



Ensuring Warm and Inclusive Transitions

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



COPENHAGEN, MAY 18-20, 2022

INTRANS EXCHANGE WEEK



HIGH-LEVEL NETWORKING
EXCHANGE FOR
POLICY-MAKERS AND
KEY STAKEHOLDERS

"SUSTAINING QUALITY & EQUITY OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS THROUGH SMOOTH AND INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS"

PEDAGOGSKI INSTITUT



Tampere University



BUPL



High-level networking exchange among policy-makers and key stakeholders

18 – 20 May 2022, Copenhagen

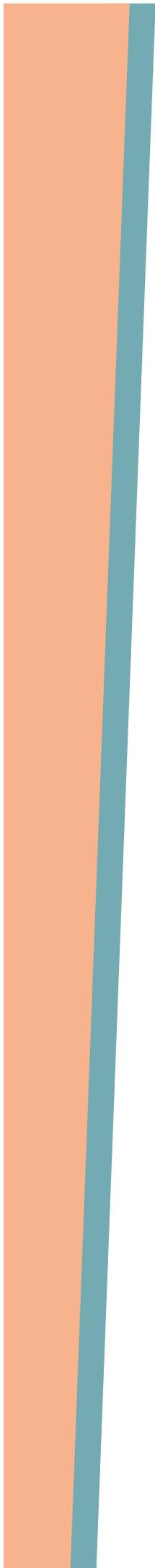
The goal of this meeting is to provide insights and peer-learning opportunities among participants to reinforce structural, pedagogical and professional continuity in educational systems in their countries. For this purpose, the program includes a balanced combination of site visits - where participants will gain knowledge from inspiring practices and policies on inclusive transition – and working group meetings – during which participants will critically reflect on observed practice and exchange knowledge with colleagues from other countries.

The policy exchange is organized by the InTrans project consortium in cooperation with BUPL (Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators) which has close contact with the Danish Ministry of Children and Education as well as with Municipalities that have a long-standing experience in ensuring pedagogical and professional continuity in the educational services from birth until 16 years old.

Witnessing how ECEC staff, teachers, local administrators and stakeholder organization from different sectors collaborate closely and developed policy and reflection tools to govern warm and inclusive transitions will be an added value for policy-makers participating in the networking exchange.

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PROGRAMME

● WEDNESDAY, MAY 18 PLENARY SESSION

MORNING	ARRIVAL OF THE PARTICIPANTS
12.00 – 13.00	<i>Welcome lunch at BUPL headquarters</i>
AFTERNOON	
13.00 – 13.10	Welcome from BUPL (Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators)
13.10 – 13.30	Introduction to the Policy Exchange Program (InTrans Team): "WHY TO INVEST IN INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS?" THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE INTRANS PROJECT TO THE EU EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL POLICY AGENDA
13.30 – 14.30	Presentation of the Danish context by Ministry of Children and Education – followed by Q&A session <i>Speakers:</i> Mette Arnsfelt McPhail Head of Office (ECEC)
15.00 – 15.45	Researching transitions: the voices of children moving from ECEC to school <i>Speaker:</i> Anja Hvidtfeldt Stanek Associate professor, University of Southern Denmark
15.45 – 16.15	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16.15 – 17.30	Presentation of participants and country contexts (BL/Flanders, Italy, Finland and Slovenia)

● THURSDAY, MAY 19 STUDY VISIT TO HOELBÆK MUNICIPALITY

MORNING	
8.00	Meet in front of the hotel to take the bus
9.30 – 11.30	VISITS TO ECEC CENTRES AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS with a focus on pedagogical continuity (0-8) <i>The group will be divided into 3 subgroups for the on-site visits:</i> 1) <i>Knabstrup ECEC and school</i> 2) <i>Mørkøv ECEC and Kildebjerg school</i> 3) <i>Galaxen ECEC and Jyderup school</i>
12.00 – 12.45	<i>Lunch at ECEC Solsikken</i>

AFTERNOON

- 12.45 – 14.30** **Presentation of the Project Playful Learning by the Center for Learning and Well-being. Two examples of practice.**
- Speakers:
Lena Basse and Marianne Preus Sørensen (Center for Learning and Well-being)
Lene Thygaard and Mette Halling (Solsikken ECEC and Gislinge Primary School)
- 14.30 – 16.00** **DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS IN SUBGROUPS**
(facilitated by InTrans team)
- 16.00** *Bus departure for returning to Copenhagen*
- 19.30** *Social Dinner in Copenhagen (Brdr. Price Restaurant)*

● FRIDAY, MAY 20

PANEL DEBATES AND DISCUSSION IN THEMATIC GROUPS

MORNING

- 9.00 – 10.00** **PANEL DEBATE WITH STAKEHOLDER**
CONDITIONS FOR COLLABORATION AMONG
DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS, *with a focus on current
challenges related to transition and how they can be
overcome*
- Speakers:
Lasse Bjerg Jørgensen - **BUPL** (Danish Union of Early
Childhood and Youth Educators)
Head of International Relations and National Treasurer
Dorte Lange – Danish Union of Teachers (**DLF**)
Vice-President
Signe Nielsen - Parents Association for ECEC (**FOLA**)
President of Parents Association for ECEC
- 10.00 – 10.15** *Coffee Break*
- 10.15 – 12.00** **DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS IN SUBGROUPS**
(facilitated by InTrans team)
- 12.00 – 13.00** *Lunch*

AFTERNOON

- 13.00 – 14.00** **PANEL DEBATE WITH COPENHAGEN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE – representatives from INITIAL & IN-SERVICE TRAINING**
CONDITIONS FOR INTER-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION AND LEARNING ACROSS ECEC AND PRIMARY SCHOOL, *with a focus on good practice related to workforce professionalization*
- Speakers:
- Mette Marie Høy-Hansen
mmhh@kp.dk
- Laura Reedtz Funder
lafu@kp.dk
- Andy Højholdt
andh@kp.dk
- 14.00 – 15.00** **DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS IN SUBGROUPS**
(facilitated by InTrans team)
- 15.00 – 16.00** **WRAP UP IN NATIONAL GROUPS AND CLOSING REMARKS**

København Tog og metro

Copenhagen Train and metro network



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S-tog Urban rail

Myldretid Peak hours
Mandag - fredag ca. kl 6 - 19
 Monday to Friday approx 6 am to 7 pm
Aften, weekend og helligdage
 Evenings, weekends and holidays

Metro Underground

Under opførelse Under construction

Regional-, Øresunds-, og intercitytog Regional, national, and international railways

GENERAL INFORMATION

● FROM COPENHAGEN AIRPORT TO HOTEL ØSTERPORT OR THE MEETING VENUE (BUPL OFFICE)

1. **By Metro** line M2 and change at Kongens Nytorv to Metro line M3.
At Metro Station Østerport you get off to go to Hotel Østerport, situated across the street from the Metro station. 21 minutes trip.
If you're going directly to BUPL continue from Kongens Nytorv with Metro Line M4 to the last station Orientkaj. 24 minutes trip. BUPL and the Meeting Center is only 200 meters from the Metro station.
2. **By Railway** from the airport you can catch a train for Copenhagen Central station. The train continues for Østerport station. 21 minutes trip. From this station you can change to Metro line M4 and continue to Orientkaj station. 25 minutes trip.

● HOTEL ACCOMODATION

Hotel Østerport

Oslo Plads 5

2100 Copenhagen

At metro station: Østerport

● MEETING VENUE

BUPL office (Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators)

Meeting Center

Sundkrogsgade 15

2100 Copenhagen

At metro station: Orientkaj

● RESTAURANT INTRANS DINNER | THURSDAY, 19TH

Brdr. Price Restaurant

Tivoli Amusement Park

MORNING

ECEC Kirsebærhaven
Skolevej 37, Knapstrup
4400 Mørkøv

Primary School Knapstrup
Skolevej 37, Knapstrup
4440 Mørkøv

ECEC Mørkøv
Ringstedvej 43
4440 Mørkøv

Primary school Kildebjergskolen
Skamstrupvej 18
4440 Mørkøv

ECEC Galaxen
Elmegården 56
4450 Jyderup

Primary school Jyderup
Holbækvej 108
4450 Jyderup

AFTERNOON

ECEC Solsikken
Kirkevej 1
4532 Gislinge

Primary school Gislinge
Skolevej 4
4532 Gislinge

PARTICIPANTS

● DENMARK



Stig G Lund

SPECIAL ADVISER, DANISH UNION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH EDUCATORS (BUPL)

Stig works at the Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators in Copenhagen as a special adviser. He worked for many years with educational and professional issues within early childhood education and care and the collaboration between pedagogues and teachers in primary schools. On behalf of BUPL and ETUCE he was member of the European Commission's working group on ECEC from 2012-14 and 2018-2020.

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● BELGIUM (FL)



Valentina Cools

EDUCATION NETWORK FOR CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES (OVSG)

Valentina is the Director of the Education network for Cities and Municipalities (OVSG), which is the umbrella organisation of municipal schools (approx. 22% of children in Flanders attend these schools). They take over major responsibilities of governing bodies. For example, they draw up their own curriculum, teaching methods, pedagogical plan and timetables. This means that the Flemish governing bodies concerned surrender some of their autonomy to the umbrella networks.

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Sofie Verhaert

ASSOCIATION OF CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES (VVSG)

Sofie is a staff member of the Association of Cities and Municipalities (VVSG). Whereas the Flemish Upbringing agency is responsible for regulations, allocation of places, funding, and quality management of childcare and out of school care, the day-to-day running of childcare centres is the responsibility of the service providers (local authorities, non-profit organisations, and also private for-profit providers). VVSG is the organisation that supports Flemish local authorities in their role as service provider and/or their role as directors in themes such as childcare, out of school care, political governance, sustainability and so forth. Sofie coordinated the development of a toolbox on transitions for local municipalities.

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Bert De Jonge

FLEMISH CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Bert is a staff member of the Flemish Catholic Education network, which is the umbrella organisation of the Catholic subsidised private schools (approx. 64% of children in Flanders attend these schools). They take over major responsibilities of governing bodies. For example, they draw up their own curriculum, teaching methods, pedagogical plan and timetables. This means that the Flemish governing bodies concerned surrender some of their autonomy to the umbrella networks.

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Barbara Devos

FLEMISH WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Barbara is a staff member of the Flemish Welfare Association. Whereas the Flemish Upbringing agency is responsible for regulations, allocation of places, funding, and quality management of childcare and out of school care, the day-to-day running of childcare centres is the responsibility of the service providers (local authorities, non-profit organisations, and also private for-profit providers). The Flemish Welfare Association unites non-profit organisations, offers information and advice and represents their interests with the various authorities.

