Report p2/3)</p>
Government Action Plan – Declarations on the Implementation of planned activities of Cabinet of Ministers led by Maris Kuchins	2016	Aims to develop an optimal situation for children with special needs in education, health care and develop a model for a support service to promote inclusive education.

From September 2018 students are not enrolled in pedagogical correction programmes. Pedagogical correction is a temporary additional measure for children who need individual support. The Ministry of Education and Science has the opinion that children have to be provided with timely individual pedagogical support in regular school, and not in a separate pedagogical correction programme.

Social correction programmes are offered at social correction educational establishments. These programmes provide for the organisation of the values education for students and their preparation for social reintegration. Knowledge and skills required for independent life within the society are provided to minor law-breakers. Minor law-breakers are also given an opportunity to master professional skills. (Eurydice)

1.4 Please describe any specific plans and strategies designed to support inclusion in education (e.g. national strategy on migrant learners):

Name and link	Year and status (approved, under preparation etc.)	Description of the focus
Initial Learning of Language for Asylum Seekers	2016-2017	<p>The Latvian Language Agency implements the project of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund “Initial Learning of Language for Asylum Seekers”</p> <p>In addition to language courses, materials have been developed, including teaching programmes, handbooks for teachers, teaching games and other freely available teaching resources.</p> <p>(International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Combined sixth to twelfth periodic reports submitted by Latvia under article 9 of the Convention October 2017)</p>
Education Development Guidelines Implementation Plan	<p>2014-2020</p> <p>June 2015</p>	<p>Supports the implementation of preventive and compensatory measures for those at risk of early school leaving, poverty, needy and low-income children and young people, so that a child or young person can continue learning in a general and vocational education institution as long as possible and finish or get a qualification that can be used in the labour market Also supports raising quality and availability of interest activities and out-of-school activities for children and young people at risk of poverty and social exclusion and needy and low-income children and young people, including for establishment of training enterprises and ensuring their operation.</p> <p>Gives assistance to co-operation among municipalities aimed at provision of professional support by the related government and municipal authorities for the needy and low-income children and young people and for those at risk of poverty. (CPRA p37)</p>

Youth Guarantee	2014-2020	Supports the involvement of young people, including those who are not employed, learning or training, in development and implementation of youth initiative projects, as well as non-formal learning activities (CPRA p37)
Short vocational programmes (1-1.5 years)	2014-2020	Includes the involvement of young people at risk of social exclusion in non-formal education programmes (young people at day care centres, group apartments, prisons, orphanages, etc., young people with addiction problems, young people with intellectual development disorders, young people who do not learn, work, or obtain a profession, etc.). (CPRA p37)

1.5 Is there a definition of inclusion in education?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please provide the definition and give the official source:

The concept of inclusive education is described in the Education Development Guidelines 2014–2020 (Ministry of Education) as a process in which corresponding diverse needs of all learners are ensured, increasing the participation opportunities of every learner in the learning process, culture and various communities and reducing possible exclusion from education and the educational process. (CPRA p7)

1.6 Is there a definition of vulnerable groups?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please provide the definition and give the official source:

Rights of the Child Law (1998) states that:

A child with special needs is a child who in connection with an illness, trauma or functional impairment of an organ system caused by an innate defect has need of additional medical, pedagogical and social assistance irrespective of whether there is a determination of disability in accordance with procedures laid down in law. (Section 53 of the RCL)

1.7 Is there a definition of special educational needs?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please provide the definition and give the official source:

Special needs — a necessity to receive such support and rehabilitation, which creates an opportunity for a student to acquire educational programme, taking into account his or her state of health, abilities and level

of development. (Section 1, Paragraph 2, Clause 14, of the General Education Law of the Republic of Latvia, GEL)

In 2014, Guidelines defined more broadly the target groups that would need support for quality education and identified several target groups according to development, ability and health status, social conditions, children and young people at risk of social exclusion, as well as those who have re-emigrated and children and young people of Latvian citizens (Guidelines for the Development of Education 2014-2020)

1.8 Please provide information on any future developments planned for inclusion in education.

Development of professional standards for pedagogues (2017)

The National Centre for Education has developed recommendations for implementation of inclusive education (CPRA p15) (https://visc.gov.lv/specizglitiba/dokumenti/metmat/metiet_iekli_izgl_ist.pdf)

On 30.06.2020 Education, the Ministry will publish a new Special schools reorganisation plan.

Changes to General Education Law, Chapter 51 (<http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20243>) will come into force on 01.09.2020. Special schools will be only for children with visual impairments, hearing impairments and mental health disorders. All other learners with physical disabilities, language impairments, learning disabilities and long-term illness must be included in mainstream schools.

1.9 Please provide information on any reports, evaluations and/or reviews of legislation and/or policy relating to inclusion in education, since 2015. This could include official and parallel reports on UNCRPD etc.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. 2018. Country Policy Review and Analysis. <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/agency-projects/CPRA/Phase2/CPRA%20Latvia.pdf>

UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. List of issues in relation to the initial report of Latvia. April 2017

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&DocTypeID=18

UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Eighteenth session. August 2017. List of issues in relation to the initial report of Latvia and Replies to the list of issues.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&DocTypeID=22

UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Concluding observations on the initial report of Latvia October 2017

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&DocTypeID=5

OECD. 2016. Education in Latvia <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9789264250628-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/9789264250628-en>

1.10 What are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hindrances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to laws and policies in the country?

Challenges

UNCRPD (2017) Concluding Observation by UN Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities suggests that Latvia should move from a medical model towards a human rights approach with public awareness campaigns to build a culture of diversity based on the participation and involvement in community life of all persons with disabilities.

In addition, no child should be refused admission to mainstream schools on the basis of disability, steps should be taken to guarantee reasonable accommodation to enable access to all students with disabilities to quality, inclusive education.

This is also in line with the Recommendations of UN Committee on Rights of the Child (2016) 47th Committee who recommend that Latvia develops comprehensive measures for inclusive education, giving priority to inclusive education instead of placing children in specialised institutions and classes. It recognises the need to educate and assign specialised teachers and professionals to classes, in order to provide individual support and appropriate attention to children with learning disabilities.

Opportunities

Work of the National Centre for Inclusive Education to develop recommendations for implementing inclusive education https://visc.gov.lv/specizglitiba/dokumenti/metmat/metiet_iek_l_izgl_ist.pdf

In 2019 a new initiative was launched by the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre. It is intended to establish a new and effective support system for children with SEN – a National level pedagogical psychological support service (with at least 10 regional branches), creating equal opportunities for pupils with special needs, strengthening inclusive education and providing coordination between social and healthcare providers.

Section 2: Governance and finance

How far are inclusive principles underpinning policies at national and local levels effectively supported by governance and financing mechanisms?

2.1 Is there formal collaboration across ministries on inclusion in education?

No No information available Yes

If yes, in which areas does this take place and who is involved?

Area	Yes/No	Description: what mechanism, who is involved and how
Policy development, implementation and coordination	Yes	The Ministry of Education works with other sectors, particularly the Ministries of Economics, Culture, Health, the Interior, Defence, Agriculture, Environmental Protection and Regional Development, and Welfare, whose tasks are included in the policy planning documents for example, Cultural Policy Guidelines 2014–2020 ‘Creative Latvia’ , Public Health Guidelines 2011–2017, Information Society Development Guidelines 2014–2020, National Industrial Policy Guidelines 2014–2020, Regional Policy Guidelines 2013–2019, National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Guidelines 2012–2018, and others. Education Development Guidelines 2014–2020 set out tasks and related funding under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as competitive and knowledge-based development approved by the Smart Specialisation Strategy (Education Development Guidelines 2014–2020). (CPRA p8)
Identification of needs / referral for services	Yes	The Ministry works with the Health sector as Regulations about Organisation of Healthcare and Financing state how family doctors provide check-ups for children from birth until 18 years of age. The family doctor is the one who sends the child to different specialists if there are any indications of health or developmental problems (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 1529, Annex 1; 17.12.2013: likumi.lv/doc.php?id=263457) (CPRA p34)
Data sharing	No	
Monitoring and evaluation	No	
Quality assurance and accountability	Yes	The <u>Education Law</u> determines that all educational institutions have to be accredited. Accreditation is carried out within five years from starting activity by the education institution and carried out every 6 years. All education programmes also need to be accredited every 2-6 years (Eurydice) If the assessment in any of the following aspects – learning and assessment of learners’ achievements, psychological and pedagogical support of learners, support in career education, cooperation with learners’ families, provision of safe and accessible environment, self-evaluation and planning of the development of

		<p>the institution, cooperation with other institutions – is unsatisfactory the accreditation period is two years.</p> <p>In the case of a two-year decision on accreditation, the founder have to submit to the State Education Quality Service within one month of receiving the decision of accreditation expert commission an action plan for the correction of the shortcomings indicated in the report of the expert commission and the implementation of the recommendations. (Preventing School Failure Report)</p> <p>A new Service - State Education Quality Service came into force on May 1, 2013. The aim of the Service is to ensure quality and rule of law in education by monitoring the quality of education and providing support in educational work.</p> <p>The Service ensures that educational institutions receive all the necessary support and assistance in the implementation of educational reforms. The aim of the Service is to promote the quality of education in educational institutions, by laying emphasis on support measures and new methods of how to approach any malfunctions and failures.</p> <p>The service uses a quality monitoring system and perform regular follow-ups of quality indicators throughout the country. They acquire and collect information submitted by schools and local governments, analyse it, drawing conclusions and developing proposals for continuing activities. They work through mutual support and co-operation to ensure that schools, parents, local governments, our Service, other public institutions and authorities, as well as non-governmental organizations can jointly work towards the common goal – the quality of education.</p> <p>https://ikvd.gov.lv/en/about-us/our-mission/ (Eurydice)</p> <p>An education system quality monitoring project started from April 2018 and runs until December 2020</p> <p>https://ikvd.gov.lv/eiropas-savieniba/izglitiba-kvalitates-monitoringa-sistemas-izveide-un-istenosana/</p> <p><u>This aims to establish a unified system to inform evidence-based policy.</u></p>
Education reform	Yes	<p>In the reform process, the Ministry of Education relies on the subordinated institutions: <u>National Centre for Education</u>, <u>State Service of Education Quality</u> and <u>State Education Development Agency</u>.</p>

2.2 Are there shared responsibilities between central and local governments on inclusion in education?

No No information available Yes

If yes, in which areas does this take place and who is involved?

