

Professionalization of ECEC:

*What makes a high
quality ECE
workforce?*



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Literature review on *high quality ECE workforce* (CoRe, 2011; Lazzari, et al, 2013)

- 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.
- **Higher levels of initial preparation** are associated with
 - ❑ better quality as well as better outcomes for children (Fukkink&Lont, 2007; Sylva et al , 2004)
 - ❑ more stimulating, warm and supportive interactions with children (OECD, 2006)

Literature review *high quality ECE workforce* (CoRe, 2011; Lazzari, et al, 2013)

- **the content of the training and the methodologies** (OECD, 2006)
- **continuing professional development (CPD) and pedagogical guidance** (Fukkink, Lont, 2007; Urban et al., 2011; Žogla, 2008).
- **Few days of training will not change traditional practices and convictions** (Fukkink, Lint, 2007)
- CPD sustained by a coherent **pedagogical framework** that stimulates **reflectivity** (Lazzarri, et al. 2013)

Literature review *high quality ECE workforce* (CoRe, 2011; Lazzari, et al, 2013)

- facilitate learning experiences by nourishing **curiosity, engagement and well-being** (Jensen, 2011; Laevers, 2011).
- design and implement a balanced curriculum that nurtures children's holistic development by providing a **variety of resources for play, exploration, meaning-making and self-expression** (Mantovani, 2007; Pramling & Carlsson, 2008),
- **involve parents and local communities** in decision-making processes on management, quality and curriculum (Rychen, Salganik, 2003; Peeters, Vandenbroeck, 2012).



ECE Professions and workforce preparation (ISCED 5 or higher) across European countries (Oberhuemer, et al., 2010)

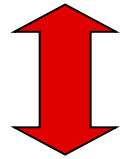
- **Early childhood professional** (0 to 6) Latvia, Slovenia, Sweden, Norway,
- **Pre-primary professional** (3 to 6) Belgium, Cyprus, Malta
- **Pre-primary and primary professional** (2/ 4 to 12) France, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Romania
- **Social pedagogy professional** (from 0 to 99) Denmark, Luxemburg, Finland
- Professional for **child care and parental support** programs (France, Belgium, FI) (0 to 3, out of school and parental support)

Workforce preparation for 0 to 3

- Tendency towards **integration childcare in social pedagogy or education: higher level of qualification, better working conditions** (UNESCO, 2010)
 - Until mid nineties: Integration in broader social welfare system: de **social 'pedagog'** for all ages
 - From end nineties: Integration in education: **teacher** (England, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Latvia, Slovenia, Finland, Denmark)
- **Split systems:** evolution towards **social pedagog for the youngest children** (France, Belgium Fl, Luxemburg)

What is a high quality workforce in ECEC ? (Peeters, 2008)

Being able to reach prescribed standards



Being able to construct from practice new ways of dealing with parents and children to attend complex demands in specific contexts



What makes continuing professional development effective?

- Support in daily practice by pedagogical coach

(Peeters, Cameron, et al, in press, systematic review)

- The development of reflective competences

(Peeters, 2008, CoRe, 2011)



A high quality workforce in
ECEC must be able to
reflect critically on practice
and to construct new
pedagogical approaches
together with children and
parents (Peeters, 2008; CoRe, 2011)




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Invisible (low or unqualified) assistants up to 40/ 50% of the workforce (CoRe, 2011; Van Laere, Peeters, Vandebroek, 2012)



Important role towards parents and children especially for disadvantaged groups (bridge function)

Few qualification requirements
Limited access to qualifying in-service training

Focus on practical caring tasks may jeopardize holistic pedagogical approach

'Assistants' or auxiliary staff (Van Laere, Peeters, Vandebroeck, 2012)

- Practitioners who 'assist' the higher-qualified core practitioner is working directly with children and families
- up to 40-50 % of workforce in some EU countries (e.g. Denmark, France, Sweden, Slovenia, Lithuania)
- No assistants in Italy and Croatia
- Core professionals (qualified bachelor) mostly from middle class -
assistants mostly from lower SES



Lack of formal training requirements of assistants

- Only Belgium (3-6), the Netherlands (4-12), Slovenia, Sweden and France have specific training requirements
- Sweden: *barnskötare* completes a three-year upper secondary vocational training in childcare and leisure-time studies
- Slovenia: *Pomočnik vzgojitelja* completes a four-year upper secondary qualification

