



Need-Assessment and Action Planning Report

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the needs-assessment study conducted in the four countries (Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, and Romania) to identify the specific needs of key educational stakeholders related to early childhood professionals. Part A includes a collection of quantitative and qualitative data from each country to identify educational stakeholders' needs around early childhood teachers' careers, well-being, and professional development supports, as well as on schoolwide discipline prevention and student socio-emotional supports. Part B includes an action plan for early childhood teachers' training implementation.

The needs-assessment study was based on a web-based survey administered to nearly 100 professionals, mostly women, in each country. A purposive sampling method was adopted to better capture the existing system challenges and needs evident in each partner's educational system. The survey focused on four areas of professional needs, namely (1) Career progression (2) Current professional development activities, (3) Professional development interests, and (3) School discipline procedures. The results indicate that teachers in all four countries experience many challenges in moving forward in their careers to more permanent or leading positions. The challenges of working with parents and a lack of opportunities for professional development are also issues reported by professionals across all countries. Some additional issues were the difficulties in balancing work and family roles, managing job-related stress, and lack of teamwork. The average amount of time dedicated to professional development activities significantly varied across countries, ranging from 60 hours per year, reported by Cypriot professionals to 194 hours per year reported by Greek professionals. Teacher well-being was reported as one topic of interest for professional development activities by all professionals from the four countries. Professionals from Cyprus and Greece highlight the need for additional training on the topic of school discipline and classroom management. Portuguese professionals manifested the interest in professional development activities focusing on child development and play whereas Romanian professionals indicated the need for professional development activities addressing the challenges of working with parents and with children with special needs. Professionals from most of the countries reported a general lack of institutional support and consideration of their professional development interests. Considering the school-wide implemented discipline practices, a relatively low percentage of professionals flag the existence of explicit discipline guidelines in their schools (range from 24% to 47% across the four countries) and very few of them have a specific discipline program available (range from 4% to 11% across the four countries). According to professionals' reports, the schools seem to be failing in providing support to children's needs to effectively deal with discipline issues. Difficulties concerning collaboration among staff, teacher training, and an inadequate number of personal were also mentioned as important limitations to professionals' ability to effectively manage children's behavior problems. Finally, professionals pointed out several directions for promoting positive learning environments in their schools. They agree with the need of implementing child-centered approaches and fostering rich playful environments to deal with children's challenging

behaviors. They also acknowledged the importance of promoting positive and collaborative relationships with the families to create a positive learning environment.

Overall, findings from the country reports provide useful information for the implementation of the proW intervention. Findings suggest the PERMA and SWPBS frameworks as relevant tools to address current needs and challenges in the four countries. Findings showed that professionals of the four countries are interested in learning opportunities in general and in staff well-being. The SWPBS framework can be a powerful means to help to develop a shared vision, implement whole-school coherent and consistent strategies, and establish strong partnerships among professionals, parents, and children, with close relationships as an important issue, highlighted throughout the country reports. Nevertheless, for successful implementation, it will be important to respect the specificities of ECEC, namely the value of child-centered and playful approaches. Moreover, coaches need to be sensitive towards potential conflictual relationships and able to manage existing tensions and conflicts. Proposed activities should not be a burden in terms of effort and time, but rather a source of inspiration and motivation. At last, the development of strong and respectful partnerships between coaches and participants may require time, an aspect that should not be overlooked.

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PART A: Needs-Assessment Analysis

Cyprus

Needs-Assessment Methodology

In order to conduct a needs assessment, a questionnaire was developed by the ProW Consortium to be completed online by ECEC staff. This questionnaire aimed at assessing the needs, efforts, and practices regarding early childhood teachers' professional development, careers, well-being, and existing children's socio-emotional supports. After identifying the main topics, a search on available measures was conducted, and a selection of items was made. The selected items were from widely used, well-known measures, such as TALIS SS from OECD. After each partner provided input and piloting of the questionnaire to check for clarity and structure, an online version was created, and the link was widely disseminated. In Cyprus, the questionnaire was distributed to all public preschools through a circular email sent by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (Ministry of Education) as well as through the Association of Private pre-school education in Cyprus. The target sample was 100 participants per country. The link was available for approximately 1 month, during June 2021.