Area	Yes/No	Description: who is involved and how
Policy development, implementation and coordination	Yes	The Ministry of Education coordinates the Education Boards in Municipalities on finance and administrative matters.
Identification of needs / referral for services	Yes	Both the state and municipal pedagogical-medical commissions assess the needs of children and recommend the most appropriate educational programme they should follow or support measures the educational institution should provide in learning (CPRA p34) Cabinet Regulations no 709 – Regulations regarding Educational Medical Commissions’ http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=252162
Data sharing	Yes	In connection with the ESF project ‘Support for Reducing Early School Leaving’ a database is being developed which provides regular exchange of information at national, municipal and school level on identified learners with a risk of dropping out of education, preventive measures taken and their outcomes. The database will provide full-fledged statistics and allow the effectiveness of the measures to be assessed in the long term. (Preventing School Failure Report p7)
Monitoring and evaluation	Yes	<p>The Ministry of Education and Science will [...] (18) monitor the results of the educational process of State-financed educational institutions; prepare and implement measures for the improvement of the quality of the educational process (Education Law, 1999–2013).</p> <p>The State Service of Education Quality shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • control compliance of the educational process with this Law, other laws and regulatory enactments governing education; • analyse the activities of educational institutions, draw up proposals for amendments to regulatory enactments and for improving the work of educational institutions; • in cases when violation of laws or other regulatory enactments have been determined, make proposals to the employer to impose disciplinary sanctions for the head of an educational institution or the teacher, or terminate their employment contract; • impose administrative sanctions in accordance with the procedures and in the cases prescribed by law; • in cases when the health or life of the learners is in danger, as well as for other violations of the law, temporarily suspend, until the founder of the educational institution has examined the relevant matter and taken a decision, the orders of officials and relieve the officials from performing duties (Education Law, 1999–2013). <p>During the accreditation process of a school, the appointed experts of the State Service of Education Quality evaluate the following fields of the activities of school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and learning • Achievements of learners • Support provided for all learners • Educational environment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available resources • Organisation of work, administration and quality assurance • The criteria for the field of support provided for learners include psychological and pedagogical support, safety of learners, provision of accommodations for learners with special needs and co-operation with families. <p>(Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 831; 20.12.2016: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/287602-kartiba-kada-akredite-izglitibas-iestades-eksaminacijas-centrus-un-citas-izglitibas-likuma-noteiktas-institucijas) (CPRA section 3)</p> <p>The local area Municipal pedagogical-medical commissions must analyse the work of educational institutions located in the administrative territory of the relevant local government in the education of learners with special needs, so that they receive education in accordance with the state of health, abilities and level of development.</p> <p>Cabinet Regulations no 709 – Regulations regarding Educational Medical Commissions’ http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=252162</p>
Quality assurance and accountability	Yes	<p>A system of self-evaluation has been developed largely on the basis of the School Evaluation and Development Planning Handbook. This is linked to external evaluation by expert teams affirmed by the Ministry of Education and Science (See above)</p> <p>School evaluation also refers to nationally regulated testing and centralised exam results Noteikumi par valsts pārbaudes darbu norises laiku 2018./2019. mācību gadā / Regulations on the Procedure of National Testing</p>

2.3 Are non-governmental organisations and/or associations involved in governance processes?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please describe their involvement:

NGOs have some involvement in quality assurance processes through involvement with State Education Quality Service (see above)

2.4 Are there any accountability mechanisms to promote the inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups?

No No information available Yes

If yes, what is the focus of the mechanisms?

Area	Yes/No	Description of the focus/actors involved (e.g. state/non state)
Appeal process for rights violations	Yes	Any matter related to the protection of rights in education is the responsibility of the Rights Monitoring Department of the State Education Quality Service. One of the main functions of the Department is to ensure surveillance over compliance with regulations in education, sports and

		<p>science as well as to provide recommendations in order to prevent breaches.</p> <p>The Rights Monitoring Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – considers claims filed by individuals concerning the activities of educational institutions and the implementation of educational processes; – advises the management staff of educational institutions, teachers, students and other persons; – carries out inspections at educational or related institutions, and scientific institutions; – issues a summons to persons, who fail to ensure compliance with laws and regulations in their activities for administrative breaches; – carries out analyses on the activities of educational and scientific institutions, provides conclusions and suggestions for improving their activities; – provides suggestions on the observation of the law within its own competency and in co-operation with public, municipal and other institutions. https://ikvd.gov.lv/en/protection-of-rights-in-education/ <p>There is no specific reference to UN Conventions on Rights of the Child or Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p>
School inspection	Yes	<p>Through the State Service of Education Quality who are responsible for the accreditation of schools.</p> <p>(Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 831; 20.12.2016)</p> <p>https://likumi.lv/ta/id/287602-izglitibas-iestazu-eksaminacijas-centru-citu-izglitibas-likuma-noteiktu-instituciju-visparejas-un-profesionalas-izglitibas</p> <p>Criteria:</p> <p>22.4 Support for learners</p> <p>22.4.1 psychological support, social pedagogical support</p> <p>22.4.2 guaranteeing safety of learners</p> <p>22.4.3 support for personality development</p> <p>22.4.4 support for career direction</p> <p>22.4.5. support for differentiation of study work</p> <p>22.4.6. support for learners with special needs</p> <p>22.4.7 cooperation with learner’s family</p>
Other quality assurance processes (e.g. standards for teaching, support services etc)	Yes	<p>In 2016, the <u>State Service for Education Quality</u> developed the <u>procedure</u> of professional activity evaluation and quality indicators’ system for heads of education institutions.</p> <p>Teachers’ Professional Activity Quality Evaluation System envisages voluntary evaluation of teachers according to quality performance levels ranging from 1 to 5. (Eurydice)</p> <p>The Ministry are currently developing standards for pedagogues.(CPRA p18)</p> <p>https://visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-048.pdf</p>

		These include: To create an inclusive, intellectually stimulating, emotionally and physically safe learning environment, supporting the learner's dignified, responsible and safe behaviour, implementing an approach appropriate to the individual development needs of each learner.
Monitoring and evaluation (e.g. data collection on attendance, participation, achievement, funding)	Yes	Monitoring (by the Ministry) takes place annually against national policy objectives which focus on reduction of early school leaving (including Roma pupils) reduction of bullying/peer abuse, proportion of special needs students integrated into general education schools, diagnosis of SEN and learning difficulties at early stage for prevention and correction – also educational quality of programme for talented pupils (Eurydice)

2.5 Please describe the general mechanisms for funding schools. Give details on: which institutions provide funding; what they provide; how they provide it and to whom, which mechanisms they use to allocate resources; and their respective roles and responsibilities.

Funding mechanisms	Description of who, what, to whom and how
National/State and Municipal budgets	<p>Early childhood education and care, basic (integrated primary and lower secondary), upper-secondary (general and vocational) education in institutions are covered from budgets of the state and municipalities. Funding from the central state budget is allotted annually and divided at the level of local municipalities.</p> <p>Early childhood, primary and lower-secondary education, as well as general and vocational upper-secondary education in public sector schools is free of charge. Local governments are responsible for the financing of general education institutions (administrative and technical staff, learning materials, maintenance of buildings and utilities). State budgets provide for the salaries of teachers. The state provides all necessary finances for special boarding schools. For schools for children with special needs, the state provides teacher salary. State gymnasiums receive extra finances because they also fulfil other functions in the field of teachers' further education and regional centre of methodology.</p> <p>The Law defines the autonomy of schools by stating that it is a head of a school who has to be responsible for the operation and performance of the school, as well as for rational use of intellectual, financial and material resources. Also, the head of the school decides on the use of the intellectual, financial and material resources of the school, and remuneration for the employees of the school (which cannot be lower than the work remuneration specified by the Cabinet of Ministers).</p> <p>A city local government and a municipality local government shall [...] (19) ensure the operation of the local government pedagogical-medical commission and the accessibility thereof for children with special needs (Education Law, 1999–2013) and finance from its budget the purchase of teaching aids corresponding to the guidelines for State pre-primary education, State basic education, general secondary education, vocational secondary education and industrial education standards – additional literature, visual aids, didactic games,</p>

	digital teaching aids and resources, handouts, study technical aids, educational materials, devices and equipment (Education Law, 1999–2013). (CPRA P19)
Per-student financing	<p>Municipalities can decide how to distribute resources to schools and supplement with own funds (OECD 2016. Education in Latvia)</p> <p>The funding formula consists of a calculation defining teacher workload that feeds into the calculation of total budget for salaries. The formula is based on detailed conversion rules to take account of number of students at each grade, regulations for class size and location of schools. Funding differs for students in grades 1-4, 5-9 or 10-12. There are additional indices to promote equity to account for differences in the cost of programmes and this favours small schools. A formula is used to calculate the number of workloads to which a school is entitled (full time workload = 21 hours of teaching)</p> <p>Workloads are converted to a budgetary amount and multiplied by a number of coefficients for social security, administration etc. Schools can use up to 15% of budget for non-teaching staff such as headteachers and special needs staff who perform administrative tasks. A factor of 1.4 is added for preparing lessons, marking etc.</p> <p>A new financing model is now being introduced.</p>
<u>Pedagogu darba samaksas noteikumi</u> / Regulation on Pedagogues Work Remuneration (2016)	The Regulation defines minimum salary rate for general, vocational and higher education teachers and heads of institutions. The Regulation also describes the system of remuneration and the system of additional payments for pedagogues.
Regulations on General Education and General Education Programme Implementation Cost Minimum per One Student (per Year) (2001)	Regulation sets general education programme costs minimum per one student (per year).
Regulations on General Pre-school Education and Special Pre-school Education Programme Implementation Cost Minimum per One Student (2001)	<p>Regulation sets pre-school education programme costs minimum per one student.</p> <p>The regulations ensure that financing for a learner with special needs in a special education programme (licenced) is twice that of the financing for a learner in a general education programme. The additional financing goes towards hiring support team specialists and increasing teacher salaries by 10 to 15% if they work in special classes or special schools. (National Overview)</p> <p>This also applies to general education.</p>
EU structural funds	These funds cover infrastructure, study aids, teacher training and support measures for talent development in students – also career education and individual support for SEN (2014-2020)

2.6 Do schools have flexibility to use funding allocations to support the inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups?