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Eva Tiquet

ACV/COV TEACHER TRADE UNION

The Christian ACV/COV is one of the biggest Teacher Trade Unions in Belgium. Eva is one of the expert people in charge of the early years workforce. She is a member of the Strategic Exercise group of the Flemish Educational Council (VLOR) that is currently developing a new vision on early years education.

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dr. Katrien Van Laere

VBJK (CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN THE EARLY YEARS)

Katrien works as a Senior researcher at VBJK, Belgium. She finished a PhD in Social Work on conceptualisations of care and education in the transition to preschool education. She has worked on different international and local action research projects concerning transitions, educare, parents' participation and accessibility of ECEC.

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dr. Nima Sharmahd

VBJK (CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN THE EARLY YEARS)

Nima is Senior Researcher at VBJK, Belgium. She works on international research and projects focused on professional development, educare, accessibility, family participation, pedagogical documentation, transitions in ECEC. She also collaborates with the Department of Education and Psychology of the University of Florence (IT), where she did her Ph.D on the relationship practitioners/families in ECEC centers. She worked for several years in Italy (University of Florence) as researcher and pedagogical coach for different ECEC services.

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Jan De Mets

CENTRE FOR DIVERSITY AND LEARNING, GHENT UNIVERSITY, AND VBJK

Jan works at the Centre for Diversity and Learning (CDL), Ghent University, and at VBJK. He is editor of many publications on education-related themes. At CDL he was involved in different projects and had an important role in 'translating' the research results into trajectories and publication for teachers, school teams, pedagogical guidance services, external school supporting organizations.

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Fran Devos

VBJK (CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN THE EARLY YEARS)

As a financial manager, Fran keeps the financial ins and outs of VBJK on the right track. She supports the project staff in the financial and administrative management of the projects.

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● FINLAND



Arja-Sisko Holappa

FINNISH NATIONAL AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

PhD, Counsellor of Education in Finnish National Agency for Education (Opetushallitus) in Helsinki, Finland. Arja-Sisko is a specialist on education development processes. She is working as leader of Impact program in Finnish National Agency for Education. She is a former teacher and teacher educator with long experience of education administration in municipal, regional and national organizations. Her special interests are the top-down and bottom-up development processes. She has experienced, organized and studied improvement processes on single school, education administrator and national levels. Her special interest is on curriculum based development processes. Answers to a question: Transition in Finnish Core Curricula and implementation processes in Finland.

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🌐 organisation-finnish-national-agency-education



Kirsi Alila

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

PhD, Senior Ministerial Adviser (Educational Affairs) in Ministry of Education and Culture (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö) in Helsinki, Finland. Kirsi is responsible for strategic development on a national and international level in the field of ECEC. Answers to a question: Current development of ECEC in the national level in Finland.

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Anette Lehtonen

CITY OF NOKIA

Coordinator of ECEC services in city of Nokia, Finland. Anette is in charge of the local curriculum for ECEC and Pre-primary Education and also the local ECEC quality management system. Answers to a question: Municipal perspective for the transitions of ECEC and pre-primary Education.

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Elina Kataja

CITY OF HÄMEENLINNA

Coordinator of ECEC services and pre-primary education in city of Hämeenlinna, Finland. Her main duties focus on the staff training and municipal curriculum development in ECEC and pre-primary education. Answers to a question: Elina's professional passion is children's participation in early childhood education. Interesting question is that whether the child has an active role in transitions – or not?

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Minttu Ilveskivi-Hentilä

TRADE UNION OF EDUCATION, OAJ

Special Advisor (education policy) in Trade Union of Education, OAJ (Opetusalan ammattijärjestö), in Helsinki, Finland. In OAJ, she is in charge of politics in early childhood education and care (ECEC), pre-primary education and early childhood special education (ECSE). Nordic co-operation in ECEC and international ECEC politics are also her responsibilities. In addition, she knows legislation of ECEC and national core curriculum for ECEC. She is also interested in evaluation. She oversees ECEC in general but especially from the perspective of head of early education centre and ECEC teachers. Answers to questions: Staff and qualification criteria of ECEC and pre-primary education, Amount and composition of staff based on legislation, OAJs short- and long-term goals in ECEC and pre-primary education.

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Emerita Prof. Kirsti Karila

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, TAMPERE UNIVERSITY

Kirsti is Emerita Professor of Early Childhood Education and Care at Tampere University. She has held an active position in developing the ECEC system in Finland. Her research areas include professionalism, institutional cultures, and policies in ECEC. Professor Karila has recently studied the municipal-level ECEC policies, parents' choices, and children's early childhood education trajectories.

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PhD, university lecturer Laura Rantavuori

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, TAMPERE UNIVERSITY

Laura works as a university lecturer in the Faculty of Education and Culture, Tampere University. Her research area includes the transition from pre-primary school to primary school from an institutional and professional point of view.

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Daniela Marrocchi

ITALIAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Senior expert officer ('dirigente tecnico') at the Ministry of Education (MI) - Directorate for Regulation, Evaluation and Internationalization of the National Education System ('Ordinamenti scolastici, Valutazione e Internazionalizzazione del Sistema Nazionale di Istruzione'). She is the delegate of the Italian Ministry of Education at the ECEC Working Group of the European Commission. Daniela Marrocchi is also a member of the Commission on the Integrated ECEC System, which recently elaborated the pedagogical guidelines for 0-6 provision (2021), as well as the first national curriculum for 0-3 services in Italy (2022).

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Marilena Pillati

EMILIA-ROMAGNA REGIONAL PARLIAMENT

Elected member of the Regional Parliament of the Emilia Romagna Region since 2020. She is currently vice-president of the Regional Parliament Commission for Equality and People's Rights, and full member of commissions on Health and Social Policies, and on Culture, Education, Training, Employment and Sport. Prior to her role with the Regional Parliament, Marilena Pillati occupied the positions of Deputy Major of the city of Bologna for four years (2016-2020), and Municipal Councilor for Education and Training (2011-2016).

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Loredana Poli

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ITALIAN MUNICIPALITIES

Member of the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI)'s Commission on Learning and Education policies; she also chairs the Department for Education and School Infrastructure of ANCI's Lombardy Section. Since 2014, Loredana Poli occupies the position of Municipal Councilor for Education, Training, Youth policy and Sport of the city of Bergamo.

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Alessandro Rapezzi

CGIL TRADE UNION (Education Workforce)

Member of the General Secretariat of the Education Workforce Section ('Federazione Lavoratori della Conoscenza') of the Italian General Workers' Confederation ('Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro'). Alessandro Rapezzi previously chaired the Education Department of CGIL's Tuscany section.

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Prof. Arianna Lazzari

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STUDIES
BOLOGNA UNIVERSITY

Arianna is Associate Professor at the Department of Education Studies of Bologna University, where she co-coordinates the research group on Early Childhood Educational Policies. Since 2021 she is acting as research consultant for the EEA Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care established under the auspices of the European Commission, DG Education and Culture.

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Prof. Lucia Balduzzi

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STUDIES
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Lucia is Full Professor at the Department of Education Studies of Bologna University, where she coordinates the BA Degree in Early Childhood Education and the research group on Early Childhood Educational Policies. Her recent studies focus on the analysis of ECEC policies at national and international level, with a specific focus on transitions, workforce professional development and pedagogical innovation of early years services.

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Martino Serapioni

RESEARCHER, FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA, AND COORDINATOR,
COFACE FAMILIES EUROPE

Martino works as a researcher at the Faculty of Education of the University of Bologna and is coordinator of the European Observatory on Family Policy at COFACE Families Europe. He holds a PhD in Social Pedagogy and a MSc in Comparative Social Policy. His most recent research has focused on local governance and institutional development across the Italian ECEC sector.

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● SLOVENIA



mag. Brigita Mark

MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORT

Brigita Mark is a Senior adviser at Pre-school Department at Pre-school and Basic Education Directorate at Ministry for Education Science and Sport.

The Preschool and Basic Education Directorate ensures the implementation of activities in preschool education, basic education and education of children with special needs. It also ensures that the members of national minorities and ethnic communities are guaranteed special rights in preschool and basic education. The Directorate is also responsible for basic music education.

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Nada Požar Matijašič

MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORT

Nada is a Senior adviser at Department of Educational Development and Quality at Ministry for Education, Science and Sport.

The Education Development and Quality Department monitors and develops the education system, and activities in the area of learning and teaching and the area of recruitment and further comprehensive training of professionals as providers and co-creators in the Slovenian sphere of education.

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Janja Cotic Pajntar

NATIONAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Janja is a Senior Consultant at the National Education Institute.

National Education Institute is the main national research, development and consultancy institution in the field of preschool, primary and general secondary education. It aims to improve the knowledge and achievements, the results of learning and teaching and the quality of lifelong learning. Different departments coordinate the development of system solutions, which are further implemented into teaching practice by consultancy subject groups. Consultancy Subject groups take care of the development of syllabi and of the subject-related didactics.

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Janja Bogataj

COMMUNITY OF PRESCHOOLS IN SLOVENIA

Janja is a Head of the Community of Preschools in Slovenia.

The Community of Preschools in Slovenia identifies general professional and business problems of preschools and implements other common tasks in the field of institutional preschool education in the Republic of Slovenia. Its goal is to defend the profession and its most vital areas. Furthermore, the Community enables exchange of experience and practice, informs professionals, researchers contemporary approaches and supervises the operation of the network of public preschool institutions

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mag. Mateja Režek

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, STEP BY STEP CENTRE FOR QUALITY IN EDUCATION

Mateja works as a researcher at the Educational Research Institute, Center for Quality in Education Step by Step. Her research focuses on initiatives that are in any way related to the professional development of professionals in kindergartens and primary schools, the quality of the educational process and the transition between different learning environments.

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Dr. Jerneja Jager

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, STEP BY STEP CENTRE FOR QUALITY IN EDUCATION

Jerneja works as a research fellow at ERI, and serves as the head of the Step by Step Centre for Quality in Education. She is a project leader and manager of different national and EU funded projects. As a representative of her organisation, she is active in national and international professional networks. Her main research interests are quality early childhood education and care, preschool programs for disadvantaged children, equal opportunities in education, diversity, inclusion, smooth transitions, professional development, professionalism, integrated systems in ECEC.