In addition to the questionnaire, a focus group was conducted to identify the ProW project's needs in Cyprus. The focus group was implemented by the Institute of Development (IoD), the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI), and CARDET. Due to the Covid-19 restrictive measures, the Focus Group was conducted online, via Zoom, to protect the health and safety of all parties involved. The interviewers - facilitators were Mrs. Vicky Charalambous and Andri Agathokleous, on behalf of the Cypriot project team. The online focus group in Cyprus was conducted on the 18th of May 2021, between the hours 16.00 - 18.00. The meeting lasted 2 hours (from 4 pm to 6 pm). The zoom link was sent to all participants two days before. The meeting was recorded after the approval of all participants.

Needs-Assessment Results

Survey Results

Short description of response rate and sample demographics

All participants (n=104) agreed to fill the questionnaire on a voluntary basis. Most of the participants were women (99%) with an average age of 40 years old (SD = 8.31; range 23 - 61; see Table 1). All the participants acquired a bachelor's degree and the majority held additional degrees (61,5% master's degree, 2.9% a Ph.D. degree).

On average, classrooms are composed of 21 children (SD = 4.6). Most participants reported working with mixed age groups in the public sector (87%), while the numbers drop in the

private settings, with a higher percentage of working with mixed ages in the non-profit schools (37,5% in community schools) than in the self-financed schools (private schools = 0%). Most of the participants were teachers (89.4%; see Table 2), with the remaining percentage splitting up between school principals (6.7%) and vice-principals (3.8%). Participating teachers had on average 17.18 years of experience in the current job setting (SD = 9.02) from which 2.97 years in the current setting (SD = 2.45). The vast majority of the sample's teachers had a full-time position (91.3%) but a lower percentage had a permanent position (81.7%).

Table 1

Demographic characteristics for key stakeholders (N= 104)

Variable	n (%)
<i>Gender [Item 1.1]</i>	
Female	103 (99%)
Male	1 (1%)
Mean (SD)	
Age (years) [Item 1.2]	40 (8.31)
n (%)	
<i>Level of formal education [Item 1.3]</i>	
Bachelor degree	104 (100%)
Master's degree	64 (61.5%)
Doctoral degree	3 (2.9%)
Other	0 (0%)
Mean (SD)	
Number of children in classroom [Item 1.4]	21 (4.6)
n (%)	
<i>Classroom's age composition [Item 1.5]</i>	
2 years-old	N/A
3 years-old	9 (8.65%)
4 years-old	0 (0.00%)
5 years-old	8 (7.69%)
Mixed age group	87 (83.65%)

Work setting [Item 1.6]

Public setting	78	(75%)
Private setting (non profit - funded by Government)	2	(1.9%)
Private setting (self-financed)	24	(23.1%)

ECEC's professionals perspectives on their career progression and professional development

Career progression's indicators

The means for all career progression items suggests that past opportunities for career development were limited. The most frequent career progression events in the last 5 years were: i) moving to a different school/ setting (M = 2.23; SD=0.97), ii) carrying out dynamic and creative work (M=2.13; SD=0.99). On the other hand, the less frequent career progression events in the last 5 years were: i) work in a different job, not in the ECEC sector (M = 1.09; SD=0.42), ii) assuming a leading position (M=1.44; SD=0.83)

Regarding expectations about career progression for the following 5 years, participants considered it to be ambiguous if they will: i) be able to carry out dynamic and creative work (M=3.56; SD=0.85), ii) pursue further qualifications (M=3.50; SD=0.87) and, iii) be able to develop professionally (M=3.47; SD=0.91), whereas they considered unlikely that they are going to: i) work in a different job, not in the ECEC sector (M=2.03, SD=1.17), ii) assume a leading position (M=2.36; SD=1.26, and iii) get a permanent contract (M=2.56; SD=1.24).