No No information available Yes

A new funding model is being developed (CPRA p21) which might lead to greater flexibility.

See : https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba_visp/IZMiepirkumamLUPPMFgalaparskats08122017.pdf

2.7 Please describe the specific mechanisms for funding the inclusion of vulnerable learners and their families in education (e.g. benefits, cash transfers, scholarships). Give details on: which institutions provide funding; what they provide; how they provide it and to whom, which mechanisms they use to allocate resources; and their respective roles and responsibilities.

Funding mechanisms	Description of the who, what, to whom and how
<u>Family allowances</u>	Awarded to all families with children. The amount of family allowance depends on the number of children and child's order in the family. Family allowances are paid till a child reaches 15 years of age or maximum 19 years of age, if the child is in general education and is not married. Several municipalities grant an extraordinary allowance for parents of school children at the beginning of school year for purchase of individual education materials and utensils.
<u>Tax relief</u>	Tax relief is general, independent, and not proportional to family income. This is a non-taxable fixed amount from income for every dependent child up to age 24, if the child till that age studies in a secondary vocational, post-secondary non tertiary or higher education institution.
<u>Disability pension</u>	Disabled children receive a pension larger than family allowance. The amount of invalidity pension depends on the disability group. Several groups of disabled persons and their companions have the right to use public transportation free of charge.
<u>Regulations on the allocation and use of state budget funds for catering of pupils at primary and lower secondary education institutions</u>	Free lunches are given to all pupils (in school years 1-4) Also for children from large families, low income families etc. These measures depend on the respective municipality and its financial opportunities - a couple of municipalities offer free lunch for all pupils learning in certain grades.
<u>School Fruit Scheme and European School Milk Scheme.</u>	These schemes provide children with fruit, vegetables and dairy products and promote good eating and healthy living habits

2.8 Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of funding and resourcing relating to inclusive education.

European Agency Financing of Inclusive Education: Mapping Country Systems for Inclusive Education 2016.

<https://www.european-agency.org/projects/financing-inclusive-education-mapping-country-systems-inclusive-education/country-diagrams>

University of Latvia study of the cost model of support services for children with special needs in the context of the implementation of inclusive education

https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba_visp/IZMiepirkumamLUPPMFgalaparskats08122017.pdf

2.9 Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to governance and finance issues in the country?

Challenges

Addressing the issue of small schools through restructuring/collaboration (OECD 2016)

Funding for greater equity – e.g. taking account of socioeconomic backgrounds (OECD 2016)

Opportunities

The new funding model should provide greater flexibility to schools to meet learners' individual needs

Current funding according to category of need risks that learners with multiple needs will not receive individually customize support (p 62)

University of Latvia study of the cost model of support services for children with special needs in the context of the implementation of inclusive education

https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba_visp/IZMiepirkumamLUPPMFgalaparskats08122017.pdf

Section 3: Data

What data on inclusion in education is available to understand if progress is being made towards equitable learning opportunities for all learners?

3.1 Please indicate if the following frameworks are in place, provide a link and give a brief description of their aims and focus:

Framework	Yes / No	Description
For monitoring and evaluating the implementation of national-level inclusion in education policy	Yes	<p>According to the regulations about the National Education Information System, data has to be provided about all learners who attend educational institutions (CPRA p35) (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No.276,29.06.2019: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/307796)</p> <p>In 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science published geospatial planning platform <u>Schools' map</u>. This tool helps parents, students, education policy-makers to get information about the school network of Latvia. The interactive tool offers information on more than 600 schools, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of students, • qualitative indicators, • indexes of centralised exams, • sports infrastructure available at regions, • inhabitants' number forecast, etc. (Eurydice) <p>Current quantitative targets relate to learner attainment, proportion of SEN integrated into general education, children (of age for compulsory education) not enrolled at school, participation in ECEC.</p> <p>Indicators will be improved and new ones will be developed and introduced in evaluation of implementation quality of the general and initial vocational education programmes (Education Development Guidelines 2014–2020).</p>
For quality assurance across all levels of the system (national, regional, school)	Yes	<p>The education quality monitoring is an instrument ensuring evaluation of learning achievements, and it ensures information and necessary feedback for improvement of performance of education institutions and teaching, as well as information about education system quality to parents and society.</p> <p>The system gathers statistical data, comparative surveys' results, centralised testing results, school accreditation and other data for further analysis. This is necessary because there is a lack of unified central level system of education quality indicators for now.</p> <p>The development of education quality monitoring system will start until the end of 2017 and completed by 22nd of December 2022. (Eurydice)</p>
Providing guidance on the use of a range of different data sources for evaluation and self-review at different	Yes	<p>In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Science started the European Social Fund project 'Participation in International Education Surveys' (Dalība starptautiskos izglītības pētījumos) to introduce internationally comparable education quality monitoring system. The project ensures Latvia's data analysis of <u>PISA</u> and participation surveys, as well as gathering and analysis of <u>TALIS</u>, <u>IEA PIRLS</u> data, and participation in some other surveys.</p>

<p>levels (national, regional, school)</p>	<p>The project ensures Latvia's participation in OECD Indicators of Education Systems (INES) programme, allowing international comparison of Latvia's data in the report '<u>Education at a Glance</u>'.</p> <p>Results of data analysis will develop an education quality monitoring system to strengthen education quality in general, because the evidence will be used for policy planning and evaluation. Other project partners are the <u>Central Statistical Bureau</u> of Latvia and <u>Institute of Educational Research</u> of the University of Latvia.</p> <p>The following achievement data collected (European Agency RA report p5) Results of state examinations (National Centre for Education, NCE). The overall NCE statistics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the results of centralised examinations; • the number taking optional examinations in secondary schools and gymnasiums; • the distribution of learners taking examinations, according to school type; • a comparison of the average results of centralised examinations between years; • the number of learners taking centralised examinations; • overall assessment of centralised examinations and the division of levels between schools and subjects; • the correlation between overall assessment and parts of centralised examination; • overall assessment of non-centralised examinations between schools and subjects; • a comparison of evaluations of non-centralised state examinations across different years. • results of diagnostic work in the 3rd and 6th grades (NCE); <p>School self-evaluation reports, including a section on learning outcomes and marks, are publicly available on regional websites.</p>
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3.2 What data is collected on learners from vulnerable groups, how and why?

No information available

3.3 Please provide the available data relating to all learners in the compulsory education system and where they are enrolled for their education.

All questions can be answered using the country's own data sources as far as possible. Alternatively, the data can be provided from publicly available international sources e.g. UIS: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=216> or UOE: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Main_Page

Please give a clear reference to the Source in the column provided.

In the Learners column, as far as possible:

- provide actual numbers as far as possible and not estimates.

- only use 0 when the data is zero.
- use M to indicate missing data.
- use NA to indicate the question is Not Applicable (i.e. the country does not have that type of provision).

All questions refer to ALL learners in the education system, not just those formally identified as belonging to a group that is vulnerable to exclusion.

Please provide notes to clarify any issues with the data and include a specific note on the calendar year and/or school year the data refers to.

Data on learner access to compulsory education	Learners	Notes	Source
(i) What is the <i>potential population</i> of learners for the compulsory education system in the country (i.e. how many children are in the country that should, by law, be in some form of compulsory education)?	Total: 255068 Male: 130907 Female: 124161		European Agency EASIE data https://www.european-agency.org/data
(ii) How many learners are enrolled in all forms of education (i.e. educational settings maintained by the ministry of education or by other authorities such as health, welfare or labour ministries)?	Total: 252790 Male: 130028 Female: 122762		
(iii) How many learners are out of any form of education (who by law should be in some form of education)?	Total: M Male: M Female: M		
(iv) How many learners are enrolled in mainstream schools (i.e. all learners, not just those with recognised needs or from vulnerable groups)?	Total: 243100 Male: 93711 Female: 119389		
(v) How many learners are enrolled in mainstream schools and spend the majority of their time (i.e. at least 80% or 4 days of the week) in inclusive groups/classes with their peers?	Total: 170924 Male: M Female: M	The missing info for boys and girls means the totals can't be used directly	
(vi) How many learners are enrolled in mainstream schools and spend the majority of their	Total: 2645 Male: 992 Female: 500		

time (i.e. at least 80% or 4 days of the week) in separate, special groups/classes, away from their peers?			
(vii) How many learners are enrolled in totally separate, special units and/or schools, away from their peers?	Total: 9120 Male: 3825 Female: 1952		

The red text indicates that the data set is incomplete. The gender breakdown for ISCED 02 is not available.

3.4 Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of data collection and monitoring for inclusion in education.

OECD 2016. Education in Latvia. Reviews of National Policies for Education OECD Publishing, Paris
https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-in-latvia_9789264250628-en#page133

3.5 Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to data collection issues in the country?