Professional development of assistants

- Limited access to in-service training
- Fewer opportunities to participate in team meetings, collaborative planning and pedagogical documentation
- Lower level of initial qualification, less chance of participating in professional development



Roles and tasks of assistants

- Caring role
 - = practical help and addressing physical needs
 - = sometimes responsible for individual well-being and emotional needs
- Learning role
 - = addressing learning needs of individual children and children with special needs

“Assistants ensure that children learn to like school”

“She really cares”

CoRe recommendations towards lower qualified assistants

Rethink professional development

- Pedagogical mentoring
- Learning from practice
- Focus on tackling inequities

Increase job mobility

- Credits for learning in practice
- No dead end jobs

Include assistants in qualifying training

- Denmark, France, Slovenia

CoRe recommendations on high quality workforce

Equal and reciprocal relation theory/practice

- reflection on working with poor/migrant parents
- development of new practices

Build leadership capacity

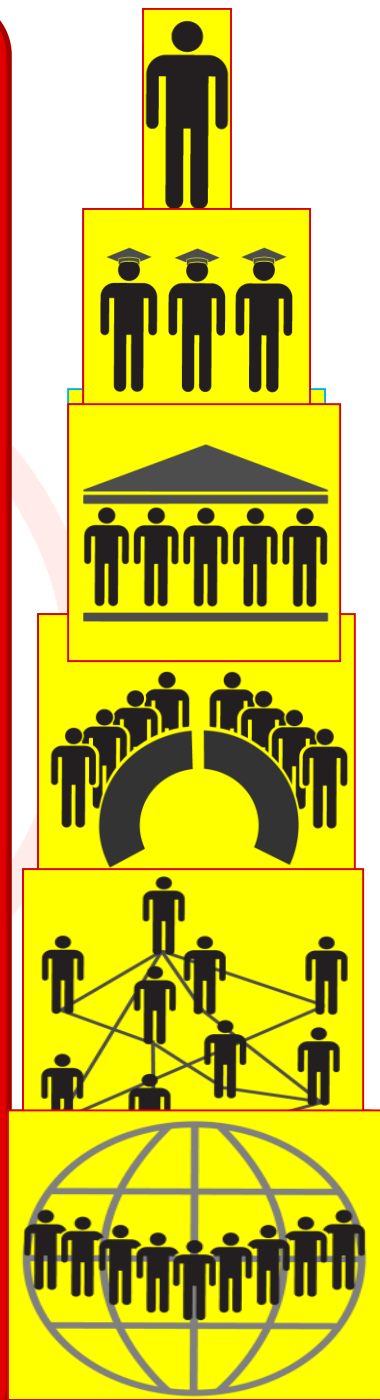
- Training of directors

High quality workforce needs competent system

- Policies that address entire ECEC system
- Professionalisation is multi-layered

The competent ECEC system

(CoRe, 2011; Peeters, 2013)