In addition, in an open-ended question asking about the bigger challenges they face on their professional development the participants have mentioned a large number of difficulties and challenges they face on their professional development, showing the important role they assume to it and the necessity of addressing them.

The most common difficulties reported were the challenges that arise between their relationships with their colleagues: collaborating, getting support, and communicating. There were also a few mentions about competitiveness and lack of interest of colleagues in their job which was considered as a difficulty.

Regarding the relationship between the participants and the management team, they mostly mentioned a lack of communication and support from the management on all the aspects of their work (classroom management, difficulties with students-parents-colleagues relationships, along with managing their efforts and providing them with acknowledgment.

On the participants' relationships with their students, the main difficulties that were mentioned are behavioral management of challenging behaviors and meeting the needs of each child (especially aggressive children behavior, violence, children with disabilities, other diagnoses, children with immigrant biography, lack of boundaries, lack of respect, responsibility, cooperation and other human values, etc). Difficulties collaborating with parents were also mentioned as a common main challenge of their work.

Another common mention as a difficulty was about the classroom's available resources and the environment such as a large number of students in the classrooms and the lack of technological utilities and time for preparation.

In addition, other main challenges mentioned are managing their stress levels, the lack of opportunities for professional development and/or self-improvement, and/or personal development, the covid-19 pandemic, the bureaucracy of the system in general, the lack of promotions, and the "problematic" promotion's system, the lack of respect of society and the continuous adaptations they have to do in their line of work.

Table 2

Career progression indicators of the ECEC professionals (N=104)

Variable	n (%)
Current position [Item 2.1]	
Teacher	93 (89.4%)
Vice Principal	4 (3.8%)
Principal	7 (6.7%)
	Mean (SD)
Years of experience in current job [Item 2.2]	17.18 (9.02)
Years of experience in current setting [Item 2.3]	2.9 (2.45)
	n (%)
Employment status - type of contract [Item 2.4]	
Permanent employment	85 (81.7%)
Fixed-term for a period of 1 year or less	15 (14.4%)
Fixed-term for a period of more than 1 year	2 (1.9%)
Self-employed	2 (1.9%)
Employment status - working hours [Item 2.5]	
Full-time (more than 90% of full-time hours equivalent)	95 (91.3%)
Part-time (71-90% of full-time hours)	3 (2.9%)
Part-time (50-70% of full-time hours)	4 (3.8%)
Part-time (less than 50% of full-time hours)	2 (1.9%)

	Mean (SD)
Progression in the last 5 years ^a [Item 2.6]	
Receiving a salary increase	1.94 (1.00)
Moving to a different school/setting	2.23 (0.97)
Assuming a leading position	1.44 (0.83)
Getting a permanent contract	1.67 (0.94)
Pursuing further qualifications	1.80 (0.98)
Being able to develop professionally	1.69 (0.95)
Having opportunities to display my knowledge and skills	1.82 (0.98)
Carrying out dynamic and creative work	2.13 (0.99)
Job autonomy to be appropriate to reconcile my family and work life	1.80 (0.98)
More freedom to organize my work	1.76 (0.97)
Work in a different job not in the ECEC sector	1.09 (0.42)
Progression expectancy in the following 5 years ^b [Item 2.7]	
Receiving a salary increase	3.02 (0.98)
Moving to a different school/setting	3.39 (0.98)
Assuming a leading position	2.36 (1.26)
Getting a permanent contract	2.56 (1.24)
Pursuing further qualifications	3.50 (0.87)
Being able to develop professionally	3.47 (0.91)
Having opportunities to display my knowledge and skills	3.44 (0.90)
Carrying out dynamic and creative work	3.56 (0.85)
Job autonomy to be appropriate to reconcile my family and work life	3.27 (1.07)
More freedom to organize my work	3.38 (0.92)
Work in a different job not in the ECEC sector	2.03 (1.17)

^a Response range from 1 (“It was not met at all”) to 3 (“It was met”);

^b Response range from 1 (“Very unlikely”) to 5 (“Very likely”).

