Collaborative Contextualized Research

• Overall coordination and team

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Structure and methodology

- Literature Review
- Survey 15 countries
- 7 Case studies

Belgium (Fr/Fl)
Croatia
Denmark
France
Greece
Ireland
Italy
Lithuania
The Netherlands
Poland
Romania
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
UK

Recommendations
Structure and methodology

- Literature Review
- Survey 15 countries
- 7 Case studies

Initial training centre Lyon, France
City of Pistoia, Italy
City of Ghent, Belgium
Initial training centre – Denmark
EYPs-NQF – England
DRCEI, Slovenia
WTANP - Poland

Recommendations
Literature review

• Broad consensus among researchers, and international organisations (OECD, UNICEF, EU), that quality of ECE and ultimately the outcomes for children and families and more specific for the disadvantaged, depend on well-educated, experienced and competent staff.

• Impact of parental participation

• Engaging larger community

• Low quality provisions can harm children
Survey on competences profiles

Formal requirements: consistency between training institutions and employers

To detailed and prescriptive profiles: stifle innovation and local dynamics
Survey on competences profiles

Framed in general terms: broad competences

Profiles oriented towards individual, must be embedded in general quality policy

Focus on working with children, less on working with parents and colleagues (Poland)
Invisible assistants up to 40/50% 

Important role towards parents and children

Few competences requirements 
Limited access to qualifying in-service training
Practical caring tasks may jeopardise holistic pedagogical approach
Core practitioners

- A. Training profiles deduced from professional profiles
- B. Only professional profiles and no training profiles
- C. Only training profiles and no professional profiles
- D. No professional profiles and no training profiles
Assistants

- A. Training profiles deduced from professional profiles
- B. Only professional profiles and no training profiles
- C. Only training profiles and no professional profiles
- D. No professional profiles and no training profiles

No assistants
Role of the assistants: Caring, Learning Bridging

• **Caring:** Be: Begeleider kinderopvang (2,5-6) Puéricultrice (2,5-6), Assistant aux instituteurs préscolaire (2,5-6); Fr :Assistant avec CAP petite enfance (0-3); Gr :Voithos nipiovrefokomou / voithos pedagogou (0-6); Lt Auklėtojos padėjėja (1-6); Nl Groepshulp (0-4); Pl: Pomoc nauczyciela (3-6); RO: Ingrijitoare (0-7); Sp:Técnico/técnica Educador o Asistente en educación infantil (0-6); Eng Wales: Nursery assistants (0-5)

• **Learning/Caring:** Dk: Pædagogmedhjælper (0-6); Fr: ATSEM Agent territorial spécialisé des écoles maternelles (2,5-6) Eng Wales: Teaching assistants (0-5); Ir: Basic practitioner in early childhood education/care (0-5); Nl: Onderwijsondersteuner (4-12); Sw: Barnskötare (1-7)

• **Bridging/caring:** Be: Doelgroepwerknemer (0-3); Ir: Community Worker – Employment Scheme (0-5)

• **Bridging/caring/learning:** Sl: Pomočnik vzgojitelja (0-7)
Denmark: Paedagogmedhjælper:

- 40% versus 60% pedagogues (ISCED 5 A/B)
- No national professional profile
- No training profile
- Caring/learning role
- New vocational alternating training for pedagogue assistants PAU
Case studies as examples of systemic approaches to professionalism

- Competent system

- Reflective competences

- Individual competences

- Continuous pedagogical support by specialised staff
Results case studies

- Competent practice needs competent support systems
- Competent system: continuous pedagogical support – from reflecting on practice to theory
- Different professionals work together in democratic way
- Dialogue with parents in context diversity increases competences
- Reinvent in-service training
CoRe recommendations

What competences?
Individual competences

**Knowledge**
- Developmental aspects of children from a holistic perspective, strategies learning, communication with children and participation, working with parents and community, working in context of diversity...

**Practices**
- Observing children in order to identify needs, planning and implementing wide range of educational projects, documenting children’s progress, creating effective learning environments, analysing needs of local communities, enabling open communication, ...

