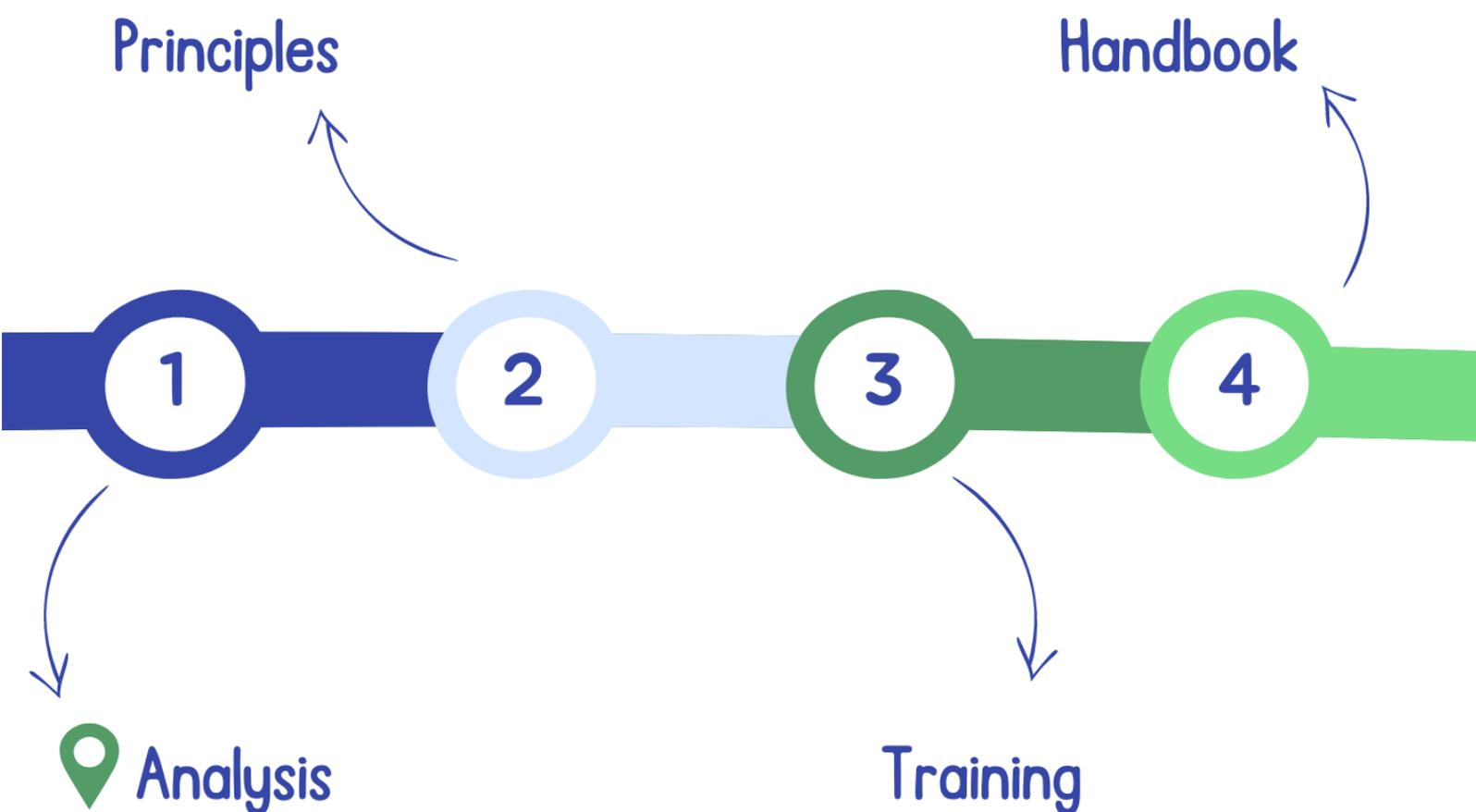


# piqet Analysis

Existing Practices of Recruitment and Professional Development of Continuous Professional Development Educators



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**Published:** 2023

**Disclaimer:** PIQET - Principles of Quality in Education of Teachers is an Erasmus+ project implemented (2022-2024) in partnership between the Educational Research Institute Slovenia, Open Academy Step by Step in Croatia, and the International Step by Step Association.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Building a strong, reliable, and high-quality ECEC workforce yields positive results that significantly impact the well-being of young children and enable their rounded and healthy development. Therefore, investing in continuous professional development and growth of the ECEC workforce must stay high on the agenda of relevant stakeholders, enabling and promoting high-quality programs.

In the present analysis, the [PIQET](#) delves deeper into the context of continuous professional development (hereafter referred to as CPD) and sheds light on professionals delivering in-service continuous professional development opportunities. Why PIQET emphasizes the professionals delivering in-service continuous professional development opportunities and their professional growth and development? Because their professional development does not get enough attention in research and professional discourse, consequently, does not get the recognition when addressing the complexity of quality in ECEC and primary school education.

PIQET uses the term **continuous professional development educators** – abbreviated as **CPD educators**, referring to professionals in the role of delivering and conducting various in-service continuous professional development opportunities for educators, teachers, and other practitioners. CPD educators most often, depending on the country context, act in the role of trainers, lecturers, mentors, coaches, learning facilitators and/or moderators, and many others. Therefore, in PIQET, we want to recognize and value the diversity and wealth of roles, profiles, and professional positions that high-level professionals, delivering and conducting in-service continuous professional development opportunities and events hold.

Our aim is twofold: **understanding** how different countries define and frame CPD and **identifying** the prevailing practices surrounding the CPD of CPD Educators. Through analysis, PIQET also investigates how various organizations in the early childhood field recruit and select CPD Educators, and how their continuous professional growth is organized and sustained.

This analysis provides a comprehensive view of the CPD landscape for CPD Educators, pinpointing challenges and proposing actionable solutions. With a dedication to shedding light on this often-neglected aspect, PIQET's goal is to heighten the discussion around it, designing quality principles that will guide both CPD educators and CPD-providing organizations in ensuring high-quality CPD opportunities and nurturing the professional development of CPD Educators.