Challenges

OECD (2016) note that MoES has recognised the need to improve its systematic monitoring of education quality and strengthen data quality with better use of evidence in policy making. For example, better tracking of learner performance could support monitoring of progress, identification of possible difficulties and prevention of school drop-out.

In particular UN Committee Concluding observations in relation to the initial report of Latvia October 2017 stress the need for disaggregated data on learners with disabilities.

Opportunities

Development of improved indicators under Education Development Plan

Section 4: Curricula, learning materials and assessments

To what extent are curricula, learning materials and different assessment processes and procedures adapted to the principles of inclusive education?

4.1 Curriculum

a. Does the curriculum content include and represent all learners?

No No information available Partially Yes

If yes or partially, please provide a description and available links, including to underpinning values and principles.

National Standard for Basic Education and Sample Plans for Basic Education Programmes (2018; in force from September 2020)

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-reforms-school-education-34_en

Schools will be more autonomous in planning their teaching work, at the same time more accountability of schools will be expected. Teachers are becoming the leaders of learning process, guiding students to get the right skills. Teachers' collaborative work also will play more important role.

The new curriculum will cover seven study fields:

Languages, Social and civic, Culture awareness and self-expression, Natural science, Mathematics, Technology, Health and physical activity.

Following transversal skills are integrated in the curriculum:

critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and entrepreneurial skill, cooperation, civic participation, digital skills.

The curriculum encompasses most important values:

Responsibility, Diligence, Enterprise spirit, Honour, Wisdom, Kindness, Compassion, Moderation and restraint, Solidarity, Equity and tolerance.

The new curriculum will offer acquisition of digital skills from first grade. All students will learn programming in grades 7-9. Learning of second foreign language will start at grade 4. The new curriculum in schools will be introduced gradually from 2020-2022

New Regulations state: 9.8. Pedagogically and generally during the activities of the staff of educational institutions, jointly planning the curriculum, following each pupil's growth and promoting the need to improve the teaching process by creating a culture of educational institutions, the best teaching materials for each pupil;

9.9. Educational institutions shall explain the basic skills and learning needs of pupils as soon as possible, followed by the pedagogical action plans and implementation plans used, as well as those that are used for all pupils through full participation in the learning process.

Regulations Regarding the State Standard in Basic Education, the Subjects of Study Standards in Basic Education and Model Basic Educational Programmes , 747 Chapter IV 01.09.2020.

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/303768-noteikumi-par-valsts-pamatizglitiba-standartu-un-pamatizglitiba-programmu-paraugiem>

The management of school determines how much time should be allocated per subject and how subjects should be distributed over the week. However, this autonomy is limited due to the obligation to observe certain rules implementing curricula, such as the number of lessons for each subject as well as minimum and maximum number of all lessons per week. (Eurydice)

In the new legislation, secondary education is an opportunity to go deeper, according to the young person's interests and future goals, by deepening and generalizing what has been acquired in basic education (grades 10/11)

https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/aktualitates/2019/MK_vsk_Visc_.pdf

In special basic education programmes for learners with intellectual development disorders, it is permitted not to include some subjects by incorporating certain themes of these subjects into the content of other subjects. (General Education Law, 2005–2011). CPRA p30

b. Does the process of curriculum development involve the participation and contribution of different stakeholders?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please provide information on stakeholder involvement.

Involves parents NGO, other ministries, professional associations, regulated by Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 970,25.08.2009, Procedures for the Public Participation in the Development Planning Process

<https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/197033-procedures-for-the-public-participation-in-the-development-planning-process>

c. Is there guidance/procedures for schools to ensure that the curriculum content takes account of all learners (e.g. using flexibility to address differences due to gender, culture, religions, the ethnicities/nations living in the country, their history and culture, differences related to disability and socio-economic background, LGBT community).

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description and examples of this flexibility.

Goals of compulsory education curriculum do not make reference to diversity.

There must be at least one more teaching period for all the grades every week called "class lesson" organized by the class teacher. Class lessons are for discussing various themes like traffic safety, handling extreme situations, healthy lifestyle, career guidance etc.

Pupils may attend 1-2 optional or individual/group lessons per week if they wish. Individual/group lessons are suggested for schools to use for:

- *talented children,*
- *children who need additional consultation to acquire teaching material.*

Several lessons of interest-related education may be also offered in educational institution, such as choir, dancing, sports, orchestra etc. (Eurydice)

d. If individual education plans (IEPs) are used, please describe the procedure for developing (who is involved and how), what they focus on (specific curriculum areas; cross curricular competences; support strategies etc.) and how IEPs are implemented, used across the school?

If they show considerable difficulties in mastering this curriculum and their academic achievements do not correspond to the requirements of the National Standard of Basic Education, then – with the parents’ consent – the learner is assessed by specialists (speech therapist, special education teacher, psychologist). The school’s support team can suggest support measures and the development of an individual education plan. (CPRA – Latvia Country Report).

General education Law (2005-2011) para 242 states that the education institution should elaborate an individual plan for each student (p.38) with disability to acquire an education program. Learners must be involved in the development of these plans.

If the above-mentioned measures do not work and the learner’s achievements do not improve, the learner may attend the pedagogical medical commission.

The school is responsible for providing appropriate support measures for learning.

Special educational programmes for learners with severe intellectual development disorders or several severe developmental disorders are provided for nine years. They are also implemented by drawing up an individual plan. Depending on the state of health of the learner and the possibilities of the educational institution, the education programme may be implemented over a longer period, but not longer than 12 years. (CPRA p28)

Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 556. Adoption:19.11.2019. Entry into force 01.09.2020 updates details on how to make individual education plan. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/310939>

e. Are there different curricula or programmes for specific groups of learners at risk of exclusion (e.g. ethnic minorities or minority language groups)

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description of the main characteristics/organisation.

Learners with special needs can attend any educational institution their parents choose. The prerequisites for providing education to such learners in a mainstream school are:

Licensed special education programme

Availability of support specialists (special education teachers, speech therapists, psychologist, etc.)

Remedial instruction

Smaller classes

Appropriate assessment. (European Agency National Overviewp8)

According to the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers, a second teacher should be provided when pupils with intellectual disabilities and severe and multiple disabilities are included in mainstream settings.

There are special education programmes for learners with visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical disabilities, language impairments, mental health disorders, learning disabilities and long-term illnesses. These include the content of the mainstream education programme but the methods of instruction, support provided and additional services differ from mainstream programmes. (CPRA)

4.2 Learning materials

a. Is there autonomy for schools and teachers to select learning material/textbooks etc?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description.

There is some autonomy but little flexibility.

The process of the evaluation, certification and selection of textbooks involves bodies previously accredited by the Ministry of Education and evaluation committees, as well as teachers, within the framework of the governing and educational bodies of the school or of the school cluster.

The evaluation, certification and selection process can be divided into two stages:

A stage of evaluation and certification of the textbooks, headed by bodies previously accredited by the Ministry of Education, namely, higher education institutions (public, private or with public recognition), official teacher organizations, scientific associations or bodies and also specifically set up evaluation committees providing scientific-pedagogic quality certification;

An evaluation and selection stage, undertaken by teachers in schools, focusing on the suitability of the textbooks to their educational project.

Basic and secondary education textbooks typically remain in use for a period of six years and must follow the subject syllabus closely.

The selection process of textbooks for students with special educational needs of a permanent nature must involve special needs teachers.

In relation to teaching methods and pedagogical resources, teachers have autonomy, although individual schools may adopt certain teaching approaches and methodologies or produce pedagogical resources to shared amongst the teachers of the school or of the school cluster.

In addition to textbooks, teachers and schools can use other materials to support teaching and learning. These are not subject to assessment and certification procedures or formal adoption.

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/teaching-and-learning-single-structure-education-21_en

b. Are there policies to ensure the availability of textbooks/materials that promote the inclusion of learners from different vulnerable groups? (e.g. resources relevant to different ethnic groups etc.)

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The Ministry of Education and Science proposed changes to the education approach in Latvia in order to develop, approve and successively introduce such a curriculum and approach to education, which would develop value-based knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary in the 21st century. These changes are implemented with the help of the European Structural Funds co-financed project “Competency approach in education curriculum”. For the first time the curriculum is reviewed as a whole by introducing a competence-based approach, in a uniform system and successively at all levels of education, starting from the age of one and a half and up to grade 12. The National Centre for Education implements the project from 2016 until 2023.

The new curriculum will be introduced gradually starting with pre-school in September 2019, continuing with grades 1; 4; 7; 10 in September 2020 and grades 2; 5; 8; 11 in September 2021; and finishing with grades 3; 6; 9; 12 in September 2022.

More on the project: www.skola2030.lv (Latvian only).

The project – Competency approach in education curriculum develops materials for different groups of learners:

- *Teaching materials in easy language*
- *Adaptation of teaching materials to Braille*
- *Materials for children with learning difficulties*
- *Methodological and teaching aids for teachers/learners in linguistically heterogenous environment.*

The project has created a repository of learning materials where most of these will be available in digital format.

c. Is there guidance/procedures to help schools to make learning materials accessible for all learners? (e.g. Braille/large print for learners with visual impairment, materials in other languages).

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Some materials are produced in Braille as part of the Competence Curriculum project – see above.

d. Is ICT used to improve access to materials for vulnerable groups?

No No information available Yes

If no, please give further information:

The Action Plan developed alongside the Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020 provides for:

- support for introducing innovative ICT learning solutions, ergonomic furnishing in general education institutions, particularly regional secondary schools, and the modernisation of learners' hostels;
- support for educational institutions implementing methodological centre functions in the fields of STEM and ICT in order to raise the quality of education. Also, the promotion of modern methodology in education and support for the improvement of sports infrastructure in local comprehensive schools; (RA report p4)

There is no specific reference to access for vulnerable groups.

e. Are there specific financial and practical resources available for textbooks/materials/ICT for different vulnerable groups?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description.