INDIVIDUAL TEACHER



TEAM / INSTITUTION



INTERAGENCY / TRAINING CENTRES / LOCAL GOVERNMENT



NATIONAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

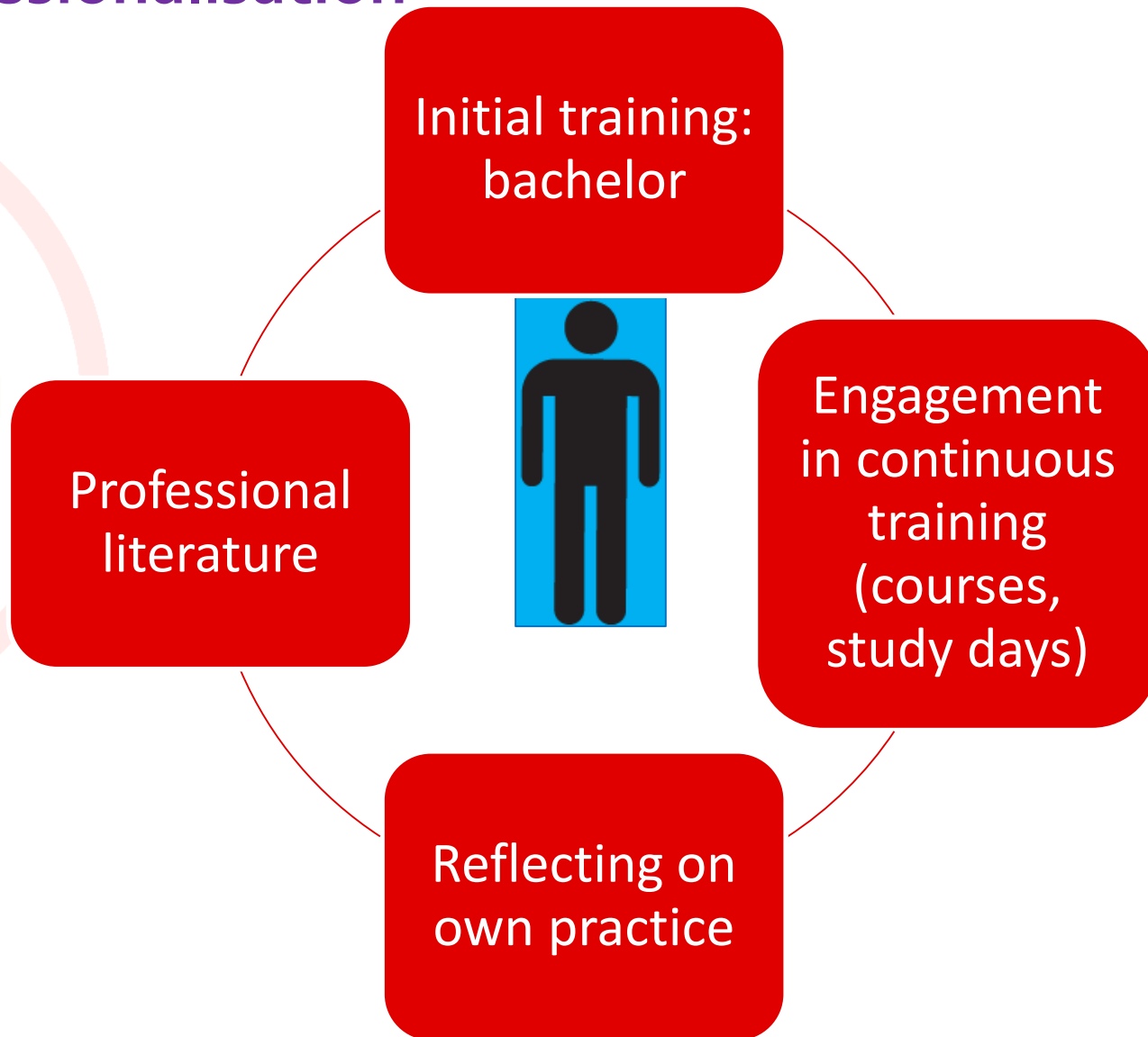


INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS



INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

INDIVIDUAL TEACHER: Active actor in process of professionalisation



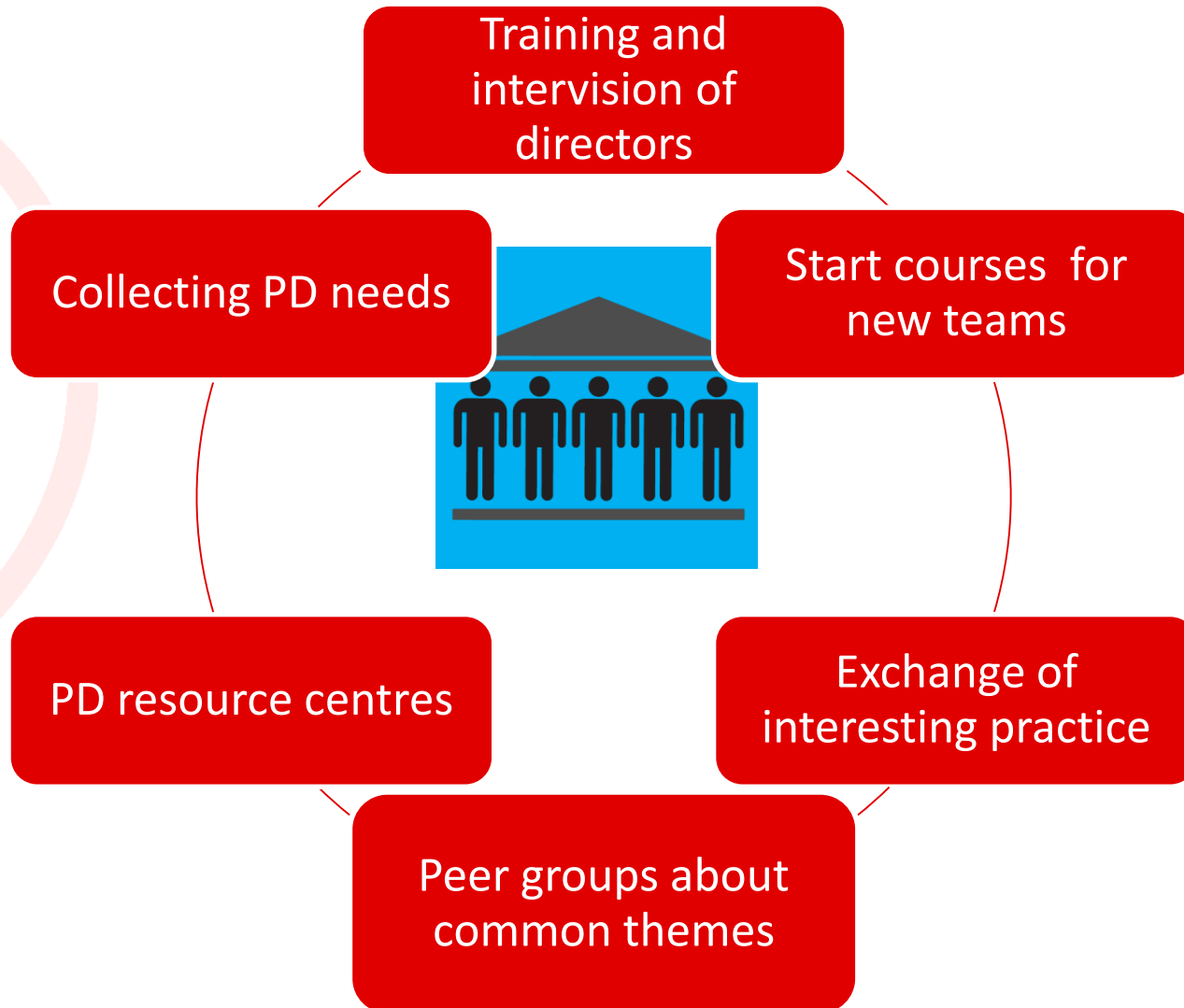
TEAM / INSTITUTION: common pedagogical approach



Competences needed on the individual and team level when working with ethnic minority families, poor families and children at risk. (Peeters, Sharma, 2014)

- Openness to dialogue with parents, colleagues and children on the basis of reciprocity;
- An engagement and ability to work towards social change;
- The ability to reflect critically on their own pedagogical practice and that of the team and the institution;
- The ability to create new pedagogical knowledge and practice.

INTERAGENCY / TRAINING CENTERS / LOCAL GOVERNMENT: DIVERSIFIED PD POLICY



NATIONAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: COHERENT POLICY



INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS AND FOUNDATIONS: INNOVATION



INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS



High quality workforce: challenges for many countries

- **Financing: costs of workforce preparation and PD**
- **Lack of child free hours**