## 2. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Framing and defining continuous professional development

**Continuous professional development (CPD)** - a process of ongoing professional growth, enhancement, and life-long learning very often refers to the process of developing, maintaining, and nurturing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, enabling professional efficiency and performance excellence beyond initial or pre-service training (Merlo, 2022; ISSA 2019; European Commission, 2013, 2019; CORE, 2011).

Definitions and framings of the concept of CPD can differ from context to context, depending on the understanding of the comprehensibility of the CPD, which very much depends on the motives and purpose each institution/organization/country holds when introducing and/or promoting CPD.

Continuous professional development is highly relevant both for improving educational performance and effectiveness, and for enhancing teachers' commitment, identity, and job satisfaction (European Commission, 2013). For example, in *Eurydice Report: Key Data on Early Childhood* (European Commission, 2019), CPD is framed as the formal in-service training

*Overall, 'professional development' was perceived as continuous learning that enabled practitioners to affirm existing understandings as well as acquire new knowledge and skills and thereby remain up-to-date with evolving developments in the field. Many participants also associated professional development with personal growth (Russel, 2008, p 6.).*

undertaken that allows ECEC staff members to broaden, develop and update their knowledge, skills and attitudes throughout their careers. It includes both subject-based and pedagogical training. Different formats are offered, such as courses, seminars, peer observation, and support from practitioner networks. In certain cases, continuing professional development activities may lead to supplementary qualifications. Along the same lines, the Singapore Ministry of Social and Family

Development (n.d) frames CPD as a form of in-service training designed to complement existing training pathways for early childhood development professionals, extending beyond the basic accredited training courses required for certification and recertification where those systems exist. CPD embraces the idea that individuals aim for continuous improvement in their professional knowledge, skills, and values, beyond the basic training required to carry out the job.

Similarly, the CORE final report (2011) describes CPD as a continuous or ongoing learning process through which one's practices and beliefs are constantly questioned in relation to changing contexts yielding competent practitioners.

Meanwhile, NACCRRRA and NAEYC (2011) see Early Childhood Education Professional Development as a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. Stressing that such opportunities lead to improvements in the

knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early education professionals, and highlighting that professional development encompasses education, training, and technical assistance.

CPD plays a crucial role in achieving high-quality practice in ECEC. The European Commission's Recommendation from ECEC experts (2018) highlights that recognizing the ECEC workforce's professionalism is important in improving the quality of provision. Professional development greatly impacts the quality of staff pedagogy and children's outcomes. Developing high-quality education and training programs for all staff working in an ECEC context (e.g., preschool teachers, assistants, educators, family day careers, etc.) helps to create a shared agenda and understanding of quality (European Commission, 2014).

CPD is also captured and highlighted in many policy-related documents, especially at the EU level, encouraging Member states to adopt and incorporate recommendations and suggestions in national policy solutions/initiatives, such as the Council of The European Union Council Recommendations on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems and the European Quality Framework.

### In summary



**Continuous professional development** is an ongoing process in which professionals in different capacities have the opportunity to grow their professional potential, nurture their skills, and develop needed competencies throughout the course of their professional engagement in the field.

CPD helps professionals to stay up to date on the latest research and trends so that they can integrate the most appropriate and effective strategies into their work and strive for quality. It also helps professionals to build relationships with their peers and access professional networks. This furthers their growth and development as professionals and helps them to stay informed, challenged, and prepared for any changes within the ECEC field and beyond.

### Continuous professional development opportunities

According to the literature available and as already discussed different formats and types of CPD are offered to practitioners, such as courses, seminars, peer observation, and support from practitioner networks (European Commission, 2019)., The most common CPD opportunities that are provided to ECEC and primary education professionals can be summed up as follow: trainings, seminars, workshops, courses, conferences, symposiums, learning exchanges, and nowadays, webinars which are gaining popularity, due to its cost-time efficiency, accessibility, and reach. Similarly, Mitter and Putchu (2018), state in their landscape analysis, that in-service and CPD programs are delivered through a range of providers, and in terms of structure and duration, in-service training opportunities are often varied and take a

variety of forms, including conferences and workshops; refresher training sessions; reflection groups; and mentoring or coaching.

The recent Eurydice European report on Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe (2019) presents data on how CPD of ECEC staff is framed and regulated at country levels and notes that only a quarter of the education systems make CPD mandatory for core practitioners<sup>1</sup> working with younger children. A few more, but still less than half of the education systems, require CPD for core practitioners working with older children. In ten ECEC systems, CPD is a professional duty for all staff (Belgium – Flemish Community, Croatia, Lithuania, Finland, the United Kingdom – England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, and North Macedonia) and in five additional countries, this professional duty only applies to staff working with older children (Czechia, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Liechtenstein). Meaning, that CPD in a certain context is still not available to all practitioners in the field equally, and nor is everywhere firmly regulated at the system level.

Still, in order to promote continuous professional development as an ongoing life-long learning and development process that empowers professionals in reflection on their practice, encourages them to engage in professional dialogue, and enables them to reach and nurture quality practice, CPD opportunities across the ECEC field expand beyond traditional/well-known professional development opportunities. As captured in *Child-Centered, Democratic, Pre-school Classrooms* (ISSA, 2019), traditional professional development opportunities are described as opportunities that often involve activities such as attending workshops, conferences, and pursuing additional courses, as well as self-study. While these methods can disseminate information widely, they do not necessarily ensure the effective implementation of acquired information and knowledge in classrooms. The key to meaningful professional growth lies in having a supportive community to prevent reverting to old habits. Critical reflection on new knowledge is vital, involving considerations like its relevance to specific contexts and its broader implications. Staying updated with early childhood development literature is essential, but it's equally important to critically assess and integrate this knowledge into daily practice. True reflection aims for deeper understanding and actionable improvement in teaching, considering underlying assumptions, values, and the broader educational context.