In the Law on the State Budget for the Current Year, the Ministry of Education and Science shall distribute funding to municipal and county municipalities of the Republic, state higher education institutions that have established secondary education institutions, and private educational institutions that implement pre-school education programs, general primary education programs or general secondary education programs taking into account the number of students as of 1 September of the previous year in pre-school education programs, general primary education programs and general secondary education programs and general secondary education programs of secondary schools established by state higher education institutions, respectively.

This budget of the city municipality and municipal institutions of the Republic for pre-school education guidelines, state secondary education, standards of vocational secondary education and vocational education is related to teaching aids - distribution of additional literature, accounting materials, active games, digital teaching aids and teaching aids. It finances the acquisition of teaching materials, equipment for vulnerable learners or centralized procurement of organized teaching aids in accordance with the procedures specified in the Publishing Procurement Law.

Cabinet of Ministers MK noteikumi Nr. 41. 19.01.2016

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/279487-kartiba-kada-valsts-un-pasvaldibas-finanse-macibu-lidzeklu-iegadi-izglitibas-iestadem>
Kārtība, kādā valsts un pašvaldības finansē mācību līdzekļu iegādi izglītības iestādēm

4.3 Assessment

a. Is there a national/local assessment framework that includes all learners?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The Regulations on the National Standard for Basic Education, Standards for Basic Education Subjects and Basic Education Programme Sample Plan (2014) set the criteria for evaluation of pupils.

Teachers in classrooms carry out continuous assessment on pupils' progress using a grading scale 1-10 and non-grade system (pass/fail or descriptive assessment). Descriptive assessment means that parents of pupils receive a short oral and written assessment report on pupils' progress, describing development of knowledge, skills, attitude towards learning and class participation.

The grading scale employed in Latvia's schools is as follows:

10 with distinction (*izcili*),

9 excellent (*teicami*),

8 very good (*ļoti labi*),

7 good (*labi*),

6 almost good (*gandrīz labi*),

5 satisfactory (*viduvēji*),

4 almost satisfactory (*gandrīz viduvēji*),

3 weak (*vāji*)

2 very weak (*ļoti vāji*),

1 very very weak (*ļoti, ļoti vāji*).

The criteria building up the assessment of learning performance are as follows: the extent and quality of attained knowledge, learned skills, attitude toward learning process and dynamics of learning performance development.

Achievements of pupils are assessed without marks in the 1st class, i.e., by using a descriptive assessment. A grading scale 1-10 is used in the 2nd and 3rd class for the subjects: Native language, Mathematics, Latvian Language for minority pupils, for other subjects a descriptive assessment is used. In the classes 4-9 the grading scale 1 to 10 is used in all subjects. (Eurydice)

There is National testing (diagnostical tests and examinations at the end of compulsory education) administered by National Centre for Education. Dates are set by Cabinet of Ministers for 3rd grade and 6th grade tests.

Pupils also receive a school-report showing descriptive assessment and/or grades in every subject at the end of each semester. The Ministry of Education and Science approves a sample of a school-report issued to pupils.

At the end of the 9th class pupils have to pass national examinations developed by the National Centre for Education. Pupils who are in the minority education programmes could choose the language of answers but now have to answer in Latvian.

In accordance with the Regulations on the Procedure of Issuing State Recognized General Education Certificates (available only for the Latvian language in ethnic minority education programs) at the end of 9th grade, pupils that have received assessment in all subjects and examinations receive a certificate on integrated primary and lower-secondary education, certificate on centralized examinations (only for the Latvian language in ethnic minority education programs) and an achievement sheet. If a pupil does not receive assessment in one of subjects or in one of the final national tests or examination, or has received a

mark below 4 in more than two of them, he or she receives a school report instead of the certificates on integrated primary and lower-secondary education. Such pupils have not completed integrated primary and lower-secondary education. In order to acquire primary and lower-secondary education, the pupil may repeat the class at the same or another education institution.

Pupils with developmental/cognitive disabilities may not take national examinations in order to get the general education certificate. The list of conditions for this exemption is centrally determined. A ninth grade student in a special or general education institution following a special education programme for pupils with such disabilities, may be exempt from taking state examinations by the school head after the recommendation of the School's Pedagogical Council. (Eurydice)

Achievements which a learner with special needs has attained during their studies shall be evaluated in line with the requirements of a special educational programme and taking into account the learner's state of health, skills and development. The acquisition of a special educational programme shall be evaluated in the form of description for learners with moderate and severe intellectual developmental disorders (General Education Law, 2005–2011). (CPRA p29)

There will be new National Standards - Cabinet of Ministers ,416 Adoption: 03.09.2019.Entry into force: 01.09.2020. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/309597>

b. Is there guidance for teachers on how to use curriculum-based assessment to identify all learning needs in the classroom?

No No information available Yes

c. Is there guidance/procedures on providing access to tests/examinations when learners need additional support/reasonable adjustments? (e.g. adapted materials, extra time etc.)

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description.

According to legislation, all learners with disabilities, except those with intellectual disabilities, follow the general education curriculum, which is based on the National Standard of Basic Education. This means that they must take state tests and examinations and be assessed as learners without disabilities. However, learners with different kinds of special needs can use support measures during the tests and examinations that will help them to show their knowledge and skills. The testing and assessment process can be adapted to a specific learner's needs and abilities. Learners with intellectual disabilities do not take state tests and their academic success is measured according to the dynamics of their development and their abilities. (National Overview)

Information on support measures for learners with disabilities during exams is available on National Centre for Education Website: <https://visc.gov.lv/vispizglitiba/eksameni/atbpas.shtml>

d. Are there specific arrangements and/or formal procedures to support the assessment of the specific needs of learners who need additional support in their learning? (e.g. those with disabilities)

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description, including clear information on the focus of needs identification procedures and who is involved in the procedures (learners, parents, professionals):

If learners have difficulty in the curriculum – with the parents' consent –they are assessed by specialists (speech therapist, special education teacher, psychologist). The school's support team can suggest support measures and the development of an individual education plan. Support measures should be used during the educational process and during state tests and examinations.

*Together with general schools, teachers and medical staff of **support centres** check and diagnose children, determine children's education and development problems and possible ways of special assistance, apply and develop new methodical and teaching aids, plan classes and events, develop individual curricula, consolidate information about children's development and health condition, organize seminars and courses for general education institution educators and children's parents. (Eurydice)*

If the above-mentioned measures do not work and the learner's achievements do not improve, the learner may attend the pedagogical medical commission.

According to the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 709 16.10.2012, in order for a learner to receive special education provision in any kind of educational setting, the parents must request that the pedagogical medical commission assesses the child. (Source: CPRA – Latvia Country Report).

Before attending the commission, the learner should be assessed by a psychologist, a speech therapist and a teacher, should have a general health check-up and, if necessary, should consult other medical specialists depending on their special needs (e.g. psychiatrist, surgeon, ophthalmologist, otorhinolaryngologist). The commission prepares a recommendation as to what kind of curriculum the learner should follow. However, the parents make the final decision about the educational institution their child will attend.

There are two types of pedagogical medical commissions (PMC): the State Pedagogical Medical Commission (SPMC), formed by the Ministry of Education and Science, and Municipal Pedagogical Medical Commissions, formed by district or town municipalities. The commissions consist of different specialists: special education teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, medical specialists and social workers. They assess different aspects of the learner's performance. Parents can file a complaint against a Municipal PMC to the SPMC (Source: CPRA – Latvia Country Report).

The PMC's competences are defined by regulations issued by the Cabinet of Ministers.

The PMC assesses learners' abilities and analyses their health condition and level of development, as well as documents from educational institutions, doctors, notebooks, achievement sheets, etc. They also:

- *recommend the most appropriate educational programme;*
- *recommend education at home for pupils with long-term illnesses;*
- *consult teachers, parents, learners and other stakeholders about issues concerning special and inclusive education.*

The assessment of learners' intellectual abilities, academic knowledge and social skills should be done before the meetings of the PMC. The commissions have the right to obtain information from the educational institutions about learners with special needs, such as the support measures and

accommodation provided. They also have the right to follow the progress of the learner with special needs in any of the educational institutions.

The PMC can identify the following special educational needs:

Learning disabilities (difficulties); Hearing impairments; Visual impairments; Physical disabilities; Language impairments; Intellectual disabilities; Mental health disorders; Severe and multiple disabilities; Long-term illnesses.

There are nine special education programmes. Seven of them – for learners with visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical disabilities, language impairments, mental health disorders, learning disabilities and long-term illnesses – include the content of the mainstream education programme. The methods of instruction, support provided and additional services differ from mainstream programmes. For learners with intellectual disabilities special programmes are available.

According to the Law on Education, parents can choose what kind of educational institution their child should attend – a special school, a special class or a special group in a mainstream school, or a mainstream class. (European Agency National Overview)

e. Is ICT used in the assessment of vulnerable groups?

No No information available Yes

4.4 Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, studies, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 relating to issues around curricula, learning materials and assessment processes.

No information available

4.5 Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to curricula, learning materials and assessment processes in the country?

Challenges

OECD (2016) suggest that assessment arrangements are underdeveloped. Further attention could be given to the use of assessment information to improve learning and the development of assessments for learners with intellectual disabilities.

Principles of curriculum planning and implementation (challenges identified at start of curriculum review)

- The large number of compulsory subjects prevents discovery and development of their interests;
- Students of vocational schools, students of secondary schools and state gymnasiums have different number of hours in general education subjects, although the examinations in the 12th grade are the same;

- *The opportunities of Latvian students in international comparison with the best systems of the world are not sufficiently comparable*

https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/aktualitates/2019/MK_vsk_Visc_.pdf

Opportunities

*Opportunities are provided by the new curriculum - to address the challenges above - and in particular the move to competency-based student assessments (CPRA grid)*Section 5: Teachers and support personnel.

Section 5: Teachers and Support Personnel

How are staff in schools prepared to accommodate students of all abilities and backgrounds, in terms of their initial training, continuing professional development and their attitudes to inclusion?