Professional development activities during the last 12 months

In the past year, participants spent on average 59.79 hours in professional development activities (SD=155.02). Eighty-nine percent (89%) reported attending courses/ seminars and 79% attended conferences, while 65% reported participating in peer and/or self-observation. On professional development activities concerning support, we see a drop-in numbers and

about one-third of the participants utilizing such methods (26% participation in coaching sessions by external persons, 29% mentoring sessions, and 41% participating in a professional network).

The most common topics addressed in professional development activities attended by participants were: i) facilitating play and learning (84%), ii) child development (74%), and iii) communicating with colleagues (63%). On the contrary, the less frequent topics fall in the category of decreasing health risks (dealing with work-related stress - 33%), children’s holistic development (monitoring/ documenting child development, wellbeing, and learning - 41%), and meeting children’s needs (working with children with special needs - 44%).

Table 3

Professional development and training activities (N= 104)

Variable	Mean (SD)
Hours spent in professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.2]	59.79 (155.02)
	n (%)
Undertaken professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.1]	
Courses/seminars	93 (89%)
Conferences	79 (76%)
Qualification programme (e.g. a degree programme)	11 (11%)
Observation visits to other schools	10 (10%)
Peer and/or self-observation	68 (65%)
On-site coaching by an external person	27 (26%)
Participation in a network of professionals working with children	43 (41%)
Participation in consultations meetings (mentoring)	30 (29%)
Other (Erasmus+ Programmes etc)	6 (6%)
Institutional support to professional development - last 12 months [Item 3.3]	
Release from working with children for activities during regular working hours	39 (38%)
Non-monetary support for activities outside working hours	9 (8%)
Reimbursement or payments of costs	8 (8%)
Provision of materials needed for the activities	33 (32%)
Non-monetary professional benefits	27 (26%)
Topics addressed by professional development activities - last 12 months [Item	

3.4]

Child development	77 (74%)
Child health or personal care (e.g. hygiene)	62 (60%)
Facilitating play and learning	87 (84%)
Working with children with special needs	46 (44%)
Working with children from diverse backgrounds	48 (46%)
Working with parents/ guardians and families	57 (55%)
Classroom management	63 (61%)
Monitoring/documenting child development, wellbeing and learning	43 (41%)
School discipline programs	55 (53%)
Learning about the school system	61 (59%)
Communicating with colleagues	65 (63%)
Dealing with work related stress	34 (33%)
Teacher well-being (e.g. positive psychology, positive emotions, resilience)	47 (45%)

Professional development interests

Participants appear to be very interested in professional development activities focusing on the following topics: i) school-wide discipline programs (M=4.18; SD=0.97) ii) teachers' wellbeing (positive psychology, positive emotions, resilience (M=4.10; SD=0.95) and, iii) working with children from diverse backgrounds (M=3.87, SD=1.03). The mean of the other topics ranged also between 3 and 4 suggesting that overall participants are interested in learning more on several topics.

However, their interests come in contrast with the lack of support from their institutions, which are indicated from levels generally below 3. Participants considered that only at times their professional development interests were taken into consideration by their institution. Specifically, although sometimes they perceive it as not difficult to have access to in-service courses (M=3.22, SD=1.42), the school rarely considers their individual needs and interests (M=2.78; SD=1.36) or takes an active interest in their career development (M=2.74; SD=1.38). In addition, the participants reported that opportunities in their school to develop new skills (M = 2.83; SD = 1.37), and encouragement to pursue further professional development (M = 2.89; SD = 1.40) are considered relatively rare.