**Values**
- Committing to inclusive educational approaches, understanding learning as co-constructed and open-ended process,
### Institutional competences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>Values:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Situated learning, community of practice,</td>
<td>• Elaborating a shared pedagogical framework orienting educational work,</td>
<td>• Understanding prof development as continuous process that encompasses</td>
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<tr>
<td>reflective approaches, adult learning,</td>
<td>arrange paid time for planning documenting and review educational work,</td>
<td>personal and professional growth, conceiving ECEC as critically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning organisations...</td>
<td>providing opportunities for joint work, ...</td>
<td>reflective communities, conceiving ECEC as forums for civil engagement</td>
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<td>that fosters social cohesion</td>
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Policy recommendations
Recommendations from previous research

Recurrent preconditions
- Staff/child rations
- Group size
- Working conditions
- Continuity of staff

Adequate public investment

Increase numbers of Bachelors (ISCED5)
CoRe recommendations

1. Equal and reciprocal relations theory/practice
   - Reflective practice: analyse de pratique, weekly reports

2. Build leadership capacity Slovenia

3. Policies that address the entire ECEC system
   - Professionalisation is multi-layered
CoRe recommendations

4. Rethink continuous professional development

- long-term, comprehensive pathways are necessary
- E.g. Poland, Slovenia, Ghent and Pistoia
5. Increase job mobility

- Horizontal and vertical
- No dead-end jobs
- E.g. Croatia, Lyon, Arhus

6. Include assistants in qualifying training

- E.g. Pre-course in Jydsk Ped Sem; collège cooperatif Rhone-Alpes; Early Years Professional Status;
- Benefit from same in-service training and share democratic culture of reflection (Slovenia°)
At the EU level

- Promote ECEC as a public good of general interest
- Quality matters as much as quantity
- Promote discussion about goals and values
- Promote exchange of policies and practices
At the EU level

Towards a EU framework for quality, including indicators on workforce

EU guidelines to support Member.States.

Document and disseminatie good practices

Support European research

Make research accessible (beyond English)

Encourage transnational networks & learning communities
Why Ghent?

- 0-3 centres of interesting practice on working with diversity and professional development
- seen by international organisations and experts as being of high quality

Research question:

What are the critical success factors for a policy based on increasing the competences on individual, team and institutional level through on-service training and pedagogical guidance, in centers that work with low qualified staff (vocational secondary level) in a context of diversity?
Methodology

• Study of history of pedagogical advice and of the system of professional development from ‘79 on
• Focus group with 4 directors on competence policy on institutional level
• 9 biographical video interviews with educators: where did you acquired the competences for the job?
• 9 thematic video interviews: reflections on themes of how practitioners have learned
• Total of around 18 hours of video were analysed
• Contextualizing the data with the directors of the services and with co-ordinator PBD
Choices made

• Perspective of the professionals
• Rich data: diversity of the chosen professional (more experienced, less experienced, immigrant/Flemish)
• Excellent practices
• Focus on learning as an ongoing process
How do ECE workers learn?

“Because we childcare practitioners work permanently in a team, we must rely on each other to sustain each other, and this attitude of working in groups determines the learning style that we prefer”.

Experienced workers see work with parents as a source of pedagogical, rather than technical, knowledge. They emphasise the importance of meaningful communication with parents, and have developed competences that integrate knowledge, values and attitudes towards upbringing (that is, education in the broadest sense), views on parenthood and cultural background.
Working in context of diversity and uncertainty stimulates learning

“Uncertainty about what the day will bring, is attractive. Because you do not know in advance what you have to do, it get’s exciting’.

“Working around diversity has maybe more than anything else increased my competences as ECE worker.”
Conclusions: critical factors

**Investment in a coherent and diversified policy** towards professional development, developed by specialised staff during long periods of time and implemented in such a way that the members of the staff have the ownership of the change, are the actors of change.

**A common culture** inside the service that is underpinned by common vision and by a *system of ethical values* on *strong commitment* towards each child and each parent.

**Vision on learning starting from practice**, peer coaching motivating frameworks (values), autonomy of the learner, intergenerational learning, towards broad competences, focused on team learning.
CoRe: Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care

Policy level
- Resources for training and mentoring
- Pedagogical framework
- Child free hours

Inter-institutional: childcare and training organisations
- Training directors
  - Exchange of innovative practice (studydays, magazines, visits)
- Peer groups
- Start training for new centers

Institution
- Joint training
- Mentoring by pedagogical co-ordinators
- Team meetings

Individual ECE worker
- Initial training (60% BA) different pathways towards qualification
- Courses
- Conferences and literature
CoRe Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care

Thank you for your attention