To thrive in their roles, professionals in ECEC and primary school education require consistent growth through structured learning avenues. With this aim in mind, targeted CPD opportunities are increasingly being employed. Merlo (2022) emphasizes the significance of such opportunities. To ensure that these professionals can seamlessly integrate the knowledge acquired through CPD into their daily practice, it's worth considering the strategies presented in ISSA's *Quality Resource Pack* (2012). This practice-research-policy blended approach not only inspires pre-and in-service training providers but also provides them with the strategies and instruments required for fostering continuous quality improvements. Along the same lines, the [ISSA's Quality Resource Pack](#) tools support practitioners in improving their everyday

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<sup>1</sup> individuals (with pedagogic training) who leads practice for a group of children at the class or playroom-level and works directly with children and their families <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/47ba3c3a-6789-11eb-aeb5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-191896611> (European Union, 2021)

practice by enriching and expanding their competencies through self- and group reflection, video recording, peer learning, and cooperation, being part of professional learning communities, and engaging in continuous dialogue with different stakeholders (ISSA, 2012).

The idea of ongoing professional growth is further reinforced by the role of reflection in the learning process. According to ISSA (2019), reflection, viewed as a collaborative and constructive process, greatly enhances professionals' learning. This growth is facilitated through mentoring, professional learning communities, observations, professional portfolios, and action research. The PIQET survey, which gathered responses from organizations offering CPD opportunities, and will be described below, highlights other prevalent CPD avenues. These include self-reflection and assessment, supervision, coaching, pedagogical counseling, study visits, and professional exchanges.

Given the vast array of CPD opportunities available, it is beneficial to delve deeper into their specifics. Let us examine the definitions<sup>2</sup> and frameworks of some of the most common CPD opportunities that resulted also from PIQET survey, in greater detail:

<p><b>PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY (PLC)</b></p>	<p><i>A PLC is a cohesive network of educators, committed to collaborative growth. Going beyond routine discussions, they delve into shared visions, context-based inquiries, and pedagogical innovations. With an emphasis on mutual trust and continuous development, they strategize and set SMART objectives to elevate teaching practices and enrich children’s student learning.</i></p>
<p><b>SELF-REFLECTION AND ASSESSMENT</b></p>	<p><i>Self-reflection is a subjective process, often prompted by reflective questions, where an individual introspects about emotions, thoughts, and experiences following an activity, process, or day. It involves considering past experiences, understanding their impacts, and reviewing one’s performance to enhance future actions.</i></p> <p><i>In contrast, self-assessment is a more objective evaluation, typically done over a longer period, focusing on specific actions and activities executed by an individual, especially an ECEC professional. This assessment identifies strengths, weaknesses, and behaviors, with the aim of monitoring and improving one’s performance. It is ideally conducted using a structured tool or instrument with predefined indicators for a comprehensive evaluation.</i></p>
<p><b>SUPERVISION</b></p>	<p><i>Supervision is a multi-faceted process designed to guide and support ECEC professionals. Initiated with comprehensive education or training, it entails periodic follow-ups, enabling practitioners reflect</i></p>

<sup>2</sup> Definitions are inspired by the following literature: Child-Centered, Democratic Preschool Classrooms, ISSA (2019); Roads to Quality, ISSA (2015); Putting Knowledge into Practice, ISSA (2012); Early Childhood Education Professional Development, NAEYC (2011); Internal glossaries, definitions, and understanding of CPD project partners from ERI, POU, and ISSA.

	<p>on their enhanced practices using the newly acquired knowledge. Through supervision, professionals can showcase improvements, seek feedback, ask questions, and present best practices. More than just a tool for accountability and skill development, supervision aims to be constructive, helping practitioners address issues, improve their practices, and find restoration amid the stresses of their roles. Its ultimate purpose is to foster continuous growth, ensuring quality care and education while offering both guidance and relief.</p>
<p><b>COACHING</b></p>	<p>Coaching is a personalized, relationship-based interaction wherein an expert, equipped with specialized knowledge in adult learning, collaboratively works with an individual or group. Through strategic questioning, the coach taps into the individual's innate potential, unveiling untapped possibilities and strategies to tackle challenges. It is not merely about imparting skills for predefined tasks, as per Chakravarthy (2011), but about fostering professional growth. This growth is achieved by facilitating goal-setting, ensuring its alignment with success parameters, and aiding in the achievement of those goals. The essence of coaching is to build capacity, emphasizing specific dispositions, skills, and behaviors that cater to the unique developmental needs of the recipient.</p>
<p><b>MENTORING</b></p>	<p>Mentoring is an empowering, relationship-centric process where an experienced individual, known as a mentor, offers holistic and non-judgmental support to a protégé (mentee). Unlike coaching, which is task-oriented, mentoring emphasizes the individual's attitudes, behaviors, and personal growth. Through both formal and informal interactions, mentors facilitate rich dialogue, fostering professional growth, confidence, and openness to new ideas. The mentor acts as a canal for knowledge-sharing, encouraging reflective practices, challenging the protégé, and facilitating a deeper connection to their teaching realities.</p>
<p><b>OBSERVATION with REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION</b></p>	<p>Observation refers to the intentional and reflective process of studying oneself or peers in a learning/teaching environment (classroom). It promotes a democratic and collaborative professional growth approach, where teaching becomes a public act that benefits educators, whether observed or observing. By observing, educators gather critical insights to enhance their practices and foster a deeper understanding of quality teaching. To be effective, it should prioritize trust and promote reflective discussion after each observation, enabling educators to gather insights, refine practices, and ultimately enhance the learning experience.</p>

<p><b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO</b></p>	<p><i>A professional development portfolio is a tool for self-evaluation and feedback to the educator about his or her teaching in order to plan improvements independently or with the support of mentors/coaches and/or colleagues in professional learning communities. It helps us to become aware of our own learning and to gain insights into our progress in implementing child-centered approaches. The process of creating the portfolio may therefore be as, if not more important as a reflection and professional development tool than the product itself (ISSA, 2019)</i></p>
<p><b>STUDY VISITS</b></p>	<p>A study visit is an immersive, hands-on experience where a small group of professionals visit a specific site, such as a kindergarten or school, to directly observe and understand pedagogical practices. It's more than just observation; it's an interactive opportunity for participants to discuss, reflect upon, and exchange insights and experiences related to the practices they witness. This collaborative approach fosters deeper understanding and promotes the sharing of expertise among attendees.</p>

*Table 1: Overview of most common CPD opportunities*

In conclusion, CPD opportunities are an important tool for empowering ECEC and primary school professionals to reach and nurture quality practice. Good-quality teaching can only be delivered by educators who continually engage in ongoing professional and personal development, who reflect on their practice, who work cooperatively with others, and who enjoy the process of lifelong learning. Professional development should build on our interests, needs and strengths. It should encourage us as professionals to take responsibility for our own growth and learning, and that of our colleagues (ISSA, 2019).