Table 4
Professional development interests (N= 100)

Variable	Mean (SD)
Topics of interest for professional development activities ^a [Item 3.5]	
Child development	3.05 (1.11)
Child health or personal care (e.g. hygiene)	3.15 (1.18)
Facilitating play and learning	3.72 (1.17)
Working with children with special needs	3.75 (1.11)
Working with children from diverse backgrounds	3.87 (1.03)
Working with parents/ guardians and families	3.50 (1.10)
Classroom management	3.83 (1.08)
Monitoring/documenting child development, wellbeing and learning	3.83 (1.03)
School discipline programs	4.18 (0.97)
Learning about the school system	3.33 (1.14)
Communicating with colleagues	3.52 (1.12)
Dealing with work related stress	3.86 (1.10)
Teacher well-being (e.g. positive psychology, positive emotions, resilience)	4.10 (0.95)
Institutions' consideration of professional development interests ^b [Item 3.6]	
My institution take an active interest in my career development	2.74 (1.38)
I am encouraged by my institution to pursue further professional development	2.89 (1.40)
School takes into account my individual needs and interests	2.78 (1.36)
There are opportunities in this school for developing new skills	2.83 (1.37)
It is not difficult to gain access to in-service courses	3.22 (1.42)

^a Response range from 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("very much")

School discipline procedures

Less than half of the participants reported that their school had explicit discipline guidelines and only 11% reported that their school followed a specific discipline program.

Most participants considered that guidelines/programs (M = 2.94; SD = 1.12) and practices (M = 3.40; SD = 0.88) were moderately effective in reducing problem behavior and that

practices were also slightly to moderately effective in supporting children's socio-emotional needs ($M = 2.95$; $SD = 0.94$).

The extent to which rules and sanctions are often well understood by staff ($M = 3.57$; $SD = 1.03$) and children ($M = 3.41$; $SD = 1.01$) are in the mid-range, suggesting that they are sometimes or often understood, but there is room for improvement. Similarly, expectations about discipline are sometimes/ frequently shared among teachers ($M = 3.38$; $SD = 1.02$). Still, professionals indicated that even though schools' philosophy on discipline sometimes/ frequently agreed ($M = 3.31$; $SD = 1.09$), the rules and sanctions are inconsistently enforced ($M = 2.38$; $SD = 1.13$).

Participants perceived their classroom's behavioral adjustment as positive ($M = 2.15$; $SD = 0.92$) whilst, when answering the open question about the 3 biggest challenges regarding children's behavior, participants refer to several behavioral problems, such as emotional regulation, aggressiveness, self-control and self-regulation, difficulty inhibiting behaviors (e.g. waiting their turn to speak) and difficulties in relationships (e.g., sharing, managing conflicts, and respecting others), and more general features such as not following/understanding classroom rules.

In addition, features related to the school environment were also frequently stated, such as difficulties with families (e.g., deal with parents' permissive parenting style and manage parental behaviors towards children), lack of strong family-school partnerships (e.g., to be synchronized with parents regarding ways to deal with children's disruptive behaviors). Other features reported are human resources (a necessity for more staff) and large numbers of children in the classrooms.

Participants reported that the schools' lack/inadequacy of students' support ($M = 3.53$; $SD = 1.13$), lack/inadequacy of collaboration among staff ($M = 3.52$; $SD = 1.22$) and lack of or inadequate teachers' training ($M = 3.27$; $SD = 1.11$) were among the most meaningful limitations in promoting positive learning environments.

Lastly, when describing what does a positive learning environment mean to them, participants mainly referred to child-centered approaches, such as i) providing opportunities for play and meaningful learning, ii) creating a respectful and warm climate; ii) stimulating children's active participation; iii) attending to individual needs and interests, and iv) respecting children.