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● INTERNATIONAL STEP BY STEP ASSOCIATION (ISSA)



Zorica Trikić

SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER, INTERNATIONAL STEP BY STEP ASSOCIATION (ISSA)

As Sr. Program Manager, Zorica leads different ISSA initiatives, such as Embracing Diversity, Supporting Families for Nurturing Care, Children on the Move and Early Childhood Workforce Initiative. She holds a Master's degree in Education and Human Resources Development. She has over 30 years of experience in the early years sector, working on programs and policy development with clear focus on the most vulnerable children, families and communities - especially Romani, refugee and migrant children.

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Teresa Moreno

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, INTERNATIONAL STEP BY STEP ASSOCIATION (ISSA)

As Communications Officer, Teresa supports the external communications and dissemination activities of ISSA as its projects. An Economics graduate, she holds a master's degree in Publishing.

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Ensuring Warm and Inclusive Transitions

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES EMERGING FROM CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON

"ENSURING WARM AND INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS ACROSS THE EARLY YEARS"



THE INTRANS PROJECT

In recent decades, educational continuity and children's transitions between the home environment, early childhood education and care (ECEC), and compulsory educational institutions, have received growing interest in both academic and policy debates. Smooth transitions between educational levels can play a significant role in children's well-being and development. In contrast, the negative impact of stressful and traumatic experiences can be long-lasting and detrimental to future success in education, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds ([EU Council Recommendation on establishing a European Child Guarantee, 2021](#); [EU Council Recommendation on High Quality Education and Care Systems, 2019](#)).

Fostering a unified approach to caring and learning (EDUCARE) across ECEC settings and beyond is crucial to sustaining children's well-being and development as well as ensuring a sense of continuity in their experiences over time. The existence of inter-institutional professional platforms for exchange and knowledge-sharing between ECEC and primary school have been further shown to be another critical factor in ensuring positive transition experiences for children and families ([OECD Starting Strong V, 2017](#)).

Nevertheless, institutional splits still characterize ECEC provision:

- Splits between services for children under-3 (usually under the responsibility of the Ministries of Welfare) and children from 3 to 6 (usually under the responsibility of the Ministries of Education)
- Splits between out of school care services (usually under the responsibility of the Ministries of Welfare) and preschool services for children from 2,5 to 12 (usually under the responsibility of the Ministries of Education)
- Splits between ECEC and Compulsory School Education (CSE).

As research shows that such institutional splits are posing many challenges to the well-being, play and learning experiences of young children – and especially for those children and families belonging to societally disadvantaged groups – promoting smooth and inclusive transition is crucial to guaranteeing the improvement of quality and equity of educational systems ([OECD, 2020](#)). Despite renewed policy attention in recent years, only sporadic policy proposals at the national and local levels have so far engaged directly with creating the conditions to improve transition practices, to make them more gradual and inclusive for a diversity of children and families.

Goal of the project

The [Erasmus+ KA3 project InTrans](#) attempts to address this gap by disseminating lessons learned from research and by upscaling 'good practice' developed within EU-funded projects conducted by the same consortium over the last 5 years. **The ultimate goal of the initiatives undertaken within the InTrans project is to improve the educational continuity and inclusiveness of ECEC by acting on two axes: *policy advocacy* and *inter-professional learning*.**

The InTrans Exchange Week meeting in Copenhagen

As part of the first axis, the project has carried out policy analysis research in the four countries involved (Belgium, Finland, Italy and Slovenia). A set of [infographics](#) with an overview of the current status of ECEC and school systems per country has been produced.

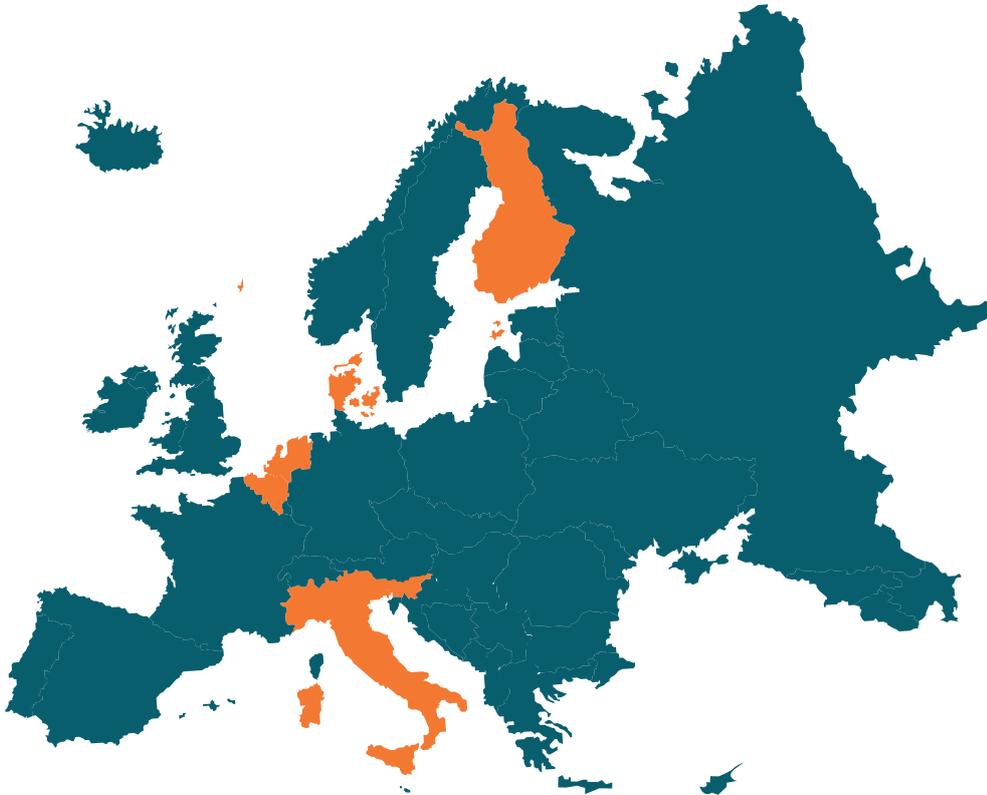
In this document we are presenting the preliminary findings that will be discussed during a high level networking exchange among policy makers and key stakeholders which will be held in Copenhagen (18-20 May 2022).

This meeting aims to provide insights and peer-learning opportunities among participants to reinforce structural, pedagogical and professional continuity in educational systems across Europe, with a view to developing educational learning communities based on a common vision shared by all stakeholders (including professionals, children and families).

Project partners: countries and organizations involved

The [Centre For Innovation in the Early Years](#) (VBJK) in Belgium is the coordinator of this international project. [Ghent University](#) (Centre for Diversity and Learning) in Belgium, [University of Bologna](#) ([Department of Education](#)) in Italy, [Tampere University in Finland](#) ([Faculty of Education and Culture](#)), the [Education Research Institute \(ERI\)](#) in Slovenia, and the [Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators \(BUPL\)](#) in Denmark are partners in this project, together with the [International Step by Step Association \(ISSA\)](#) leading dissemination activities.

Associated partners: Upbringing Agency (BE), Flemish Department of Education (BE), Agency of Educational Services (BE), Ministry of Education and Culture (FI), Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (SL), Emilia-Romagna Region and Gruppo Nazionale Nidi e Infanzia (IT), Holbæk Municipality (DK).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Challenges and opportunities emerging from cross-national comparison

This brief cross-country analysis aims to summarize the evidence that emerged during the policy analysis phase of the InTrans project. In particular, the document focuses on data and information collected through **expert interviews with policy decision-makers and stakeholders** in Belgium (Flemish community), Finland, Italy (Emilia-Romagna), and Slovenia. Interviews took place between 2020 and the first half of 2021; they were set up, conducted, and analyzed by the InTrans project partners. The analyses in question formed the basis of **four country baseline reports**¹, which portrayed the different policy contexts with particular attention to the topics of transition, educational continuity, and inclusion across the fields of ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) and CSE (Compulsory School Education). Therefore, **the focus of the analysis concerns the relationships between childcare and preschool provision in split ECEC systems (Italy/Emilia-Romagna and Belgium/Flemish community) and the relationship between early childhood and primary school education in the context of integrated systems (Slovenia and Finland)**. The cross-national analysis of findings is summarised in three topical paragraphs, shedding light on the main institutional and pedagogical challenges faced in each country or region regarding implementing smooth and inclusive transitions across ECEC and CSE systems.

TRANSITIONS, PARTICIPATION OF FAMILIES, AND INCLUSION

Moments of transition are crucial junctures in the personal history and educational trajectory of all children: their importance is however even more salient for children who come from societally disadvantaged groups or have special needs. Despite this, **as young children move into increasingly formalized and learning-oriented educational environments – from childcare to preschool, from preschool to primary school – less attention tends to be paid to the experiences of children in transitions and parental voices gradually receive less consideration vis-a-vis those of professionals.**

In the case of vulnerable families, the power imbalance between parents and professionals often leads to a deterioration of families' trust in educational institutions. Parents who experience negative interactions with professionals during transitions, are more likely to develop distrust towards educational settings and staff in general, leading them to disengage from educational decision-making processes, or even to postpone the transition to school for their children.

As a relationship of trust between parents and professionals is an important condition for children successfully settling in to a new educational environment, **policies aimed at sustaining warm and inclusive transitions ought to avoid focusing only on children and provide instead wide consideration to the improvement of continuity between the home environment and educational settings.**

¹ The [InTrans Policy Baseline reports](#) from Belgium, Finland, Italy and Slovenia can be found [here](#).

Current policy initiatives in InTrans project countries

BELGIUM

In *Belgium*, the *Flemish Departments and Agencies of Education and Welfare* established in 2015, an *interdepartmental working group* with the stated aim of improving transition processes between the home environment, childcare and preschool. The working group developed an *action plan on transitions* seeking to develop close patterns of cooperation between public administrations and socio-educational services (childcare, preschool and family support) as tighter cooperation between local policy decision-makers and providers is seen as strategic to mainstream inclusive practices, as well as to offsetting bureaucratic barriers to organizational integration. This interconnected set-up also creates the organizational backdrop also for improving horizontal continuity among ECEC services in the local communities. In this sense, the Flemish action plan seeks to broaden opportunities for networking among professionals operating in day-care centres and preschools in the neighborhood, in order to streamline parental involvement during transitions (particularly into pre-schools).

FINLAND

In *Finland*, the centrality of parental participation is emphasized both in the *core curricula for pre-primary and early childhood education and care*, as well as by the *2018 Act on Early Childhood Education and Care*. A key message conveyed in the documents is that, to the extent that parents can frame their role as co-creators of their child's educational plan, the system should look at reciprocal partnership between families and professionals as one of the overarching goals to which to aspire. Among the many local and center-level practices that developed under the auspices of the legislation, the most common are centered around strengthening communication between ECEC, school and home. Such practices aim to enhanced the exchange of background information between families and ECEC professionals in order to identify and consider every child's individual needs and interests in pedagogical work carried out within an ECEC setting. The case for *inclusion into national guidelines on transitions of targeted support mechanisms addressing the needs of specific subgroups*, such as children with special needs, was also raised by Finnish stakeholders. Such national level guidelines would help to unify the support for children with special needs that currently varies in the Finnish ECEC and primary school settings, as this current variation is considered be problematic for children's smooth transitions.