### **The importance of CPD opportunities and their impact**

CPD opportunities not only benefit professionals and their growth but consequently impact the quality of the practice in which children grow and thrive. As we learn in *5 Steps to Quality* (2016), where van Kullen and Vandekerckhove stress that recognizing the ECEC workforce as professionals is key, and they even further elaborate that professional development has a huge impact on the quality of staff pedagogy and children's outcomes. Developing common education and training programs for all staff working in an ECEC context (e.g., preschool teachers, assistants, educators, family day carers, etc.) helps to create a shared agenda and understanding of quality.

In addition, *5 Steps to Quality* (2016) introduces the concept explaining that good training results in professionals' ability to engage in warm, supportive, and stimulating interactions with children, which facilitates their development. Not only is the training or education as such essential, but the content of it and the way it takes place, as the used methods, are key. Bridging practice and theory and reflection have proven to be the most successful. Training is

never finished: **ongoing learning opportunities maintain the level of quality**. This can happen in different ways: team reflection, mentoring, pedagogical coaching, action research, projects, professional exchange, and similar.

*“It has become clear that a single day of training for one practitioner isn't really that effective compared to learning in teams with colleagues in longer training processes. Learning to reflect on one's own practice is key here, individually as well as collectively, within the team”* (van Keulen & Vandekerckhove, 2016, pp. 13).

In short, high-quality ECEC is essential in order to ensure the best outcomes for children's development, and a competent ECEC system is key to achieving this. By providing quality CPD opportunities, ECEC professionals can develop the knowledge, skills, values, and understanding to meet the needs of children, families, and society as a whole. Through such measures, the ECEC workforce can be empowered to provide high-quality and effective education and care to the children in their care, and ultimately ensure the best outcomes for the children's development.

In conclusion, Peleman, et al. (2017), in their systemic literature review on quality in ECEC in relation to CPD, outline indications of critical success factors when determining a positive impact of CPD programs on the improvement of pedagogical practices and hence on the quality of ECEC settings.

1. CPD provision must be embedded in a coherent pedagogical framework or curriculum that builds upon research and addresses local needs.
2. CPD initiatives should be grounded in the active involvement of practitioners in the transformative process for the improvement of educational practices within ECEC settings.
3. CPD needs to be focused on practitioners learning in practice, in dialogue with colleagues and parents, and, to maximize the effectiveness of CPD practice, a mentor or coach should be available during ECEC staff childfree hours.

### 3. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CPD EDUCATORS

#### 3.1 Framing continuous professional development of CPD educators

The importance of CPD in each professional's career matters. There are numerous reasons why CPD plays a crucial role in uplifting high-quality services and programs as well as being an enabler of personal career development and professional growth. Equally important is the aspect of CPD of those who are providing, facilitating, and leading continuous professional development opportunities. **Continuous Professional Development Educators** – shortly, **CPD Educators** are professionals conducting, facilitating, and leading in-service professional

development opportunities across educational spectrum. In PIQET, we particularly focus on CPD educators providing CPD opportunities for practitioners in ECEC and primary school education (*grades involving children up to 10 years old*), and we are specifically interested in their continuous professional development, as well as recruitment, and selection processes.

### In summary



**Continuous Professional Development Educators – or CPD Educators** are professionals designing, conducting, facilitating, and leading in-service professional development opportunities in ECEC and primary schools.

While the vast majority of research papers and other relevant literature focusing on professional development (also referred to as: continuous/continuing/ongoing professional development) outline the importance of CPD for professionals (teachers, educators, practitioners, assistants, etc.), the notion indicating the equal importance of CPD of CPD educators remains scarce. Therefore, **the role of PIQET is to give visibility to the topic and bring it into the discussion aiming at developing principles of quality** that will guide CPD educators and CPD providers (organizations providing CPD) in reaching, sustaining, and nurturing the quality CPD opportunities and professional growth of CPD educators.

Nevertheless, to better understand and inform the framing process of continuous professional development of CPD educators, inspirations, and parallels, to a certain extent, can be drawn from the professional development of “teacher educators.” For instance, van der Klink with colleagues (2017) discusses that teacher educators' concerns and areas of focus evolve over the course of their careers, from survival in new contexts to deeper reflections on identity and best practices (van der Klink, et al., 2017), just like CPD educators may undergo similar developmental trajectories in their career.

In other words, the professional development of teacher educators is a multifaceted journey marked by evolving concerns, diverse learning opportunities, and strong internal motivation. While the study (van der Klink et al., 2017) presents an overview of the developmental trajectories and experiences of teacher educators from multiple countries, it highlights the need for deeper, extensive international research to provide clearer insights into this profession's nuances.

*Education of teacher educators refers to the preparation, teaching, or facilitating of teacher educators. Nowadays, the term “teacher educators” commonly refers to both those who educate prospective teachers and those who educate practicing teachers, that is, to those who initiate, guide and support teacher learning across the lifespan. Yet, sometimes, the term “teacher educators” refers only to educators of prospective teachers, that is, to those who teach future teachers, and not to those who provide professional development for practicing teachers (Even, 2012).*

Drawing parallels between the previously mentioned research (van der Klink, et al., 2017) on the development of teacher educators and the insights presented by Goodwin & Kosnik (2013) it is evident that the approach to continuous professional development is not solely about knowledge acquisition but about transforming the entire ethos of education (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013). Just as teacher educators expressed evolving concerns throughout their careers, from adapting to novel settings to sophisticated reflections on teaching methodologies, CPD educators might also navigate a complex professional journey.

The emphasis on teacher educators needing to think holistically, view knowledge as inquiry-based, and focus on problem-solving (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013) resonates with the earlier study's findings that professional development consists of a mix of learning activities, underlining the importance of diverse experiences and adaptability (van der Klink, et al., 2017). However, the foundational principle remains consistent across both discussions: the recognition and agreement within the profession that educators, whether they're teachers or CPD educators, require formalized, continuous, and supportive preparation throughout their careers.