5.1 Please list type of staff, their numbers and required level of education for the position in different type of educational institutions

Type of staff	Number	Required education	Comment
Mainstream schools			
Teachers	20593	Bachelor/Masters degree	
Professional staff (psychologists, pedagogues, social pedagogues, speech and other types of therapists)	1717		Central Statistics Bureau Latvia (CSB) 2018/2019
Teacher Assistants (specify role and add rows as required)	484		Central Statistics Bureau (CSB) Latvia 2018/2019
Headteachers	2438 (CSB 2018/2019)		<p>13. A person whose education fulfills one of the following requirements is entitled to work as a head of an educational institution, deputy director and educational methodologist:</p> <p>13.1. higher pedagogical education;</p> <p>13.2. higher and pedagogical education or within the framework of the higher education study program acquired a study course related to pedagogy for at least two credit points or 80 hours;</p> <p>13.3 higher education and acquires pedagogical education or acquires program of professional development for at least 72 hours in pedagogy.</p> <p>The Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No 569, September 14, 2018 https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301572-noteikumi-par-pedagogiem-nepieciesamo-izglitiba-un-profesionalo-kvalifikaciju-un-pedagogu-profesionalas-kompetences-pilnveides</p>

Special schools			
Teachers	1460 (CSB 2018/2019)	Bachelor/Masters and additional courses	The qualification of special teacher requires a 4 or 4.5-year professional study programme in special education; or a 2.5-year study programme (80–93 credits) for teachers who are already qualified; or master’s study programmes; through in-service training courses for teachers with qualifications in some other subjects (at least 72 study hours). (European Agency. National overview, Latvia, Teacher Education for inclusive education)
Professional staff (psychologists, pedagogues, social pedagogues, speech and other types of therapists)	258 (CSB 2018/2019)		The qualification of special education teacher or the qualification of teacher speech therapist is acquired at a separate programme. This qualification allows to work at all education levels.’ (Eurydice. National Education Systems, Latvia, Chapter 9.1.
Teacher Assistants (specify role and add rows as required)	190 (CSB 2018/2019)		
<i>Others (please specify and add rows as required)</i>			
Other institutions offering education if they exist (i.e. children’s homes, young offender’s institutions etc).			
Teachers			
Professional staff (psychologists, pedagogues, social pedagogues, speech and other types of therapists)			
Teacher Assistants (specify role and add rows as required)			
<i>Others (please specify and add rows as required)</i>			

5.2 Please indicate if education/training on inclusion in education is available for the following groups of professionals.

Type of staff	Yes	No	No information	If yes please state if pre- or in-service, mandatory or optional, who provides education/training and summary of content
Head teachers/School directors			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	According to Cabinet Regulation No 354 from May 10, 2011 “Regulations on the list of professions and positions of teachers”, (https://likumi.lv/ta/id/229913-noteikumi-par-

			<p><u>pedagogu-profesiju-un-amatu-sarakstu</u>) head teachers and school heads are listed as teachers and CPD demands apply to them accordingly.</p> <p>Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 569 “Regulations regarding the education and professional qualifications required for teachers and the procedure for the improvement of teachers' professional competence” (https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301572) stipulate the following:</p> <p>The professional development program of teacher general competences should include such topics as: innovations and development trends in education; improvement of civic attitude; promotion of high-quality, creative pedagogical activity; implementation of the pedagogical process according to individual needs of each pupil; learning content for future competences, sustainable development and inclusive education; protection of children's rights, health and safety, recognition and prevention of child abuse and domestic violence.</p>
Teachers (see also 5.4)	Yes		<p>Continuing professional development (CPD) is compulsory for teachers at all education levels. Teachers are responsible for acquiring the mandatory in-service training CPD programmes of at least 36 hours in each three-year period. Credits can be achieved through 12 hours of self-development and experience (seminars, conferences, informal adult education programs).</p> <p>European Social Fund projects supported continuous professional development for teachers who worked with learners with special educational needs (SEN) between 2007 and 2013. The Ministry of Education and Science has been funding it since 2014. ESF funds some CPD to increase teacher competences.</p> <p>If there are learners with special needs in the educational institution, teachers should complete the module of general competencies which includes courses about inclusive education and work with learners with special needs</p> <p>The Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020 include the ‘Improvement of motivation and professional capacity of teachers and academic staff’ intended to introduce ‘a system of quality, remuneration and motivation for teachers, to improve lifelong learning competences (foreign language, ICT skills) and professional competences (entrepreneurship, financial literacy, leadership, creativity, skills to work with learners of different abilities and skills levels)’ (Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020. https://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406) (TPL4I grid section 2)</p> <p>‘The professional competence development program includes 18.1. general competences of the teacher (innovations and trends in education, issues of education, improvement of civic</p>

			<p>attitude, promotion of qualitative, creative pedagogical activity by implementing the pedagogical process according to the individual needs of each pupil, future curriculum for future competences, sustainable development and inclusive education, health and safety, recognition and prevention of child abuse and domestic violence); 18.2. curriculum and didactics (choice of teaching strategies and methods, including literacy, thinking, creativity and innovation, didactic models, traditional, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning, concept and transversal skills, subject and curricular innovation and Methodology, ICT skills in a high quality modern educational environment); 18.3. education management (purposeful, result-oriented organization of the educational process, implementation of the pedagogical process oriented towards professional cooperation, leadership, financial skills, document management, school management, including change management, education quality monitoring in the educational institution, personnel management).’ (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers Nr. 569, 2018. https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301572) (TPL4I grid p22) Law On Local Governments, 09.06.1994 https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/57255 <i>Chapter II Competence of Local Governments</i> Section 15 (21) to organise continuing education for teaching staff and pedagogical methodology work. There is no official induction period for new teachers in Latvia ...New teachers may receive support in their work places from their more experienced colleagues.’ (Eurydice. National Education Systems, Latvia, Chapter 9.2.)</p>
Special teachers			<p>The qualification of special teacher can be acquired in several ways: by completing a 4 or 4.5-year professional study programme in special education; through a 2.5-year study programme (80–93 credits) for teachers who are already qualified; through master’s study programmes; through in-service training courses for teachers with qualifications in some other subjects (at least 72 study hours). (European Agency. National overview, Latvia, Teacher Education for inclusive education) https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/latvia/teacher-education-for-inclusive-education)</p>
Teacher Assistants			<p>A teacher's assistant with the profession classification code “2359 05” is defined as a position comparable to the position of a teacher. Qualification demands are identical as for a teacher. A Pre-school teacher's assistant or, according to the former name, nanny is a technical worker, profession classification code “5312 01”</p>

Professional Staff				(10.6) Policy outlines the specialised training pathways for specialists who support school communities to implement inclusive education: Experienced educational institutions, special education development centres, non-government organisations and higher educational institutions are allowed to provide trainings for teachers who implement inclusive education (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 662, 28.10.2014: likumi.lv/ta/id/269965). (European Agency. CPRA, Latvia, Recommendation 10.6)
Inspectors				
Teacher Trainers		No		The Cabinet of Ministers determines procedures for academic staff qualifications. Teacher trainers (and higher education teaching staff in general) have to acquire professional development programmes on: innovation in higher education system, higher education didactics, or education management. Acquisition of the above mentioned programmes has to take 160 academic hours (including at least 60 contact hours) till the end of election period to the academic position.' (Eurydice. National Education Systems, Latvia. Chapter 9.1. TPL4I p20 Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 569, 11.09.2018: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301572/redakcijas-datums/2018/09/14 Section 3, paragraph 2

5.3 Is education and training of teachers aligned with national policy goals on inclusive education?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description.

There is no standard curriculum requirement to the content of pedagogical sciences, therefore what prospective teachers learn in various training institutions may vary.' ... 'Areas of management/administration, aspects of behaviour management/school discipline, integration of pupils with special needs, work with multicultural groups of pupils are offered in compulsory courses or core curriculum options of initial teacher training. ... All pedagogy students have to acquire knowledge in psychology, special pedagogy and medicine in order to integrate children with special needs into mainstream schools. (Eurydice. National Education Systems, Latvia, Chapter 9.1. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/initial-education-teachers-working-early-childhood-and-school-education-39_en).

Regulation regarding the education and professional qualifications required for teachers and the procedure for the improvement of teachers' professional competence(2018) defines requirements for necessary education and professional qualifications for teachers working at pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education level.

The aims of in-service training are to ensure the necessary teacher qualification, to conform to the necessities of society and to promote the growth of pedagogues as creative personalities. (CPRA section 10)

The Education Development Guidelines mention within the line of action of 'Improvement of motivation and professional capacity of teachers and academic staff': 'In order to ensure that educators are adequately prepared to

work in a linguistically heterogeneous environment, teacher training for modern teaching and methodological tools will be organized. In addition, the professional competence of teachers in the methodology of integrated teaching of content and language will be ensured. (Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020).

Teachers professional standards (<https://visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-048.pdf>) (2018) describe teachers' tasks and responsibilities. Some of them are:

- plan an inclusive learning process and environment, setting specific results to be achieved for each learner and choosing appropriate methods, techniques, tools and resources).
- systematically follow the learner's individual development, learning, personality, and social growth needs, language and civic competence for planning and implementing a child-centred learning process.
- in cooperation with colleagues in the educational institution, plan a coordinated learning process with the aim to include all learners and promote their growth.
- create an inclusive, intellectually stimulating, emotionally and physically safe learning environment, supporting the learner's dignified, responsible and safe behavior, implementing an approach appropriate to the individual development needs of each learner.
- evaluate the learner's performance and growth in accordance with clearly defined evaluation criteria and in accordance with the individual learning outcomes
- evaluate the information obtained in the learning process and assessment in order to respond to the learning needs of the learners and to evaluate and improve their professional competence and practice. (This in principle also applies to 5.4, as new teacher education programs are developed in accordance with the requirements of the teacher's standard).