In addition, other aspects not directly related to children were also frequently reported such as close relationships with their colleagues and the parents, the necessity of communication and support between all the adults surrounding the children. Finally, the participants reported the significance of feeling supported, respected, and acknowledged by their colleagues and school system.

Table 5

School discipline procedures (N= 104)

Variable

	n (%)
School has explicit discipline guidelines [Item 4.1]	41 (39%)
How were school discipline guidelines developed? [Item 4.2]	
Based on top-level guidelines	40 (38%)
Based on research-based evidence	28 (27%)
Based on other resources	13 ((13%)
The school follows a specific discipline program [Item 4.3]	11 (11%)
	Mean (SD)
Guidelines/programs effectiveness in reducing problem behaviors ^a [Item 4.4]	2.81 (1.13)
Practices effectiveness in reducing problem behaviors ^a [Item 4.5]	3.04 (0.88)
Practices effectiveness in supporting socio-emotional needs ^a [Item 4.6]	2.95 (0.94)
Implementation of discipline within school ^b [Item 4.7]	
The rules and sanctions are well understood by staff	3.57 (1.03)
The rules and sanctions are well understood by children	3.41 (1.01)
There is an agreed philosophy on discipline in this school	3.31 (1.09)
Shared expectations about discipline among teachers	3.38 (1.02)
The rules and sanctions are not enforced in a consistent fashion in this school	2.38 (1.13)
Overall classroom behavior adjustment ^c [Item 4.8]	2.15 (0.92)
School's limitations on promoting positive learning environments ^d [Item 4.9]	
Lack of or inadequate of number of personnel	3.49 (1.24)
Lack of or inadequate of teacher training	3.27 (1.11)
Lack of or inadequate of students' needs support	3.53 (1.13)
Complaints from families	2.81 (1.03)
Lack of or inadequate collaboration among staff	3.52 (1.22)

^a Response range from 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("Extremely");

^b Response range from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Always");

^c Response range from 1 ("Behave exceptionally well") to 5 ("Misbehave very frequently");

^d Response range from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree").

Focus Group Interview Results

Seven participants attended the Focus Group, all female. All participants had been informed about the overall aim of the project and they had agreed to participate. Consent forms were

delivered and signed by all participants before the Focus Group Implementation (the consent form complied with the GDPR regulations).

Participants were invited based on their knowledge and experience in preschool education to ensure a diversity of perspectives will be heard. All participants reported a longstanding work experience in education and were employed at the time in the public education sector. Three of the participants work in their current setting (e.g. school) for less than 5 years, 1 of them for less than 10 years, and three of them for more than 10 years. In addition, 2 participants were holders of graduate degrees, and 5 of them holders of postgraduate degrees. In addition, 2 participants were holders of graduate degrees, and 5 of them holders of postgraduate degrees. The 4 participants were preschool teachers, 2 were principals at preschools and 1 of them was a preschool school inspector.

The meeting was organized following the focus group protocol created by the consortium and in a way to facilitate the process and ensure that all participants can have an equal opportunity to express their opinions.

Main priority school needs for promoting positive and preventative learning environments

The participants unanimously agreed that students' psychological development and support is the most important priority they have throughout the year, along with having a consistent way of "diagnosing" their student needs. They try to get to know each student independently and as mentioned "*it is important to listen, open our ears and listen to children*".

Another participant mentioned: "*they are children but they have a voice and we should listen to them*". They expressed their wish to prevent problems and not to act when it is too late and that they should build strong relationships with their students. Finally, early childhood teachers consider the parents as their main allies to support children's development outside the school.

Social skills were considered by the focus group participants as a milestone in early childhood development since "*the early childhood care settings are the first community in which children live while learning to cooperate, communicate and have relationships with others*" which is "*something no other setting can provide to a child*". In addition, social and emotional skills are the keystones to develop cognitive skills so the efforts should turn into these directions.