In conclusion, a parallel can also be drawn based on Su & Wang, (2022) who stated that professional development (PD) for educators is crucial, as it enhances teaching quality and ensures learners success. Emphasizing the vital role teacher trainers/educators play in the educational ecosystem. Their training and the quality of their instruction directly impact the overall teaching standard. The modern classroom's changing dynamics necessitate teachers to be equipped with updated knowledge and skills (Su & Wang, 2022). Therefore, teachers must internalize values such as social inclusion, equity, cultural appreciation of multilingualism, and the overarching principles of social justice to create an inclusive and effective learning environment that caters to all students' diverse backgrounds and experiences.

While the importance of PD for educators is recognized, there's a pressing need for more focused research on teacher trainers' development. Such research will ensure that they are well-equipped to handle the evolving educational landscape (Su & Wang, 2022), indicating gaps in research.

### **Gaps in research and suggestions**

CPD educators are responsible for developing the professional skills and knowledge of others in our case of ECEC professionals and primary school teachers, yet the research on CPD of CPD educators is limited. Much of the existing research is focused on the effectiveness of CPD programs rather than on the efficacy and quality of the CPD educators delivering those programs. Therefore, there is a need for further research to understand the CPD of CPD educators better, which also stems from the literature review (international and country-focused) piloted under the PIQET project, indicating a lack of available research on the CPD of CPD educators in general. With this in mind, a set of suggestions was designed to bridge the gap.

**First**, there is a lack of research on the motivations of CPD educators, as well as their attitudes and beliefs toward professional development. Research is needed to understand the factors that drive CPD educators to pursue and maintain their professional development. Additionally, research is needed to explore the impact of CPD educators on the professional development, growth, and quality of professional’s practice in ECEC and primary school education.

**Second**, there is a need for research to examine the impact of CPD on the professional growth of CPD educators. While much of the existing research around CPD points out the effectiveness of CPD programs (i.e., Slot, P. 2015; van Keulen & Vandekerckhove, 2016; Peleman, et al., 2017), there is a need for research to examine how CPD impacts CPD educators and their abilities to implement professional development initiatives effectively and of high quality.

**Overall**, the research into CPD of CPD educators is limited, and there is a need for further research to understand better the motivations, attitudes, beliefs, and effectiveness of CPD educators. Research is needed to explore the impact of CPD on the professional growth of CPD educators. Such research will provide valuable insights into the CPD of CPD educators and will set the tone for further promotion of high-quality CPD opportunities that keep a learner in the center.

### **The importance of focusing on the CPD of CPD educators lies in the quality**

We have learned from various studies (Slot, P. 2015; van Keulen & Vandekerckhove, 2016; Peleman, et al., 2017) that process quality in ECEC is, to a certain extent, informed and influenced by pre-service and in-service trainings or continuous/professional development. Therefore, the quality of transferring and modeling the knowledge by CPD educators equally matters as the quality of application of acquired knowledge and skills by ECEC educators and primary education teachers. The equation, in this case, sounds: quality yields quality. The higher the quality of CPD educators, the higher the quality practice of practitioners – **co-fluence of professional growth and quality practice**.

Recognizing the pivotal role of CPD educators in inspiring the quality of practice in ECEC, it becomes crucial to identify the factors contributing to quality of delivering, facilitating, and modeling learning through CPD opportunities. By gaining insight into the practices and mechanisms that support their professional growth (*as discussed in section 4.2.4*), we can work towards enhancing the overall quality of delivery and facilitation of CPD opportunities that undoubtedly impact the ECEC practice - enabling a more effective learning environment for both educators and children. With this purpose in mind, the PIQET project set out to conduct above presented literature review and comprehensive survey (presented below) to explore the landscape of CPD educators’ development across various organizations from different countries.

## 4. CPD Educators' Pathways: from recruitment to excellence

### 4.1 Methodology

#### Rational, Sample, and Aim

In order to better understand the factors contributing to quality implementation of CPD opportunities by CPD educators and further explore their in-service **professionalization** in the role of CPD educators, PIQET surveyed organizations providing CPD opportunities, mapping how different organizations define CPD educators, what mechanisms are used for recruitment and selection and how their continuous professional development and professional growth are ensured and regulated.

The PIQET survey was disseminated among [ISSA Members](#), providing CPD opportunities for ECEC and primary school education professionals across Europe and Central Asia. In addition, an in-depth survey was conducted in PIQET partner countries, Slovenia, and Croatia. Their findings are accessible here: [Slovenia](#), [Croatia](#).

The sample included 22 organizations providing CPD opportunities and/or pre-service and in-service training in various countries. The sample span across ISSA member organizations in Europe and Central Asia, including countries *Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Latvia, Mongolia, Moldova, North Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom*. Most of the organizations operate as non-governmental organizations, national/international non-profit organizations, research institutes, and/or university departments/teaching colleges.

The PIQET survey aiming at mapping existing practices and mechanisms was built based on the following topic and themes (*see annex 1, questionnaire indicators*):

1. *Continuous professional development events and opportunities for ECEC and primary school education professionals*
2. *Profile and titles of CPD educators*
3. *Recruitment and selection of CPD educators*
4. *Support and Continuous Professional Development for CPD Educators*
5. *Monitoring and evaluation of the work of CPD Educators*
6. *Principles or standards to ensure the quality of CPD educators' work*
7. *Common Needs of CPD Educators for CPD and Quality Performance/Practice*

**Recruitment** is the process of reaching out to potential applicants and inspiring them to apply for the actual or anticipated vacancy, position, and/or opportunity. While **Selection** is a process of hiring employees among the shortlisted candidates and providing them with a job/assignment in the organization.

## Limitations

The PIQET Analysis, described in this document looks at CPD as a whole and specifically at the CPD of CPD educators across countries and regions. Therefore, when looking at existing practices and examples, we have to take into account the specific contexts of each country/region; while some countries might have a bit more advanced and comprehensive approach to CPD in terms of policy solutions and regulations, some are still in progress of bringing CPD on systemic agenda. Hence, we have to take the existing practices and examples as inspiration and reference points to reflect on our own realities.