5.4 With respect to the main initial teacher education programmes, describe how inclusion in education is addressed in it (i.e. requirement for number of academic credits under European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), subjects and topics covered, focus etc).

The Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers on the Necessary Academic and Professional Qualifications of Pedagogues and Professional Competence Development Procedures for Pedagogues (2014) prescribe that a person is entitled to work as a teacher after completing a 2-3 year short-cycle programme or 4-5 year Bachelor study programme and acquiring teacher qualification.

All teachers must undergo study programmes leading not only to higher pedagogical education but also to a teacher qualification in the respective level of education. Most programmes prepare teachers of subjects. Early childhood teachers and primary school teachers (classes 1-4) receive a teacher qualification in the respective level of education, and are entitled to teach most of subjects ie. are generalists. (Eurydice)

The group of professional programmes at higher education institutions includes:

- *1-2 year programmes after Bachelor studies leading to higher professional pedagogical education (consecutive model);*
- *professional study programmes with integrated Bachelor study programmes of 4 or 5 years duration (concurrent model).*

Bachelor study programmes open the possibility to enter a Master programme. All these programmes coexist, though the concurrent model is followed most frequently.

Practical placements at school are a compulsory part of initial training of the teachers. This part corresponds to 39 credit points out of 240 (in accordance with the ECTS).

The general structure of pedagogical education consists of four parts:

- *Pedagogy and psychology,*
- *Content of specific subject/s to be taught in school and methodology of teaching,*
- *Pedagogical practice and development of the qualification thesis,*
- *General education courses like languages, ICT, arts, physical education.*

There is no standard curriculum requirement to the content of pedagogical sciences, therefore what prospective teachers learn in various training institutions may vary.

Seen as a whole, pedagogical part of teacher training consists of two components, theoretical and practical. The theoretical component consists of several disciplines to complete obtaining a certain number of credits.

The following subjects have been introduced in recent years: Philosophy of Upbringing; Introduction to Philosophy of Education; Philosophical, Psychological and Legal Aspects of Education; Environment etc. Among the new courses there are branches of pedagogical practice in the world, historical comparative analysis of the concept of pedagogy, etc.

Several courses of alternative pedagogy have been included in the subjects taught: the pedagogical system of M. Montessori, Waldorf schools, the pedagogical system of C. Freinet, etc.

Broadening and differentiating of the syllabus of general pedagogy course embrace comparative pedagogy, pedagogical communication, mutual influence, family, pre-school, primary school, and ecology and health education.

Pedagogical study programmes are closely related to the actual pedagogical process. Courses like applied pedagogy, educational technologies, didactics of individual subjects have been introduced. More attention is being paid to the perfection of pedagogical skills.

Contact classes may take 50% of the mentioned curriculum, while the rest is to be devoted to independent studies as required by course syllabi. At least 30% of study courses should be implemented practically.

Specialization of subject teachers includes:

- *courses on the standards of subjects to be taught: 150 credits,*
- *professional study courses: 50 credits.*

Computer science is mandatory for all students. Areas of management/administration, aspects of behaviour management/school discipline, integration of pupils with special needs, work with multicultural groups of pupils are offered in compulsory courses or core curriculum options of initial teacher training. For example, in various higher education institutions it is possible to acquire the qualification of a special education teacher. In that case, in addition to higher professional education and teacher qualification of an education level, pedagogues obtain also the qualification in a specific special education area. All pedagogy students have to acquire knowledge in psychology, special pedagogy and medicine in order to integrate children with special needs into mainstream schools.

Pre-school, integrated primary and lower-secondary education and upper-secondary education teachers are trained alike, except that they study courses depend on definite education guidelines for a definite level of education.

Teachers trained to work at a certain level of education are not qualified to teach in other educational levels with an exception of specialist teachers of art subjects (music, painting etc), sports subjects, foreign languages and Latvian language and literature, who are entitled to teach the respective subject at all levels of education. Eurydice Chapter

9.1. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/initial-education-teachers-working-early-childhood-and-school-education-39_en).

The qualification of special teacher can be acquired in several ways: by completing a 4 or 4.5-year professional study programme in special education; through a 2.5-year study programme (80–93 credits) for teachers who are already qualified; through master's study programmes; through in-service training courses for teachers with qualifications in some other subjects (at least 72 study hours). (European Agency. National overview, Latvia, Teacher Education for inclusive education) <https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/latvia/teacher-education-for-inclusive-education>

In 2018 six teacher-training institutions started implementation of the EU Structural Funds supported activity "Reduction of the study program fragmentation and strengthening the sharing of resources". In the frame of this activity, teacher-training institutions will develop new teacher training programs. Inclusive education principles will be included in all teacher-training programs.

5.5 Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 relating to initial teacher education and/or professional development issues.

European Agency Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion – Self Review grid Latvia 2019 (will be available in 2020)

5.6 Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to teachers and support personnel in the country?

Challenges

OECD (2016) note the need to improve quality of the education profession overall through more selective entry and improved salaries as well as development of standards and related professional development that is provided for teachers free of charge

In 2013, a report "Linking Program for Evaluation of Motivation, Remuneration and Professional Performance of General and Vocational Education Teachers" aimed at establishing a link between the evaluation system of motivation, remuneration and professional performance of general and vocational education teachers. At the same time, the program aims to provide a modern learning and work environment and to improve the professional development support system for teachers. Much of the problem identified relates to issues that are directly subordinate to the financial aspects, and therefore, effective management of resources should be the primary concern, taking into account the review and improvement of the existing funding model. (Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020. <https://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406>)

Opportunities

The following text outlines the intention for future development:

In order to improve the overall situation in the country, develop institutional excellence and raise the prestige of the teaching profession, the implementation of the established linkage system for the evaluation of the motivation, remuneration and professional performance of teachers of general and vocational education shall be continued.' (Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020. <https://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406>) (TPL4I p33)

Section 6: Schools

How does the work of schools, school management and leadership impact on access, participation and provision of equitable opportunities for all learners?

6.1 Who is excluded from attending any form of school?

Please give reasons for this group being excluded from attending school and describe any form of alternative provision made for them?

Many children with special needs are enrolled in special education institutions or classes on the basis of the statement issued by the national or municipal Pedagogical Medical Commission. The Commission determines children's mental development disabilities and special needs, necessity for special education, and type of special education programme, provides guidance to parents, teachers and education institutions on pedagogical medical issues and adjustments to provide the appropriate special education programme.

Pupils are grouped taking into account the diagnosis. The main disability determines the provision. It is possible that children of different age belong to the same class. (Eurydice)

6.2 Are there issues around the over- and under-representation of different vulnerable groups in different school settings?

No No information available Yes

6.3 Please give details on the main admissions criteria for schools.

a. Highlight any issues with the national policies.

The requirement for enrolment in the 1st class is reaching the age of compulsory schooling. The General Education Law states that children should start schooling in the calendar year when they attain 7 years of age. It is possible to start schooling a year earlier or later in line with the conclusion of the family doctor and if the parents wish so. In this situation health and psychological preparedness is taken into account.

The procedure is as follows: parents (guardians) notify the school that they want the child to attend. The school sends written response to parents, whether or not the child is admitted. If it is not possible to admit the child (because of limited number of places), the school head sends a motivated reply to parents and the copy of this document to the Board of Education, which further notifies parents about free places in other schools. This procedure is regulated by the Procedures for Enrolling Students in and Discharging from General Educational Institutions and Special Pre-school Educational Groups, and also for Moving Them up into the Next Grade (2015).(Eurydice)

From September 1, 2020, children and learners with learning disabilities, language disorders, physical disabilities and long-term illnesses should acquire education in mainstream settings. The amendments to the Law were introduced to foster inclusive education providing support for learners in mainstream settings.

Main admission requirements are almost the same for all pupils with or without special educational needs. In the case of pupils with special educational needs, the possibility to start compulsory education later is used frequently.

b. Where schools set their own admissions criteria, please outline any impact on inclusion.

A school providing compulsory (integrated primary and lower-secondary) education may not organize admission tests. However, enrolment of a student in general lower-education (grades 7–9) in a gymnasium or a State gymnasium or in general secondary educational programme is organised according to the following conditions:

- *the student may take not more than two entrance examinations;*
- *a commission prepares the programme and content of entrance examinations, and also determines the criteria and procedures for evaluation;*
- *the dates for applying for entrance examinations is announced, and the procedures for the course and evaluation notified;*
- *results of the entrance examinations are recorded in minutes and the minutes are signed by all members of the commission of entrance examination;*
- *the student has to be informed about the results of the entrance examination within five working days after the entrance examination.*

(Eurydice)

6.4 Please provide information on the different forms of support that are available to learners in schools.

Special educational programmes ensure the possibility of acquiring general education for learners with acquired or hereditary functional disorders according to their special needs. The main purposes and tasks, the mandatory content, the implementation plan for a special educational programme and the requirements in relation to a previously acquired education shall be determined in conformity with the State general education standard in accordance with special needs of learners (General Education law) (CPRA p27)

The head of a general educational institution shall be responsible for:

- *the implementation of educational programmes*
- *the provision of an educational institutions – with educators*
- *noting the special needs of learners and their education in conformity with special educational programmes (General Education Law 2005–2011).*

Integrated schools provide individual education programmes for children with special needs; organize education in compliance with the requirements of the respective special education programme and the regulations of the institution, taking into account the following main principles of activities:

- *content of education is practical;*
- *comprehensive work aimed at checking and rehabilitation of pupils;*
- *cooperation of educators, tutors and children's parents in order to develop individual education programmes, create favourable environment, compensation of development problems thus giving the best possible value to the child's life and development, allowing him/her to work and participate in social life;*
- *formation of vocational skills that would allow pupils to compete in labour market after the completion of school;*
- *formation of a data basis and consolidate information about children's development and health condition;*
- *preparation of educators, medical staff, children's parents and other pupils for the integration of children with special needs in school life;*