ITALY

In *Italy*, the importance of fostering parents' participation during transitions from home to early childhood services has been stressed in the *Pedagogical Guidelines for 0-6 Provision* issued by the Commission on the Integrated ECEC System in 2021. The Commission was established under the Ministry of Education following the implementation of the *Reform on the Integrated 0-6 System* (D.L. 65/2017) with the purpose of developing pedagogical guidelines to serve as a common reference for both segments of the ECEC sector (previously split between 0-3 and 3-6 provision), thus enhancing pedagogical continuity between daycare and preschool settings. Within the document, particular attention is paid to how to foster horizontal continuity among ECEC settings, families and local communities in contexts of socio-cultural diversity.

SLOVENIA

In *Slovenia*, cooperation with parents has been emphasized in the *Kindergarten Curriculum* since 1999. In regard to transition from preschool to primary school, collaboration practices are well established. Most commonly, parents are involved in the transition process through parents' meetings organised by preschools and primary schools. However, none of these activities are pre-determined and variations exists from one teacher to the next in the number and type of activities they plan and implement.

TRANSITIONS AND INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

Widespread capacity for interprofessional collaboration, in an operational perspective, is as crucial as the introduction of national steering documents and the implementation of new governance protocols and arrangements. While interprofessional collaboration is grounded in exchanges and interactions across institutional divides—such as those that separate childcare, preschool and primary school settings—its consolidation as a common practice may lead to the progressive dissolution of boundaries between educational spheres and to the emergence of a shared ground for mutual professional learning.

The consolidation of a discourse and practice of interprofessional collaboration, however, is contingent upon two important conditions:

1. The gradual emergence of 'shared space' at the boundary between different educational institutions, where joint initiatives and integrated practices can concretely take place.
2. The degree of readiness displayed by members of ECEC, preschool, and primary educational settings to opening up to different pedagogical visions and institutional logics, undertaking a relational process aimed at constructing a new, *continuous professional practice* underpinned by a *common language*.

A shared pedagogical vision is therefore crucial to the consolidation of practices of interprofessional collaboration. Inception of such a logic, in turn, hinges largely on a professional partnership taking root across the wider educational field, based on mutual respect and equal recognition under law, and sustained by ongoing collegial reflection and inter-professional learning.

Challenges identified on interprofessional collaboration

- *Differences in professional status and employment conditions* between staff operating at different education levels. Such disparities are seen to reinforce existing stratification patterns between professional groups. In countries with split ECEC system, childcare workers have been shown to nurture feelings of subordination to teachers employed in higher educational segments. Similarly, both in countries with split and unitary systems, preschool teachers are often under the impression that their voices are not always as heard as or valued as those of primary school teachers working in compulsory school. Perception of a power divide has been observed as being particularly detrimental to initiatives involving the deployment of childcare workers in preschool settings - or that of preschool teachers in primary classes. Deconstructing ideas of a hierarchical structure internal to education professions is one of the key challenges on the path towards systematic interprofessional collaboration.
- Differences in the professional status of daycare workers and pre/primary school teachers are often associated with differences in *working conditions. These are crucial for fostering – or rather hindering – inter-professional collaboration arrangements* (i.e. working hours, paid time without children allocated to collegial work or continuing professional development). Resolving a number of discrepancies at the level of the adult-child ratio and flexibility in teaching hours would go a long way into creating a more favorable environment for interprofessional cooperation.
- *A high degree of autonomy accorded to teachers in relation to collegial planning, especially around transitions*, also proved to represent an obstacle to inter-professional collaboration. Whereas principles of joint planning and collective decision-making are at the core of the notion of interprofessional collaboration, these ideas seem to be more established in ECEC than in primary school settings (where the implementation of transition practices might even be left to the discretion of individual teachers).

Existing conditions that could foster interprofessional collaboration in InTrans project countries

- Dissemination initiatives undertaken through the 2015 Flemish action plan have insisted on the importance of presenting successful transitions as shared, joint efforts of collaboration. In this spirit, outreach efforts aimed at promoting *best transition practices are often conducted by a team composed of representatives of different*

educational segments, so as to provide a display of interprofessional exchange and collaboration.

- In the context of the recent Reform on the Integrated 0-6 System in Italy, *Pedagogical Coordination Networks are identified as pivotal levers to support inter-institutional collaboration across 0-3 and 3-6 services and among different ECEC providers*. Pedagogical Coordination Networks are seen by experts as strategic to foster educational continuity through joint in-service training initiatives and joint planning of childcare workers and teachers around transitions. Vertical pedagogical alignment is encapsulated by *joint in-service training programs focused on the development of a common pedagogical language* shared by 0-3 and 3-6 professionals, centred on children's rights, holistic learning and well-being along a developmental continuum.
- The strategic importance of joint in-service training programs was also raised in the context of Slovenia, where interviewed stakeholders highlighted that *in the future, more joint trainings, workshops and further education should be organized in order to connect preschool and primary school teachers*. Such joint in-service training programmes are considered crucial to support preschool and primary school teachers in developing a common understanding about the developmental needs of 5- and 6-year-old children. *Joint trainings with reflection and other opportunities for professional collaboration, where they could discuss their practices and their roles would help professionals articulate mutual expectations and build relational competencies*. This is crucial due to the different professional identities and different understandings of preschool and primary school teachers' professional missions. While primary school teacher's mission is to teach, the preschool teacher's mission is to support the child's learning and development and to help develop values, attitudes and habits. Alongside providing an opportunity for debating pedagogical approaches and constructing a shared understanding of developmental needs, joint training programs are seen as a space where professionals engaged in *co-teaching practices built relational competences and, crucially, negotiated a shared vision*. Recently, renewed attention has been paid to such dimensions of transition due to the consistent rise in delayed first-grade enrolments among six-year-olds.
- In Finland, the fact that *national- and local-level governance of pre- and primary education nowadays falls under the same administration* is seen as a condition facilitating inter-professional collaboration in transition phases. In addition, the *processes of constructing the local curricula offer opportunities for professionals to collaborate and create shared knowledge*. Although such governance- and curriculum-related structural elements create a smooth context for everyday professional collaboration among preschool and primary school teachers - thus enabling pedagogical and professional continuity - it is acknowledged that inter-professional collaboration also requires *high quality leadership* to be developed both in pre-service and in-service education.

TRANSITIONS AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Pedagogical leadership is pivotal to the inclusive outcome of transition processes: as pedagogical coordinators and (pre)school leaders perform in critical mid-management and professional team support roles, they are positioned at a key nexus within the organization that grants them the opportunity to operate across institutional boundaries. From an organizational standpoint, **pedagogical leaders retain broad responsibility for creating the right structural conditions for educational continuity**, namely collaborative spaces at the boundary between learning environments. They are in this respect expected to set up informal but organized deliberative settings - such as participatory planning sessions bringing together families and professionals - to convene cooperative networks on the line of integrated practitioners'/teachers' meetings, as well as to schedule and oversee joint programs of professional development, inter-vision and co-teaching initiatives.

Alongside promoting collaborative practices and helping to ensure structural conditions that favor continuity, pedagogical leaders perform an essential function in maximizing every-day opportunities for the construction of an interprofessional pedagogical identity

rooted in a common knowledge base. On an ideational level, in fact, educational leadership plays an equally key role in building a common understanding of the value of transitions across multiple services, thus facilitating the consolidation of an interprofessional culture built on co-responsibility and a common educational language. *With specific respect to fostering warm and inclusive transition, pedagogical leaders and coordination figures are responsible for ensuring that the inclusive value of educational continuity gains increasing relevance among practitioners and teachers* - looking to increase awareness about hidden mechanisms of exclusion, as well as about the association between socioeconomic condition and difficulties experienced during the transition from one educational level to another.

Current initiatives implemented in InTrans project countries

ITALY AND BELGIUM

In Italy and in Belgium (Flemish community) we are witnessing the emergence, in recent years, of *local inter-institutional networks for exchange and cooperation between educational leaders involved across the ECEC, preschool, and sometimes primary school sectors*. Pedagogical coordination platforms and inter-institutional networks have been cited repeatedly throughout interviews as performing manifold important functions in support of educational continuity. One such function is that of *local steering mechanisms*. The setting-up of pedagogical coordination platforms and inter-institutional networks ensure *circulation of information, ideas and practices* particularly to educational stakeholders operating in remote or isolated contexts. In this respect, they represent a lever to maintain a coherent quality discourse across the local ECEC/preschool field. Trans-institutional platforms represent a *forum where key stakeholders can exchange views on – and advocate for – enhancing quality and equity of ECEC and CSE systems*. These platforms can further constitute a dynamic innovation space, and their framework can be used to present and promote *collaborative research and experimentation initiatives* within local communities. In Belgium, for example, in Flanders, from January 2022 onwards, 12 pilot projects on pedagogical continuity are being funded for three years by the Flemish government. A local network comprising childcare, preschool and out of school care is expected to collaborate to enable integrated ECEC for children from 0-6 years old. The pilot projects will be supported in a learning network. The project will be steered by a group with representatives of welfare and education as well as the unions. The collective goal of the project is to develop a practice model on pedagogical continuity by integrated work. The learning group functions as a space for interprofessional exchange, where ECEC managers and stakeholders can meet and discuss topics such as regulations and infrastructure, but also serves to provide key consulting and assistance to service providers that show interest in implementing continuity and integration. Furthermore, in Italy, inter-institutional pedagogical platforms have been recognized as performing a second important function in offsetting the effects of ECEC governance fragmentation, by sustaining policy cooperation mechanisms across administrative boundaries and across different providers.

FINLAND

In Finland, *a crucial function performed by inter-institutional networks relates to their levelling effect*. As ECEC, pre-primary and primary institutions are under the same administration, at the municipal level the inter-institutional working groups and networks are part of the established administrative structures and practices. However, the collaboration among the municipalities could be strengthened. Broader, *regional level trans-institutional forums could have a crucial networking effect by fostering the dissemination of good practices and facilitating mutual learning in the field*. In this respect, trans-institutional pedagogical networks might serve as *drivers of policy advocacy*, providing motivated school directors, leaders and teachers with a framework for scaling up or expanding innovative transition programs and initiatives.