## 4.2 Key findings

### 4.2.1 Continuous Professional Development Events and Opportunities for ECEC And Primary School Education Professionals

The results of the survey suggest that organizations provide a range of CPD opportunities to professionals in the early childhood and primary education field. The most common types of CPD opportunities provided include **trainings, workshops, mentoring, seminars and conferences**, and some other types of opportunities. Organizations report offering training programs for teachers, training of the early childhood workforce, professional consultations, workshops, mentoring support, seminars and conferences, and other types of CPD opportunities.

Moreover, the findings suggest that organizations are responding to the specific needs and requirements of their educators by providing customized training programs and courses that are accredited by the relevant authorities/agencies. Some organizations even offer free trainings as part of their projects. The responses also indicate that organizations are aware of the importance of ongoing (continuous) professional development for educators and are willing to invest time and resources to ensure that their educators have access to the best possible training and other relevant professional development opportunities.

Out of the 22 organizations that participated in the PIQET survey, 21 reported that they provide **training programs to educators**. For example, one CPD provider reported that their organization provides more than 45 programs of teacher training, as well as professional consultations, workshops, and other CPD opportunities. Some organizations are providing training of trainers and tailored trainings for professionals working with children at an early age.

In addition, ten organizations reported that they provide **workshops** as a form of CPD. Organizations list providing workshops for educators on various topics as well as seminars, webinars, trainings, courses, individual consultations, summer school-certified courses, professional internships, methodological support, and events for school representatives.

**Mentoring** was also reported as a form of CPD by seven organizations. For example, providing mentorship through learning communities, mainly in primary schools, as well as in some instances providing mentoring support to educators.

Lastly, seven organizations reported that they provide **seminars and conferences** to ECEC and primary school education professionals. completing the academic components.

Overall, the data suggest that there are some common types of CPD opportunities provided by different organizations. However, the responses also indicate that organizations are offering customized CPD opportunities to their educators to meet their specific needs and requirements.

#### 4.2.2 Profile and Titles of CPD Educators

**CPD educators** as professionals in the role of delivering and conducting various in-service CPD opportunities and events for educators, teachers, and other practitioners. Depending on country or other specific context, CPD educators might also be called trainers, lecturers, mentors, coaches, facilitators, and such. In this document we recognize and value the diversity of roles, profiles, and professional positions that these high-level professionals hold.

The results of the survey suggest that organizations use various types of CPD educators to provide CPD opportunities. The types and titles of CPD educators used include **mentors, trainers, facilitators, lecturers, educators, consultants, expert consultants, psychologists, supervisors, and pedagogical coaches**.

Out of the 22 organizations that provided input, 16 reported using **mentors** as a type of CPD educator. Many organizations providing CPD opportunities reported using mentors, trainers, and educators as profiles and titles for CPD educators within their organizations. In addition, 13 organizations reported using **trainers** as a type of CPD educator.

**Facilitators** were also reported as a type of CPD educator by 12 organizations. Moreover, 11 organizations reported using **lecturers** as a type of CPD educator.

In conclusion, organizations across different countries utilize an array of professional roles, including mentors, trainers, facilitators, lecturers, educators, and others, in delivering CPD opportunities. The survey findings underscore the diversity and richness of these roles within CPD provision, offering valuable insights to inform and potentially enhance the strategies of other organizations in their CPD implementations.

#### 4.2.3 Recruitment and Selection of CPD Educators

Out of the 22 respondents, 13 organizations have in place internal criteria and protocols for the recruitment and selection of CPD educators, while nine do not. Among the organizations that have criteria and protocols in place, the following are some of the criteria mentioned:

- Preschool or schoolteachers with at least three years of teaching experience in kindergarten/school.
- Level of education, commitment, and references of candidates.
- Master's degree at Level 9 for lecturer grade and Level 8 for supervisors and tutors.

- Set of skills to facilitate interactive, learner centered CPD opportunities

The recruitment and selection protocols for CPD educators differ significantly across organizations. For instance, one entity selects a team of 17 coaches based on their coaching skills, humanities, or pedagogical degree, understanding of pedagogical frameworks, and communication skills. On the other hand, another organization selects educators based on their completion of basic training, proficiency in the topic or method, and exceptional performance. Certain organizations rely on motivation letters, interviews, and tasks, while others draw from a pool of trainees or opt for proficient practitioners, providing them with further training and recommendations.

The data reveals that while more than half of the survey organizations have established criteria and protocols for CPD educators' recruitment and selection, the specifics vary widely. For instance, one organization necessitates trainers to possess skills of interactive, learner-centered teaching methods and classroom management, whereas another requires a master's degree at Level 9 for lecturer grade and Level 8 for supervisors and tutors. This diversity suggests that there is no universal approach to recruiting and selecting CPD educators. Each organization should consider its unique needs and objectives when developing criteria and protocols, particularly given the diverse entities providing CPD opportunities, including NGOs, teaching colleges, educational agencies, and universities.

Trend-wise, the data indicates that organizations prioritizing the quality and effectiveness of their CPD programs tend to establish specific criteria and protocols for CPD educators' recruitment and selection. Such organizations have detailed procedures aimed at ensuring educators are qualified, committed, and willing to enhance their teaching practices. On the contrary, organizations lacking these criteria and protocols may find difficulties in recruiting and selecting the best suited CPD educators, which could negatively affect the quality and effectiveness of their CPD opportunities.

This section underscores the importance of a strategic and tailored approach in the recruitment and selection of CPD educators. Given the variations in criteria, organizations must align their recruitment and selection protocols with their specific CPD goals and the unique needs of their educators to ensure the highest quality and effectiveness of professional development opportunities.

#### 4.2.4 Support and Continuous Professional Development for CPD Educators

The PIQET survey indicates that most respondent organizations provide various forms of support and continuous professional development (CPD) to their selected CPD educators. These provisions vary based on the organization and the specific needs of the CPD educators.

One organization, for instance, detailed its strategy, which includes conducting a needs assessment and pre-survey, offering training, mentoring, and a post-survey to their CPD educators. Another entity provides continuous methodology support and ongoing courses, with a basic level of 80 hours of training and an advanced level of 40 hours, as well as more specialized courses and trainings. Other forms of support and development offered include workshops, seminars, roundtables, internships, self-study, peer-learning, online courses,

learning exchanges, conferences, and various forms of trainings such as pilot-coaching, intervision, and team meetings.