- *adaptation of school facilities to suit the needs of children having serious physical disability;*
- *cooperation with special education development centres. (Eurydice)*

New regulations state:

Principle of implementation of the standard and inclusion of all students:

9.4. Various forms of teaching organization are used to achieve the goal of teachers' learning;

9.5. the attitude of the educational institution towards a culture that respects the diversity of students according to gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, state of health, language, intellectual development and known characteristics, taking into account differences and prohibitions of different treatment;

9.6. educational institutions involve parents in supporting student learning by providing regular feedback on student performance and growth;

9.7. an environment that creates an educational institution that is physical and emotional, as it promotes the acquisition and learning of students' social emotional skills, as well as the fact that everyone adapts to all students;

Regulations Regarding the State Standard in Basic Education, the Subjects of Study Standards in Basic Education and Model Basic Educational Programmes , 747 Chapter IV 01.09.2020. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/303768-noteikumi-par-valsts-pamatizglitiba-standartu-un-pamatizglitiba-programmu-paraugiem>

a. Inclusive pedagogy, personalised learning and universal design approaches

No No information available Yes

The Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers state what kind of support and what specialists should be provided for learners with disabilities included in mainstream educational settings (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 556. Adoption:19.11.2019. Entry into force 01.09.2020)

Education Standards regulate that the educational institution provides a learning process that complies with the hygiene requirements specified in regulatory enactments, inclusive, intellectual and social-emotional development and health-promoting, physically and emotionally safe learning environment in accordance with the age and developmental needs of students and universal design requirements, such as easy-to-understand information, easy access, contrasting design of environmental objects in the floor and indoors. (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 747. Adoption:27.11.2018. Entry into force 01.09.2020)

b. counselling and mentoring possibilities

No No information available Yes

Schools can choose to appoint a counsellor depending on school size/budget. Class teachers also are significant players in the provision of guidance services at general school level. Guidance is mainly provided during special lessons led by class teachers and during project weeks.

Schools are encouraged to provide individual work (tutoring) with talented children and pupils with learning difficulties. Schools may offer psychological support to pupils, pedagogues and parents provided by psychologists and social pedagogues. Schools provide first aid and health preventive care for pupils; inform the child's general practitioner about health problems. (Eurydice)

c. input from specialist teachers/therapists

No No information available Yes

At integrated primary and lower-secondary education level and upper-secondary education level there are social pedagogues who analyse the learning problems of pupils and teachers as well as families, ensuring through counselling and support that education is properly conducted. Social pedagogues also ensure protection of children rights and act as a mediator between the school and municipality.

Some schools employ a psychologist to assist pupils, teachers and parents who need psychological support and advice. A teacher - speech therapist works with children with speech problems in the first six classes. (Eurydice)

d. input from learning support assistants

No No information available Yes

Pupils with severe and multiple disabilities from 5–18 years of age have the opportunity to receive state-funded personal assistant services for mobility and self-care. The assistant provides assistance up to 40 hours per week. The assistance is available throughout the school year. Based on the severity and the type of disability, the school signs a contract with the assistant. The contract specifies the duration of the assistance services, compensation for the assistance services and payment terms. (National Overview p8)

People with disabilities are entitled to receive the service of an assistant in education institutions to support mobility and self-care. This includes assistance to perform the following activities: moving within education institution; performing self-care; communication with teacher; taking notes in lectures and preparing lecture materials; school supplies and arrangement of work place; interaction with peers and other people in education institution (for example, during breaks and extended school day groups, after school activities, participation in events). Report from Latvia to UN Committee on People with Disabilities (para 238):

e. availability of ICT / assistive technology

No No information available Yes

f. Please describe any other forms of support available.

The teachers and medical staff of support centres check and diagnose children, determine children's education and development problems and possible ways of special assistance, apply and develop new methodical and teaching aids, plan classes and events, develop individual curricula, consolidate information about children's development and health condition, organize seminars and courses for general education institution educators and children's parents.

Main measures include: all necessary aids (like slat-pencils, ramps, elevators etc.); additional lessons for rehabilitation and correction under the guidance of the respective specialists, therapeutic lessons, systematic psychological and medical examination and analysis, etc.

According to the amendment of the Education Law, education should be provided in sign language in schools for students with hearing impairments. In November 2018, the Cabinet of Minister adopted the new National Standard for Basic Education (integrated primary and lower-secondary education) which will come into force on

September 1st, 2020 in which the special education programme specifies that learners with hearing impairments who are included in mainstream educational settings should be provided with the opportunities to develop communication skills including the Latvian sign language.

6.5 Please give a description of the strategies in place for practically supporting mainstream school staff teams to increase their capacity to be inclusive and to improve access, participation and achievement for all learners.

Strategy	Description of the focus
Seminars for general education institutions	The pedagogical medical commission of the state and local government is to promote inclusion of learners with special needs in general education institutions. Specialists of the commission provide consultative support to education institutions, local governments, parents on issues regarding the provision of education to learners with special needs. There are seminars for general education institutions on relevant issues in organizing the learning process for these learners. (Report of Latvia to UNCRPD Committee, para 244)
Special education support centres (from March 2016)	These centres provide support to IE teachers and to learners with special needs. Special education institutions are encouraged to become special education development centres to support teachers in mainstream education. In order to do so, they must develop professional development materials and activities: 'The requirements are that the special education institution has to: ... provide methodological and pedagogical support for at least 50 teachers and specialists; develop at least two methodological materials available on its website; ... organise at least two events on inclusive education every year, etc. (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 187; 29.03.2016) (European Agency. CPRA, Latvia, Recommendation 1.12)

6.6 Please provide information regarding school buildings and infrastructure.

a. Are there schools that face infrastructure issues that are barriers to inclusion?

No No information available Yes

b. Are there strategies and/or initiatives to improve school buildings and infrastructure?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please describe the strategies, their aim and focus.

Strategy	Description of the focus
...	
...	
...	

If no, please give further information:

6.7 Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) from any recent reports, systematic evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of the school system, potentially drawing on information from school inspections and / or school self-review work.

Daniela, L. 2015. Children with special needs in Latvia: Legislative frame in Society, Integration, Education, Volume III. p74-84

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277887334_Children_with_Special_Needs_in_Latvia_Legislative_Frame

6.9 Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to schools in the country?

Challenges

Daniela (2015) and OECD (2016) identify inequalities in the school system e.g. difference between urban and rural schools. Daniela also identifies differences in the availability of licenced special education programmes for learners with different disabilities throughout the country.

The Report of Latvia to UN committee CRPD para 251 (p41) highlights the need to implement inclusive education to ensure the efficient inclusion of children with disability in comprehensive schools and change the paradigm to create a socially inclusive culture and non-discriminatory attitudes, to promote respect when children with and without disability grow and learn together. This would also address the concern expressed by the Concluding observations in relation to the initial report of Latvia October 2017 that many children attend special schools or are home schooled due to the lack of reasonable accommodation and accessibility, including physical accessibility, in the majority of mainstream schools.

Opportunities

The European Agency Report on Raising Achievement (<https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/agency-projects/RaisingAchievement/CountryReports/Raising%20Achievement%20Latvia%20Country%20Report.pdf>) notes the opportunities provided by the new curriculum (from 2018) as well as an extensive project to reduce early school leaving.

Section 7: Communities, parents and students

How far does the wider school community support learners to access and benefit from education opportunities?

7.1 Have there been any campaigns to raise awareness of inclusion in education at national or local level?

No No information available Yes

7.2 Does legislation/policy support parental involvement in schools?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Parents (persons who exercise custody) have the following rights:

- *to choose an educational institution for their child*
- *to participate in the improvement of educational process and in the council of an educational institution;*
- *to enter into a contract with an educational institution regarding the education of and care for the child at an educational institution;*
- *to provide and receive information regarding issues related to the training and teaching of the child;*
- *to propose performance of inspections at the educational institution*
- *to exercise other rights laid down in regulatory enactments for the provision of the education of the child (Education Law, 1999–2013). (CPRA p13)*

Parents of learners with additional support needs are informed about the consultations (analysis of outcomes) by entries in an online journal and a learner's diary. The situation is then analysed by teachers and support staff. Where necessary, parents are advised to visit the Pedagogical Medical Commission to continue the education process through programmes that are appropriate for learners' abilities. (European Agency RA report p6)

7.3 Does legislation/policy support collaboration between schools and stakeholders in their local communities (e.g. services/employers)?

No No information available Yes

7.4 Does legislation/policy support the development of learning communities in local/regional areas e.g. support for schools to work together; involvement with universities, support services to provide research evidence and development of innovative practice?

No No information available Yes

7.5 Does legislation/policy set out a role for NGOs, DPOs, or other organisations representing vulnerable groups?

No No information available Yes

If yes, please describe the role. Specify which non-governmental actors are particularly active in inclusion in education and how they operate.

Several NGOs have a very good collaboration with educational institutions, including special schools. These organizations, for example, are for children with severe and multiple disabilities (Velku Biedrība), for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (Latvijas Autisma apvienība). They organize professional development of specialists and teachers, they provide assistance with solving problems that arise in schools, they consult both pedagogical staff (specialists and teachers) and parents, they are involved in the development of legislation concerning children and learners with SEN (CROSP report 2018)

The ESF project 'Support for reducing early school leaving' supports initiatives by NGOs formed by young people to raise awareness of the problem of early school leaving among them, to reach out to learners through peer learning and to involve them in activities. (Preventing School Failure Report p7)

7.6 Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) from any recent reports, systematic evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of parental and wider community involvement in the work of schools.

No information available

7.7 Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to communities, parents and students in the country?

Challenges

To increase networking between educational institutions (through Municipalities) (RA Report)

Opportunities

Education Development Guidelines (2014-2020) raise the need for awareness raising about disability to increase public understanding.