SLOVENIA

In Slovenia, preschools can be organized as independent institutions or as a unit of the school which is also typically located in the same building; in the latter case the principal, administration and counseling services are shared, which means they could implement the same vision regarding the smooth transition and build on it. There is also a growing need for connecting kindergartens and elementary schools through organizing inter-institutional professional learning communities, which bring together both kindergarten and primary school professionals and have an affect on the development of a shared pedagogical vision. Inter-institutional professional learning communities are facilitated by coordinators from kindergarten and primary school and supported by principals from both institutions. In the last two years, within the framework of various initiatives, several such inter-institutional PLCs have been formed throughout Slovenia.

Learning from each other to overcome existing challenges: the value of policy exchange

Despite a growing consensus on the importance of inclusive and warm transitions across ECEC and CSE, good transition practices are still not widespread and mainstreamed in EU Member States. In order generate a deeper systemic impact, a wider strategy both at national and international level is imperative. Ministries and Governmental Departments which are responsible for ECEC and CSE at central level (i.e. Welfare and Education) or at decentralised levels (i.e. Regions, Municipalities) could collaborate in a more systematic way to create a common vision on the importance of warm and inclusive transitions for the benefit of a diversity of children and families attending early childhood services and school institutions. Research shows that fostering **pedagogical continuity, professional continuity and continuity with the home environment and the broader community** is crucial to ensuring that all children – especially the most vulnerable ones – can benefits from the positive transition experiences on their educational trajectory. In order *to produce systemic change at these three levels, however, certain structural conditions and a shared visions at policy level is needed*. Starting from the idea that a competent system is essential to make change sustainable along these lines, the initiatives carried out so far within the InTrans project has been geared toward influencing systemic conditions in each participating country or region, so that good transition practices could be disseminated and implemented on a wider scale.

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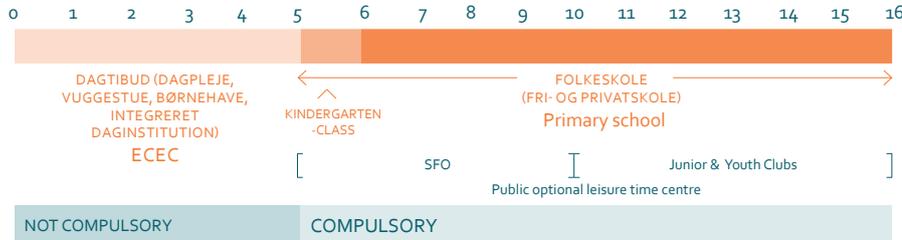
INTRANS INFOGRAPHICS

Overview of the present state of early childhood care and education systems in the InTrans project countries:

- Denmark
- Belgium
- Finland
- Italy
- Slovenia

DENMARK

STRUCTURE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION



TIMELINE OF RECENT POLICY MEASURES

2004

Pedagogical Curriculum for ECEC in the Act of ECEC

Introduced for the first time, some pedagogues found this a risk of schoolification while other saw the curriculum as a recognition of the ECEC profession. The topics of the curriculum is quite similar to those of the curriculum for the kindergarten-class.

2014

Reform of the primary school

The reform introduced longer schooldays and a closer cooperation between school and leisure time centres in order to promote play and learning. The reform was heavily criticized by teachers because of deteriorations of their working conditions. Pedagogues weren't happy about the reduction of the time for activities in the leisure time centres.

2018

A Strengthen Pedagogical Curriculum for ECEC was decided by the Parliament

It marked a shift from the risk of schoolification and different ideas of testing and use of pre-fixed concepts to emphasize the importance of children's play and the pedagogues' development of a comprehensive learning environment.

2021

Act on minimum ratios in ECEC

This Act is going to improve the ratio of staff to children in the future. From 2024 the minimum ratio will be 1 staff to 3 children aged 0-2 years and 1 staff to 6 children aged 3-5 years. Some municipalities have already introduced these new ratios.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE



ATTENDANCE

Most children start in the services around the age 10-12 months. Attendance rates are:

- 12-24 months; 86 %
- 24-36 months; 93 %
- 3-5 years; 98 %



PROVISION

93% of ECEC are public or independent and all supervised by the municipalities. 7% are private but with an agreement with the municipality, so they get funding and are supervised like the municipal services. 75% of the costs are paid by the municipalities and 25% by the parents. Fee reduction for low-income parents.



PERSONNEL

55% of the staff are pedagogues with a BA degree. 45% are assistants – some of them with a vocational training. The services are led by leaders who have the pedagogue education and further education.

PRIMARY SCHOOL



KINDERGARTEN-CLASS

Since 2009 the one-year kindergarten-class of the primary school became compulsory but kept an educational content build upon ECEC pedagogy. There is a close collaboration between this class and the following three grades. Also, a cooperation exists with the optional leisure time centres and pedagogues from these centres are partly working in the kindergarten-class and the first grades.



FINANCE

Kindergarten-class in public schools are free. Private and independent schools get 75% funding and parents pay the 25%. 15% of pupils attend private/independent schools.



PERSONNEL

The class-teacher of the kindergarten-class has a BA pedagogue degree. Sometimes they are supported by assistants.



DENMARK: 5 CURRENT ISSUES IN TRANSITIONS ACROSS ECEC AND/OR PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. TRANSITION FROM KINDERGARTEN TO PRIMARY SCHOOL THROUGH EARLY SFO* IN THE SPRINGTIME

2/3 OF MUNICIPALITIES USING EARLY SFO MODEL



*SFO: SCHOOL'S LEISURE TIME CENTRES

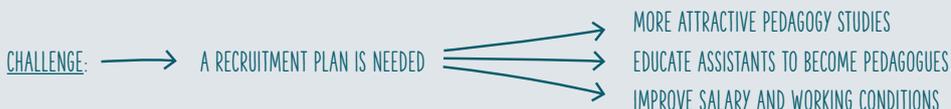
2. SMOOTH TRANSITION FROM KINDERGARTEN TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

COOPERATION ON THE TRANSITION FROM KINDERGARTEN IS ENFORCED BY ECEC AND SCHOOL LEGISLATION

WAYS OF COOPERATION IS DECIDED AT LOCAL LEVEL



3. SHORTAGE OF PEDAGOGUES

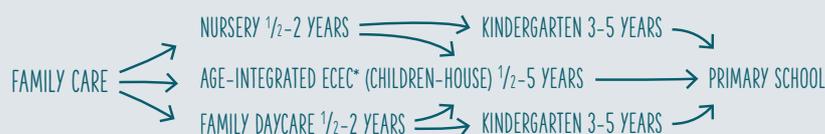


4. EARLY INTERVENTION FROM FAMILY CARE TO ECEC

EARLY INTERVENTION FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN AT RISK OR WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



5. TRANSITIONAL TRAJECTORY FROM FAMILY THROUGH ECEC TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

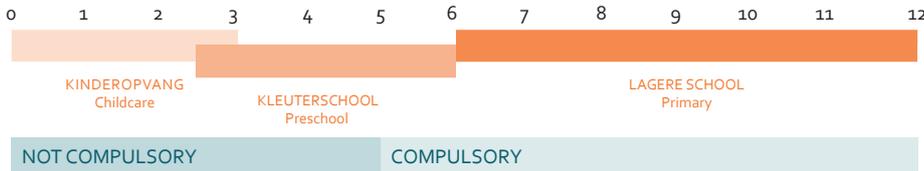


*AGE-INTEGRATED CENTRES ARE THE MOST COMMON TODAY

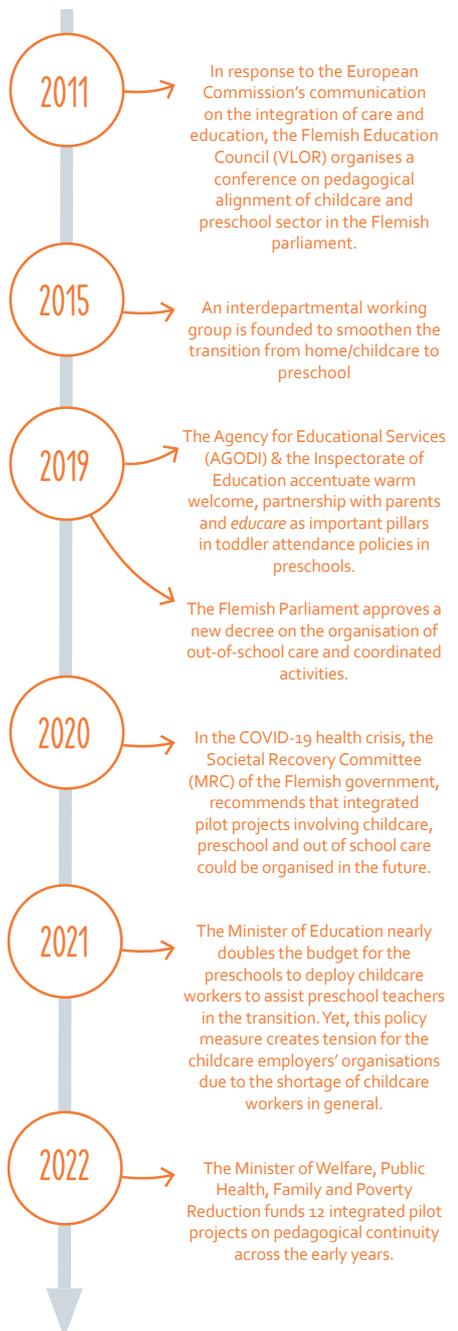
BELGIUM

FLEMISH COMMUNITY

STRUCTURE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION



TIMELINE OF RECENT POLICY MEASURES ON TRANSITIONS



CHILDCARE



ATTENDANCE

Childcare is attended by approximately 50% of children. Parental fees are means-tested in approximately 3/4 of childcare places. Places are unequally accessible: children with migration backgrounds, and children living in poverty are significantly underrepresented.



PROVISION

The Ministry of Welfare and the Upbringing Agency are responsible for regulations, allocation of places, funding, quality standards and management. The day-to-day running of childcare and out of school care centres is the responsibility of local authorities, non-profit organisations, and also some private for-profit providers.



PERSONNEL

One childcare worker (secondary vocational degree, ISCED 3B) is responsible for 8/9 children. Unqualified staff need to be fully qualified by 2024. In recent years, pedagogical coaches (bachelor in pedagogy of the young child, ISCED 6) have joined the childcare workforce for management, coaching, or to eventually work directly with children and families.