Many of the organizations also carry out training of trainers (ToT) for their CPD educators. One organization typically provides initial ToT training, pairs less experienced trainers with more experienced ones for training delivery and assists more advanced trainers in developing mentoring skills. Another organization offers 1-2 upgrading trainings to mentors and trainers, usually conducted by international experts.

Interestingly, some organizations provide ongoing CPD programs to all personnel based on their identified needs, while others focus on specific target groups. For example, one institution offers different types of CPD for three different target groups, with the second group participating in regular group meetings, individual consultations, and reflective discussions after implemented trainings.

In general, it appears that the majority of organizations offer some form of support and development to their CPD educators. For instance, one organization extends "an opportunity to get acquainted with other works of professionals." Another entity gives priority to their trainees to participate in any new training opportunities, as well as support for their overall well-being through team-building events or reflection groups.

These findings suggest that organizations recognize the importance of ongoing professional development for their CPD educators. They are taking steps to provide the necessary support and resources for their growth and improvement, particularly in the initial phase, after new CPD educators are selected, hired, or contracted.

#### 4.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Work of CPD Educators

The monitoring and evaluation methodologies of CPD educators' work vary among the survey respondent organizations. Some entities use methods such as classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews to assess their CPD educators' performance. A particular organization mentioned adhering to monitoring and evaluation guidelines and utilizing a Quality Assurance Tool (QUAT). Observations and performance development reviews are also popular methods to evaluate the work of CPD educators. Several organizations reported the use of practice observations, performance development reviews, and participant feedback, while others revealed conducting year-long observations to study their CPD educators' professional growth outcomes.

To ensure the quality of CPD educators' work, some organizations maintain various frameworks or guidelines. ISSA Quality Principles<sup>3</sup> are upheld by some, while others also follow monitoring and evaluation guidelines, as well as the Quality Assurance Tool (QUAT). Certain organizations safeguard the quality of their professional development opportunities for ECEC professionals and primary school education professionals by having a firm grasp of certain quality principles.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.issa.nl/quality\\_pack](https://www.issa.nl/quality_pack)

In contrast, some organizations invite their CPD educators to submit reports and reflections to provide feedback and improve their performance. One organization, for example, requires its trainers-mentors to submit analytical reports and participants' feedback, receive individual feedback from content/area experts, and participate in joint reflection sessions after each training round and mentoring sessions to debrief the results and formulate further strategies. Another entity requires their trainers to submit training reports and critical reflections, and their mentors to provide mentoring reports and critical reflections.

In conclusion, these findings suggest that there's no one-size-fits-all method for monitoring and evaluating the work of CPD educators. Organizations utilize a variety of methodologies and frameworks to assure quality and enhance the performance of their CPD educators. However, it's critical to emphasize that the vast majority of the surveyed organizations emphasize quality and therefore uphold different frameworks to ensure the provision of high-quality CPD opportunities.

#### 4.2.6 Principles or Standards to Ensure Quality of CPD Educators' Work

The purpose of the survey was also to investigate if the organizations uphold or use any principles, standards, philosophy, or framework to ensure the quality of CPD educators' work. From the responses gathered, it appears that a majority of the organizations surveyed (16 out of 22) uphold or use some form of principles, standards, or frameworks to mainly ensure the quality of content their CPD educators' implement/deliver.

The most commonly mentioned reference for quality assurance is the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) and its [Quality Pedagogy Principles and Quality Resource Pack](#). Other organizations mention national education standards, global education principles, academic integrity, and their own internal checklists and competencies frameworks.

It is worth noting that while most organizations mentioned using some form of quality assurance, the level and depth of implementation can vary greatly. The findings suggest that organizations are aware of the importance of ensuring the quality of their CPD educators' work, and are taking steps to uphold or use quality principles, standards, or frameworks. The use of ISSA resources is particularly common among the ISSA Member organizations who were surveyed, indicating the potential influence and effectiveness of such resources and mechanisms in promoting quality education. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of ensuring consistent and thorough implementation of quality assurance measures across different organizations.

In conclusion, there are a few organizations providing CPD opportunities that follow quality principles, mostly for the content of their CPD opportunities but not for the implementation and competencies of their CPD educators. This indicates a potential gap and/or room for improvement in CPD opportunities; therefore, the main goal of PIQET is to develop a set of principles that will help and guide organizations in ensuring the quality flow of CPD opportunities as well as the quality performance of CPD educators.

#### 4.2.7 Most common needs of CPD educators

Based on the collected input, the needs of CPD educators for their continuous professional development and quality performance are diverse and multidimensional. Based on the data, it's evident that the most commonly expressed need among CPD educators, as reported by CPD providers, is to enhance and strengthen their understanding and implementation of child-centered and inclusive practices to better support practitioners with whom they work.

Mentoring and continuous professional support emerged as important areas of focus. The organizations indicated that they require tailored professional support and on-site mentoring to enhance their practice. Furthermore, the data suggests a need for ongoing opportunities for professional development, with educators seeking continuous methodological support, individual consultancy, and opportunities for internships.

Another trend points towards the necessity for CPD educators to maintain up-to-date knowledge on topics related to their field, and competence in facilitating engaging, active learning experiences. This includes a desire for opportunities for further growth and exchange of experiences with other CPD educators.

Diversification of teaching methods to cater to diverse learners, effective assessment and evaluation strategies, and enhanced collaboration with different stakeholders were also identified as areas of interest. Several CPD providers surveyed indicate a need for trainings that helps manage private-professional commitments, digital and language skills, and staying up-to-date with contemporary educational trends.

Finally, there is a clear emphasis on the need, as per CPD providers surveyed, for professionals (beneficiaries of CPD opportunities) to enhance their skills in promoting mental health and wellbeing, both for themselves and their students. They recognized that their work, often involving demanding situations and marginalized communities, can lead to burnout, emphasizing the need for mental health resilience training. This aspect has grown in importance as mental health conversations become less stigmatized and more central to their skill set.

#### 4.2.8 Understanding the specific context

The additional information provided by organizations providing CPD opportunities highlights the challenges and contextual factors that influence CPD opportunities they provide as well as the status of CPD educators in their specific contexts. One striking theme is the influence of politics and the bureaucratic structure on the quality of education and professional development. It's mentioned that the rigidity of the system, vertical control, and political affiliations can undermine the emphasis on quality, thereby demotivating educators and discouraging them from seeking professional development.