- **Lack of recognition for mentoring and earlier acquired competences**
- **Large parts of ECEC workforce is unqualified**
- **Gender: more men needed!**
- **Recurrent preconditions not met:**
 - Staff/child ratios
 - Group size
 - Working conditions
 - Continuity of staff



Documents on high quality workforce on VBJK website: www.vbjk.be

- Urban, M., VandeLazarri, A. , Peeters, J., Vandebroeck, M. (2013). **The early years workforce: A review of European research and good practices on working with children from poor and migrant families**
Background paper for the Transatlantic Forum on Inclusive Early Years in New York, 10-12th of July 2013
- Urban, M, Vandebroeck, M., Peeters, J., Lazzari, A., Van Laere, K. (2011) *CoRe Competence requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care. Final Report for European Commission, DG Education and Culture. Research Documents.*
- *Van Laere, Peeters, Vandebroeck (2012). The education and Care Divide: the role of the early childhood workforce in 15 European countries. European Journal of Education, Vol. 47, No 4.*
- *Peeters, Buric, Lundt Children in Europe (2011)Valuing the workforce .*
- *DECET, ISSA Diversity and Social Inclusion: Exploring Competences for Professional practice in ECEC.*
- *Peeters, J. (2008). The Construction of a new Profession. SWP Amsterdam*



**Thank you for your
attention**





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