PRE-SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE

The Flemish preschool system is internationally known for its high enrolment numbers (99 % for 3-5 years old / 82% for 2,5 years old). Approximately 97% of enrolled children attend preschool frequently. The probability of non-attendance increases when children have no Belgian nationality, have a low educated mother, receive a school allowance and/or speak a language other than Dutch at home.



PROVISION

Preschool is an integral part of Basic education (*Basisonderwijs*) under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. Three types of provision: (1) preschool settings run and fully financed by the Flemish Community; (2) subsidised public settings organised by local authorities; and (3) subsidised private settings – mostly Catholic. Accordingly, umbrella networks are responsible for curriculum, teaching methods and pedagogy. Mostly schools foresee their own before and after school care because subsidised out of school care are not everywhere available



PERSONNEL

The school director is responsible for the preschool and primary school staff. Although no strict regulations, on average 1 preschool teacher (bachelor in preschool education, ISCED 6) for 20-25 children during educational times (excluding lunch and other breaks) with sometimes help of a childcare worker (secondary vocational degree, ISCED 3B). Staff members or volunteers without a specific educational qualification can be responsible for the supervision of a numerous group of children during lunch, before and after school.



BELGIUM: 5 CURRENT ISSUES FACING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

FLEMISH COMMUNITY

1. ABRUPT AND UNEQUAL TRANSITIONS TO PRESCHOOL

MISALIGNMENT BETWEEN A 'CARING' CHILDCARE AND AN 'EDUCATIONAL' PRESCHOOL/'PLAYFUL' OUT OF SCHOOL CARE

START IN PRESCHOOL ESPECIALLY HARD FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE NOT ATTENDED CHILDCARE (HIGHER CHANGE OF BEING IN A SOCIETALLY VULNERABLE POSITION)

MILESTONE: → WARM TRANSITIONS AS QUALITY CRITERION IN 'TODDLER PARTICIPATION POLICIES' (POLICIES TO INCREASE THE ENROLMENT & ATTENDANCE IN PRESCHOOL)

CURRENT EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICES:

→ WORK ON WARM AND INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS AND MORE *EDUCARE* WITHIN THE EXISTING DOUBLE SPLIT SYSTEM. BRIDGING PRACTICES AND EXCHANGE ON VISION/PRACTICE IN INTERINSTITUTIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

→ WORK ON INTEGRATED PROJECTS CHALLENGING THE DOUBLE SPLIT SYSTEM. FROM A MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND HOLISTIC APPROACH, A DAY OF A CHILD IS RE-CONSTRUCTED

2. PEDAGOGICAL CONTINUITY AS A POLICY INTEREST

12 PILOT PROJECTS ON PEDAGOGICAL CONTINUITY FUNDED FOR THREE YEARS BY THE FLEMISH GOVERNMENT.

→ CHILDCARE, PRESCHOOL AND OUT OF SCHOOL CARE COLLABORATE TO ENABLE INTEGRATED ECEC FOR CHILDREN FROM 0-6 YEARS OLD

→ THE PEDAGOGICAL CONTINUITY (*DOORGAANDE LIJN*) IN DEVELOPMENT, CARE, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND PLAY OF CHILDREN IS AT THE CORE OF THE PILOT PROJECTS. COLLABORATION WITH THE HOME -AND NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT IS ESSENTIAL

RISKS: → SCHOOLIFICATION OF CHILDCARE AND PRESCHOOL (SOLELY PREPARATORY FUNCTION FOR WHAT COMES NEXT) WHICH RESULTS OFTEN IN FIXED (PRE)SCHOOL READINESS CONCEPTS, IS OFTEN DETRIMENTAL FROM AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PERSPECTIVE

OPPORTUNITIES: → ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS AND HINDRANCES IN REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS OF CHILDCARE, OUT OF SCHOOL CARE AND PRESCHOOL WILL BE EXAMINED. THE FLEMISH GOVERNMENT WILL THEN DECIDE ON TEMPORARY FLEXIBILITY IN THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS IN ORDER FOR THE PILOT PROJECTS TO SUCCEED.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS: → LACK OF PEDAGOGICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONTINUITY DURING (LUNCH) BREAKS IN PRESCHOOL (DIFFERENT POLICY LEVELS INVOLVED, BREAKS ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS 'EDUCATIONAL TIME', THUS LACKING SUFFICIENT TEACHING OR CARE STAFF)

→ LIMITED COMMON CHILD-FREE HOURS TO REFLECT IN INTERPROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

3. QUALITY CRISIS IN CHILDCARE SECTOR

- CURRENT SUBJECT OF PUBLIC AND FLEMISH PARLIAMENT DEBATES, IGNITED BY THE DEATH OF A 10 MONTH OLD BABY IN A CHILDCARE CENTRE

- FLAWED QUALITY ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES, POOR WORKING CONDITIONS, LOW SOCIETAL APPRECIATION, HIGH ADULT-CHILD RATIO, GENERAL LOW LEVEL OF INITIAL QUALIFICATION AND OCCUPATION SHORTAGE OF CHILDCARE WORKERS BECAME MORE APPARENT IN THE PUBLIC AND POLITICAL EYE

KEY OBSTACLES: → MINISTER OF WELFARE PUBLIC HEALTH, FAMILY AND POVERTY REDUCTION REFERS TO HAVING LIMITED FINANCIAL POSSIBILITIES.

RISKS: → THIS CRISIS CAN HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS WITH PRESCHOOLS/OUT OF SCHOOL CARE.

SUGGESTED PROPOSALS/ACTIONS: → CONSENSUS THAT NEW FUTURE VISION ON CHILDCARE NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS

→ FLEMISH GOVERNMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY NEEDS TO DISCUSS AND ASSESS THE CHILDCARE BUDGET ACCORDINGLY

→ REDO QUALITY MEASUREMENT STUDY (MEMOQ) AFTER THE ADULT-CHILD RATIO WAS INCREASED TO 1.8/9

4. NEW DECREE ON AFTER SCHOOL CARE

THE FLEMISH GOVERNMENT AIMS TO HAVE AN INTEGRATED OFFER OF OUT OF SCHOOL CARE ACTIVITIES - ABBREVIATED 'BOA' - FOR ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

→ THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE IN CONTROL AND OUTLINE A LOCAL EXTRACURRICULAR POLICY TOGETHER WITH LOCAL PLAYERS, IRRESPECTIVE IF THEY ARE FUNDED BY EDUCATION, WELFARE, CULTURE OR YOUTH AND SPORT

→ THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES GIVE FINANCIAL PRIORITY TO 'OUT OF SCHOOL CARE CENTRES FOR TODDLERS' (*KLEUTEROPVANG*) WITH A QUALITY LABEL

POTENTIAL BARRIER: → THERE IS STILL A FIVE YEAR TRANSITION PERIOD FOR THE CURRENT RECOGNISED AND SUBSIDISED OUT OF SCHOOL CARE CENTRES. HOWEVER, FUNDING IS NOT SPREAD EVENLY ACROSS THE FLEMISH COMMUNITY OF BELGIUM; WHETHER SOME REGIONS HAVE MADE SERIOUS INVESTMENTS IN OUT OF SCHOOL CARE, OTHERS LESS SO. IN THAT TRANSITION PERIOD THE FLEMISH GOVERNMENT WILL EXAMINE HOW TO LEVEL THESE REGIONAL DIFFERENCES OUT. THIS IS A TRICKY ENDEAVOUR IF THE GENERAL BUDGET FOR OUT OF SCHOOL CARE WILL NOT INCREASE ACCORDINGLY.

5. SHORTAGE OF ECEC STAFF

ECEC STAFF BELONG TO THE BOTTLENECK PROFESSIONS. MANY ECEC CENTRES HAVE OPEN VACANCIES FOR TEACHERS AND CHILDCARE WORKERS, INTENSIFIED IN THE COVID19 HEALTH CRISIS.

→ IN PRE-AND PRIMARY SCHOOL A QUARTER OF STARTER TEACHERS STOP THEIR PROFESSION WITHIN FIVE YEARS. INITIAL TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS ARE ATTRACTING FEWER AND FEWER PEOPLE. A SMALL MINORITY OF SECONDARY EDUCATION STUDENTS IN CHILDCARE WANT TO CONTINUE TO WORK IN ECEC

→ NEVER BEFORE WAS THE IMPACT OF THE SHORTAGE OF ECEC STAFF SO PROBLEMATIC IN TERMS OF AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY OF ECEC

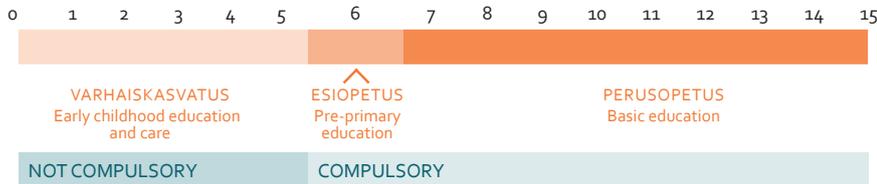
SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS: → HIGHER SOCIETAL APPRECIATION OF THE JOB AS TEACHER AND JOB AS CHILDCARE WORKER, STIMULATE MORE LATERAL ENTRANTS, BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS INCLUDING ADULT-CHILD RATIO, MORE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND JOB MOBILITY...

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY: → HOW CAN THE EXPANSION OF INNOVATIVE ECEC PROJECTS ATTRACT MORE POTENTIAL STUDENTS OR LATERAL ENTRANTS TO WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES? TO CHANGE THE IMAGE OF THE JOB, THE IMAGE OF THE ECEC CENTRES ITSELF HAS TO CHANGE.

FINLAND



STRUCTURE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND BASIC EDUCATION



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE



ATTENDANCE

In 2019 attendance rate of early childhood education and care (ECEC) was 35% among under 3-year-olds and 85% among 3-5-year-olds. The percentages include both center-based ECEC and family day care.



PROVISION

Municipalities are responsible of organizing the ECEC services for all 0-6-year-old children. In 2019, 76% of the provision was publicly provided center-based ECEC, 6% publicly provided family day care, and 18% private provision. Private provision is publicly subsidized.



PERSONNEL

The personnel in center-based ECEC (0-5 years old) consists of *teachers, social pedagogues and childcarers*. Special education teachers work with children either by consulting the other staff members or providing education for the children with special needs.

PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION / BASIC EDUCATION



ATTENDANCE

Attendance of pre-primary education (appr. 20h/week, one year before the beginning of basic education) has been mandatory from 2015. Basic education begins in the year when the child turns 7.