In certain regions, the lack of state-supported systems for the professional development of educators adds to the challenges. This seems to suggest that the burden of providing quality professional development opportunities falls largely on independent organizations, which might not be equipped to satisfy the entire demand or cover all necessary needs. Time constraints are another significant barrier to CPD. Even when CPD opportunities are provided for free, getting people to attend can be difficult due to time restrictions. This highlights the

need for flexible and accessible CPD options that can accommodate the busy schedules of educators.

In summary, these responses emphasize the complexities and challenges of providing CPD in various contexts. They highlight the need for strategies that address political and bureaucratic hurdles, time constraints, and lack of state support, and underscore the importance of adaptability and innovation in delivering effective CPD.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings cover a range of topics, including the selection and recruitment of CPD educators, the support and development provided to them, monitoring and evaluation methods, principles or standards used to ensure quality, the most common needs of CPD educators, and the specific context and challenges faced by organizations - CPD providers implementing CPD opportunities. The analysis provides valuable insights into the current practices and challenges associated with CPD of CPD Educators, highlighting the importance of ongoing professional development, quality assurance, and addressing the individual needs and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of CPD opportunities.

Based on the analysis, we can draw several conclusions regarding the current state of CPD and CPD educators and their professional growth:

1. **Selection and recruitment of CPD educators:** A variety of methods are used to select and recruit CPD educators, including recommendations, advertisements, and selection committees. Formal qualifications and experience seem to be significant factors in the selection process.
2. **Support and Continuous Professional Development for CPD Educators:** The majority of organizations provide some form of support and development for their CPD educators, including training, mentoring, and workshops. This indicates a recognition of the importance of ongoing professional development.
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation of CPD Educators:** Organizations use a range of methods and frameworks to monitor and evaluate the work of their CPD educators, including classroom observations, questionnaires, interviews, and performance development reviews. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to monitoring and evaluation, but a majority of organizations seem to emphasize quality and continuous improvement.
4. **Principles or Standards to Ensure Quality of CPD Educators' Work:** Most organizations uphold or use some form of principles, standards, or frameworks to ensure the quality of their CPD opportunities, with the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) Quality Pedagogy Principles and Quality Resource Pack being the most commonly mentioned reference.
5. **Most Common Needs of CPD Educators:** CPD educators express a desire for continuous learning, growth, and improvement, with a focus on learner-centered

approaches, diversification of teaching/knowledge transfer methods, collaboration, and personal well-being.

6. **Understanding the Specific Context:** The challenges and contextual factors that influence CPD for educators highlight the importance of understanding the local context in which CPD opportunities are implemented or provided. The complexities and challenges of providing CPD in various contexts highlight the need for strategies that address political and bureaucratic hurdles, time constraints, and lack of state support, and underscore the importance of adaptability and innovation in delivering effective CPD.

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations emerged to improve the CPD of CPD educators, their status, and overall mechanisms elevating quality practice that might support CPD providers in their endeavors:

1. **Enhance support and development opportunities for CPD educators:** Provide a diverse array of support and development activities, including training, mentoring, workshops, seminars, and learning exchanges, tailored to meet the specific needs of CPD educators and address their areas of interest.
2. **Strengthen monitoring and evaluation methods:** Implement comprehensive and consistent monitoring and evaluation practices, including classroom observations, participant feedback, and adherence to quality assurance frameworks, to ensure the effectiveness of CPD programs and facilitate the continuous improvement of CPD educators.
3. **Develop and uphold quality standards and principles:** Encourage the use of quality principles, standards, and frameworks, such as the ISSA Quality Pedagogy Principles, to ensure the quality of CPD educators' work, and promote consistent implementation of quality assurance measures across different organizations and programs.
4. **Address contextual factors and individual challenges:** Design and implement CPD programs that take into account the specific contextual factors and individual challenges faced by educators, such as balancing private-professional commitments, developing digital and language skills, and addressing mental health and well-being needs.

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## 7. Annexes

### Annex 1: Indicators used to collect input form organizations providing CPD opportunities

1. **Type and Range of CPD Opportunities Provided:** Number and diversity of CPD events/opportunities provided by the organization.
2. **Roles of CPD Educators:** Number and diversity of roles of CPD educators within the organization (e.g., mentor, facilitator, supervisor, lecturer, trainer, etc.).
3. **Presence of Recruitment and Selection Criteria:** Existence of explicit criteria and protocols for the recruitment and selection of CPD educators.
4. **Quality of Recruitment and Selection Criteria:** Thoroughness, specificity, and relevance of the listed recruitment and selection criteria and protocols for CPD educators.
5. **Provision of Support and Development for CPD Educators:** Extent and type of support and continuous professional development opportunities offered to CPD educators once they are selected.
6. **Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:** Presence and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation procedures for the work of CPD educators.
7. **Upholding Quality Principles or Standards:** Whether the organization adheres to any principles, standards, philosophy, or framework to ensure the quality of CPD educators' work.
8. **Detail and Relevance of Quality Principles or Standards:** Specificity and relevance of the described principles, standards, philosophy, or frameworks used for ensuring quality.
9. **Common CPD Educator Needs:** Prevalence and importance of the common needs identified by CPD educators for their continuous professional development and quality performance.
10. **Context-Specific Information:** Presence of additional crucial context-specific information shared by the organization that can affect their CPD practices.

### Annex 2: Existing Practices for the Recruitment and Professional Development of Continuous Professional Development Educators in Croatia

- **This country report can be found at:** [https://www.issa.nl/sites/default/files/u327/PIQET\\_Analysis\\_Croatia.pdf](https://www.issa.nl/sites/default/files/u327/PIQET_Analysis_Croatia.pdf)

### Annex 3: Existing Practices for the Recruitment and Professional Development of Continuous Professional Development Educators in Slovenia

- **This country report can be found at:** [https://www.issa.nl/sites/default/files/u327/PIQET\\_Analysis\\_Slovenia.pdf](https://www.issa.nl/sites/default/files/u327/PIQET_Analysis_Slovenia.pdf)