FINANCE

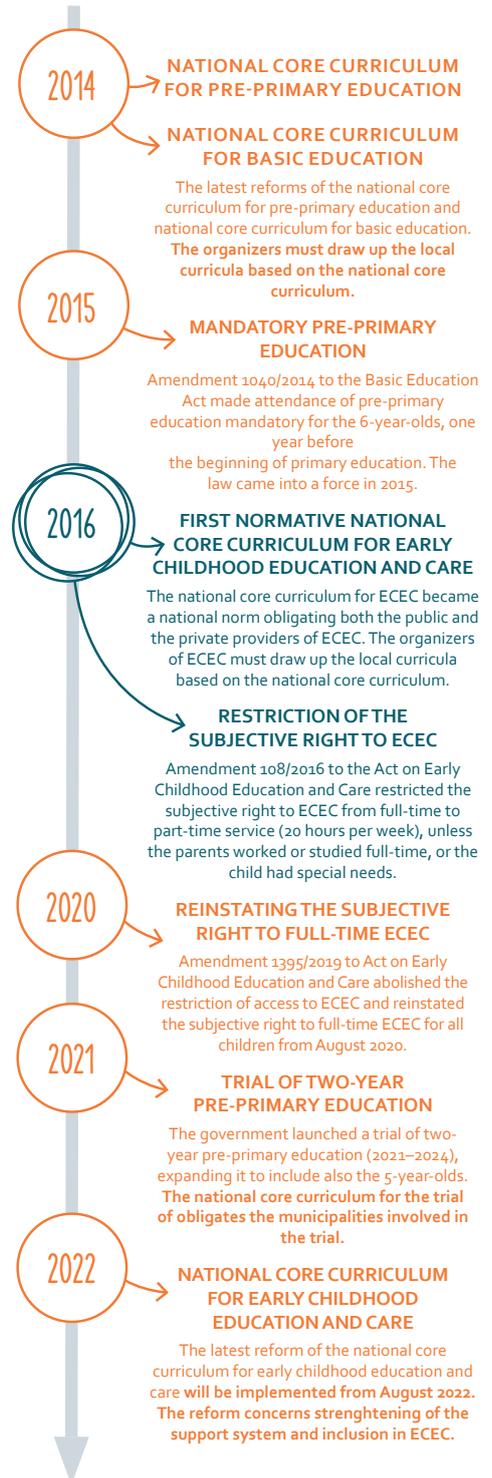
Public ECEC and pre-primary and basic education are funded by the municipalities and supplemented with central government transfers (25% of the expenses). ECEC fees cover 13-14% of the expenses and are regulated by the law. There is no fee for low-income families. Pre-primary and basic education is free of charge.



PERSONNEL

Class teachers, teachers in ECEC and childcarers work in pre-primary education. Class teachers are qualified to work in basic education. Special education teachers work with children either by consulting the other staff members or providing education for the children with special needs.

TIMELINE OF RECENT POLICY MEASURES



FINLAND: 6 CURRENT ISSUES FACING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

1. IMPROVING QUALITY AND EQUALITY IN ECEC

CHALLENGE: TO SEEK EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND WELLBEING AND TO REVISE THE RISE OF INEQUALITY

ECEC GOALS



ONGOING: FINNISH GOVERNMENT, RIGHT TO LEARN -PROGRAMME (2020-2022) → TARGETED FUNDING FOR THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL PROJECTS

2. INCREASING ENROLLMENT TO ECEC

CHALLENGE: ENROLMENT RATE LOWER THAN OECD AVERAGE

ONGOING: GOVERNMENT NATIONAL POLICIES



3. TWO-YEAR PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION (5-6-YEARS OLD)

THE ONGOING TRIAL

→ CHALLENGES



IT IS IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE THE TRADITIONAL MISSION OF THE FINNISH ECEC AND PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HOLISTIC GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING.

4. SUFFICIENT TIME FOR POLICY REFORMS IMPLEMENTATION AT LOCAL LEVEL

RAPID AND MULTIPLE CHANGES

HAVE BEEN CHALLENGING FOR

THE MUNICIPALITIES TO IMPLEMENT

→ RISK

→ EXCELLENT REFORMS MAY REMAIN UNREALIZED

5. SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF THE WORKFORCE IN ECEC

CHALLENGE: LACK OF QUALIFIED STAFF- TEACHERS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

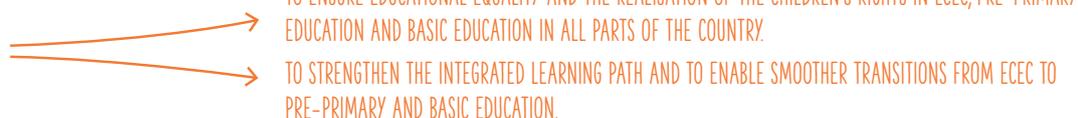
→ RISKS



MEASURE IN PLACE: THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOCATED ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR PRESERVICE, UNIVERSITY TRAINING OF ECEC TEACHERS TO INCREASE THEIR NUMBER.

6. GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES AND TARGET STATE EXTENDING TO THE 2040s

AIM



PREREQUISITE

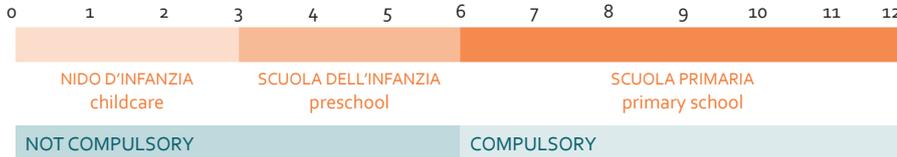
→ COMPREHENSIVE REFORM OF THE LEGISLATION OF ECEC, PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION AND BASIC EDUCATION.

KEY POLICY DOCUMENT

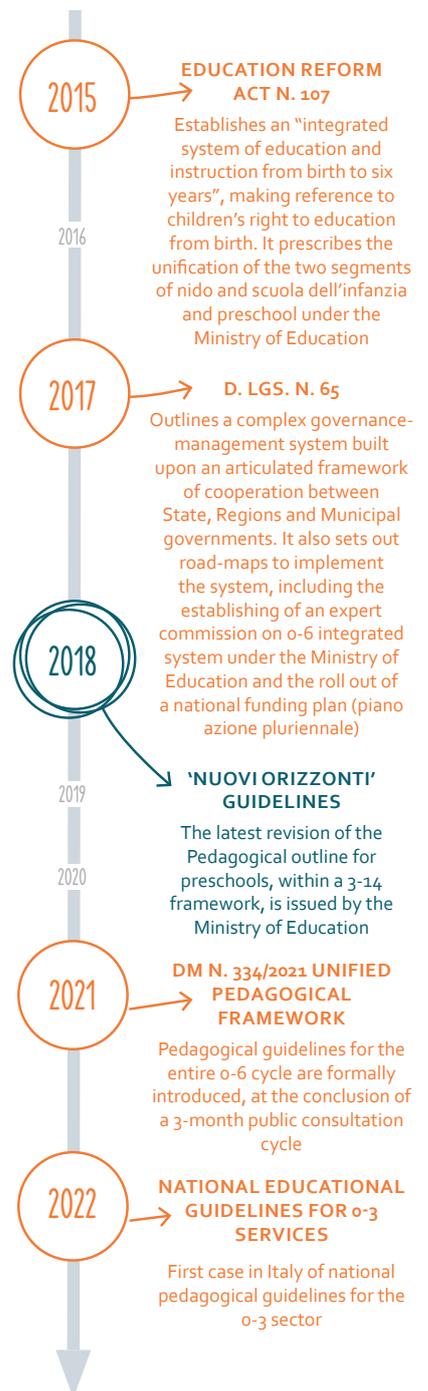
→ EDUCATION POLICY REPORT OF THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT, 2021.

ITALY

STRUCTURE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION



TIMELINE OF RECENT POLICY MEASURES



CHILDCARE



ATTENDANCE

In 2019 **CHILDCARE SERVICES** were attended by 25.5% of the under 3s. The percentage increases with age. Quite low for toddlers under 12 months, it increases to 22% of those in the 12-24 age group, and to 46,8% of children older than 24 months.



PROVISION

Municipalities provide directly more than 50% of places. Most places in private provision are subsidized by local governments on the basis of specific agreements and quality requirements. A further 4-6% of places are offered by unsubsidized private providers.



PERSONNEL

Childcare services are operated by educators. Children/educator ratio is set by local legislation. Each service is sustained by a pedagogical coordinator who support educators' reflection on their practice, promote their relationships with children's parents, build links between services in the area.



STRONG IMBALANCES AND POLICY DISPARITIES IN PARTICIPATION, PROVISION, AND STAFF QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN NORTHERN/CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN REGIONS SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED

PRESCHOOL



ATTENDANCE

Scuola dell'infanzia is attended by 90% of 3 year-olds, 94% of 4 y.o. and 86% of 5 y.o. (many enter primary school before turning 6). 62% are enrolled in state-maintained preschools, almost 1/3 attend private settings (mostly operated by a Catholic preschool network) and 9 to 10% municipal schools.



FINANCE

Personnel costs in state-maintained preschools are covered by the national government whereas expenditures for buildings, canteen and transports are covered by local governments. Non-state preschools complying with national quality guidelines benefit from a partial financial support from the national government.



PERSONNEL

Two (or 3) teachers share the responsibility of 20 to 29 children for three years (from age 3 to age 6), although actual co-presence is rarely achieved in State-maintained settings. Preschools run by local governments and the Catholic preschool network (FISM) also employ a pedagogical coordinator.



ITALY: 5 CURRENT ISSUES FACING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

1. OVERCOMING PERSONNEL QUALIFICATION GAP



RISK: SCHOOLIFICATION OF ECEC → INCREASING ALIGNMENT OF THE PRE-SERVICE TRAINING ROUTE FOR PRE-PRIMARY STAFF WITH THAT FOLLOWED BY PRIMARY TEACHERS POSES A THREAT TO THE PEDAGOGICAL CULTURE UPON WHICH ITALIAN ECEC HAS BEEN BUILT OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS.

TO DO: DEVISE AND IMPLEMENT A MORE COHERENT AND UNIFIED APPROACH TO PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR ALL ECEC STAFF

2. CREATING INTEGRATED IN-SERVICE TRAINING ROUTES



KEY OBSTACLE: TEACHERS IN STATE-MAINTAINED PRESCHOOLS ARE EMPLOYED UNDER A NATIONAL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT THAT DOES NOT LEND ITSELF EASILY TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF INTEGRATED IN-SERVICE TRAINING MODELS

TO DO: CROSS-SECTOR DISCUSSION WITH TRADE UNIONS MUST BE INITIATED

3. REORGANISATION OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



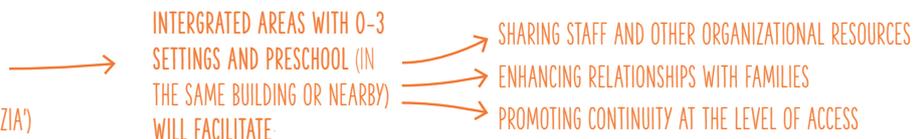
ALREADY IN EXISTENCE

KEY NEW INSTITUTIONS:

- A** NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE 0-3 SECTOR
- B** EXPERT COMMISSION WITH CONSULTING AND ADVISORY TASKS, RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPILING THE PEDAGOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE 0-6 SYSTEM
- C** SPECIFIC BUREAU RESPONSIBLE FOR 0-3 ECEC SERVICES
- D** NATIONAL REGISTRY FOR ALL 0-3 SERVICES ALONG THE MODEL OF 3-6 SECTOR

PLANNED BUT NOT YET OPERATIONAL

4. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE 0-6 CENTRES (POLI PER 'L'INFANZIA')



POTENTIAL BARRIER: LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES → THE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FUND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTEGRATED SYSTEM IS LIKELY TO REPRESENT A SPECIAL, ON-TIME FINANCING EFFORT

PAVING AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE: INVESTING IN EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY STARTING FROM EXISTING PROVISION, BY SUSTAINING INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION AND JOINT PLANNING OF TRANSITIONS → **0-6 PEDAGOGICAL GUIDELINES BECOME A KEY TOOL FOR LOCAL EXPERIMENTATIONS.**

5. LOCAL PLATFORMS FOR PEDAGOGICAL COORDINATION



MAIN BARRIER: NO PEDAGOGICAL COORDINATORS IN STATE-RUN PRESCHOOLS → CURRENTLY ONLY MUNICIPAL AND PRIVATE PROVIDERS ARE REPRESENTED IN LOCAL COORDINATION PLATFORMS

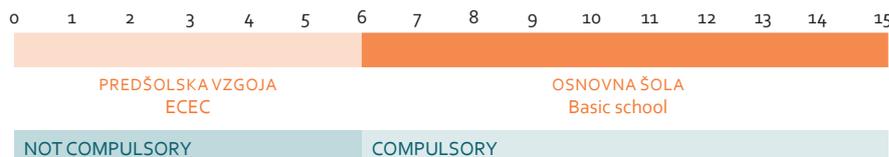
- EXPERIMENTAL MODELS:**
- A** EXPERIENCED PRESCHOOL TEACHERS IN STATE-MAINTAINED PROVISION ARE ASSIGNED SPECIAL COORDINATION TASKS
 - B** MUNICIPAL PEDAGOGICAL COORDINATORS REACHING OUT TO STATE-MAINTAINED PRESCHOOL.
 - C** IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOCUSED ON PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP TARGETED TO MIDDLE-MANAGEMENT FIGURES IN STATE-MAINTAINED PRESCHOOL

SLOVENIA



STRUCTURE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

The early childhood education and care (preschool education) in Slovenia is part of the education system. It has been inside the realm of the Ministry responsible for education since 1993. ECEC is organised as a single system for all children 1–6 years of age and/or until they start basic school (single system of primary and lower secondary education).



ECEC

ATTENDANCE

In the school year 2021/22, there are 82.5% of children aged 1–5 who attend preschool education, 93.7% of children aged 4–5 and 67% of children aged 1–3. The majority of children are enrolled in public kindergartens.

PROVISION

Municipalities are the founders of public kindergartens (as independent unit or kindergarten unit at school). If needed, municipalities grant a private kindergarten a concession to provide a public service and the same programme as a public kindergarten. There also exists a system of regulated home care.

PERSONNEL

Preschool teachers (bachelor's degree) and preschool teacher assistants (upper secondary education) work together in a team. They are both present at least 6 hours (with children aged 0–3) or at least 4 hours a day (with children aged 4–6).

BASIC SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE

Compulsory basic education is organized in a single-structure nine-year basic school attended by pupils aged 6 to 15 years. Parents enrol children in school in the catchment area where they reside. However, they may enrol the child in another school. Basic schools have to provide places for all children in the catchment area.

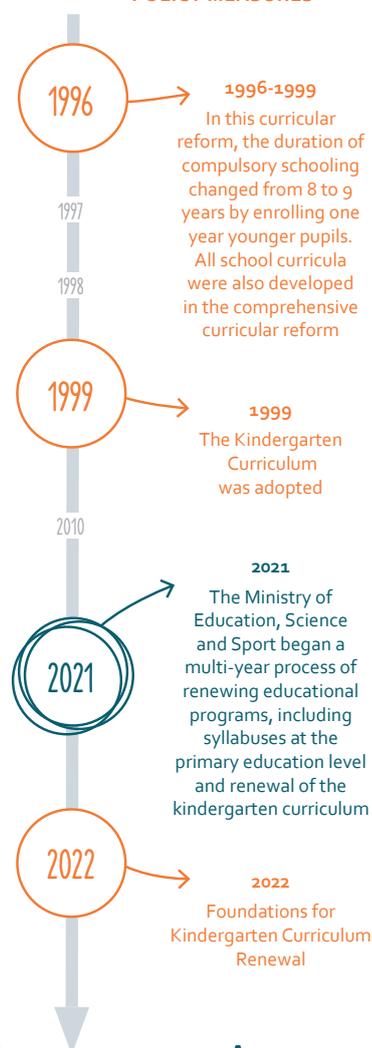
PROVISION

Basic education is provided by basic schools. The basic school comprises three educational cycles, each three years long. The majority of children with special educational needs attend the mainstream kindergartens and schools. The SEN students benefit from the adapted implementation and additional professional support. Adapted basic education may be also provided by educational institutions specialising in children/students with special needs.

PERSONNEL

In the first three-year educational cycle, children are taught by generalist (class) teachers. It is recommended that the same person teaches the class for all three years. Primary school teachers (master's degree) work in basic schools. In the 1st grade classroom, they partly work with a second professional (preschool education bachelor's degree/primary school teacher master's degree), depending on the number of children in the classroom.

TIMELINE OF RECENT POLICY MEASURES



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



SLOVENIA: 3 CURRENT ISSUES IN TRANSITIONS ACROSS ECEC AND/OR PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. INCREASE IN SCHOOL POSTPONEMENT → SCHOOL YEAR 2010/11: 4.5% → 2021/22: 11.4%

- TO DO:
- MORE SYSTEMATIC ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO TRANSITIONS. THE SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS, IN GENERAL, ARE APPROPRIATE, BUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSITIONS IN PRACTICE IS NOT ALWAYS ADEQUATE.
 - ESTABLISHING INTER-INSTITUTIONAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (IPLCS).
 - ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS PRESCHOOL-SCHOOL-PARENTS TO GAIN GREATER TRUST IN EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.
 - ANALYSIS OF THE ADEQUACY OF PROFESSIONAL DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSIONS, IN CHARGE OF SCHOOL POSTPONEMENT.
 - ANALYSIS OF THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION ON DIFFERENT LEVELS (NATIONAL-LOCAL).

2. LACK OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES, WHICH WERE ADOPTED DURING THE CURRICULAR REFORM

MEASURES, SUCH AS: 2ND PROFESSIONAL IN THE 1ST GRADE; TRANSITION OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS WITH THEIR GROUP OF CHILDREN TO THE 1ST GRADE; ADDITIONAL TRAINING FOR TEACHERS, WHO WORK IN THE 1ST GRADE WITH 6-YEAR OLDS ARE NOT IMPLEMENTED AS THEY WERE PLANNED.

- TO DO:
- REIMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES, WHICH WERE ADOPTED DURING THE CURRICULAR REFORM.
 - SUPPORTING AND RAISING AWARENESS OF THE KINDERGARTEN AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT ABOUT THE SUPPORTIVE LEGISLATION, WHICH CAN HELP TO ENSURE SMOOTHER TRANSITION.

3. SCHOOLIFICATION OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

THE PARADIGM OF CHILD'S READINESS INSTEAD OF INSTITUTION'S READINESS IS STILL OFTEN PRESENT IN EDUCATION

- TO DO:
- COMMON TRAININGS FOR PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS AND MANAGEMENT.
 - ESTABLISHING IPLCS.
 - DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE ATMOSPHERE AND CULTURE WITHIN THE INSTITUTION.

SOURCES:

- [HTTPS://EACEA.EC.EUROPA.EU/NATIONAL-POLICIES/EURYDICE/CONTENT/SLOVENIA_EN](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/slovenia_en)
- [HTTPS://WWW.STAT.SI/STATWEB/FIELD/INDEX/9/83](https://www.stat.si/statweb/field/index/9/83)
- [HTTPS://WWW.OECD.ORG/EDUCATION/SCHOOL/SS5-COUNTRY-BACKGROUND-REPORT-SLOVENIA.PDF](https://www.oecd.org/education/school/ss5-country-background-report-slovenia.pdf)

Challenging the split system

A series of two online webinars for policy-makers, stakeholders and influencers in early childhood care and education

If you are a policymaker, stakeholder or influencer in the field of early childhood education and care, join us for two learning exchange events (webinars) on challenging the split system in early childhood care and education, and exploring the emerging pathways towards change.

During the learning exchange events, researchers from Italy, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands will discuss the challenges of the split early childhood systems and explore newly emerging innovative practices and policies, that can inspire policy makers from other countries.

Dates: Tuesday, 15th November and Thursday, 1st December, from 15h30 to 17h30

Organizers: InTrans consortium, international Working Group on Split Systems (Michel Vandebroek, Jochen Devlieghere & Lobke van Lombergen, Nima Sharmahd, Katrien van Laere & Liesbeth Lambert, Kathy Jacobs, Florence Pirard & Marie Housen, Lucia Balduzzi & Arianna Lazzari, Tullia Musatti & Mariacristina Picchio; Sylvie Rayna & Pascale Garnier, Catherine Collombet, Ruben Fukkink, Pauline Slot) and International Step by Step Association (ISSA)

This meeting booklet has been prepared by **InTrans** project partner, the **International Step by Step Association (ISSA)**.

ISSA is an international learning community powered by the leading early childhood experts in Europe and Central Asia. It unites and supports professionals and partners to deliver high-quality early years services equitably. ISSA challenges existing knowledge and practice and co-construct new approaches and models.

ISSA's vision is a society where all families, communities, and professionals work together to empower each child to reach their unique full potential and embrace values of social justice and equity.

Established in 1999, ISSA's office is located in Leiden, in the Netherlands.

For more information, visit www.issa.nl



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www.issa.nl/intrans