Existing practices for supporting schoolwide discipline prevention and positive learning environments

- **Existing practices on discipline prevention and positive learning environments**

Regarding **schoolwide discipline prevention and positive learning environment**, the participants mentioned that there is not a systematic approach to manage situations and the existing resources come into action after the escalation of problems. Thus, the need for preventive programs was identified.

There is in Cyprus a small number of early childhood schools that have implemented "PROTHESI" which is a whole school-based discipline prevention and positive learning environment program based on Positive Behavior in Schools but on a minor scale. There are also other programs that the schools utilize for challenging behaviors when necessary but

most programs are based on a “management of difficulties instead of preventing them” as stated. Schools that face various difficulties are also supported by programmes eg DRASE, PAVIS (children with migrant backgrounds and social and emotional difficulties).

Thus, participants reported that there isn’t a specific program on a wide scale covering their specific goals, but it is something they see as necessary to happen and would interest them. Teachers try to include and find new, imaginative ways, utilizing their knowledge and experiences in order to improve their own and their student’s everyday experiences in the classroom.

- **Existing practices on teachers’ wellbeing**

Although there are many stressors in the teaching profession, there are no programmes or systems in progress to support early childhood teachers’ wellbeing currently in Cyprus.

In the question “What are the main stressors at work?” participants mentioned that balancing relationships (parents, teachers, leadership team) and the complexity of them is the main stressor for all, along with the constant changes in the curriculum which demands adaptations on their behalf. In addition, the school climate and school culture rank high as stressors when there is no mutual support and understanding between colleagues. On the other hand, all teachers noted that when there is support, their everyday experience is very pleasant. Third, the often-extensive interventions on their role and responsibilities from outside sources demand high levels of resources to be managed productively. In addition, the large number of students per classroom, of the difficulties arising from supporting children with migration backgrounds such as difficulties in communications, lack of support in translation as well as lack of supporting resources and the evaluation by the inspectors, are topics that cause stress for early childhood educators. The group mentioned the ease with which society questions their role and criticizes their work.

- **Existing opportunities for teachers’ careers/career development**

On the topic of **career development**, all the participants agreed that the only provider of programs supporting their wellbeing is workshops provided by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) under the “Professional Learning Support” which is running since 2015. Each school has a collaborator from the CPI throughout the year, on a specific topic and goal that each school sets as necessary based on their own needs in reference to 2 main axons of the curriculum: 1) personal and social consciousness development of children, 2) emotional support for educators. The implementation of the program is in the form of workshops. In addition, this academic year (2020 - 2021) a three-hour workshop was implemented on a Pancyprian level in order to support teachers emotionally with the aim to deal with the Covid situation. There were 4 different workshops to choose from and each school should complete at least 1 of them. Early childhood teachers mentioned that it was beneficial for their psychological empowerment and noted that more similar activities are welcomed. Apart from these, there is a section in the curriculum on emotional support of teachers, but there isn’t a fully developed program on positive psychology for early childhood teachers.

About their career progression, the early childhood teachers mentioned that an early childhood teacher in order to be promoted being a holder of a Postgraduate Degree would have to reach on average the age of 48 - 52-year-old (with about 18 years of experience in schools), while with a bachelor degree around 50 - 54 years of age for promotion. In addition, their promotion route is from a preschool teacher to become a vice principal and then a school principal. In order to be appointed as a school inspector, the chances are slim since currently there are 3 positions in Cyprus fulfilling this set of duties. In addition, due to economic reasons, about 55 positions for vice-principals and 45 positions for principals are in freeze mode at the moment and for many years the situation is stable. This has as a consequence for preschool teachers to take over the responsibilities of principals and vice-principals with the only benefit of a partial reduction in their weekly teaching hours.

Important teacher training topics for promoting school-wide prevention and stronger socio-emotional supports

- **Training topics for promoting teachers' wellbeing**

The participants of the focus group unanimously mentioned that for promoting schoolwide prevention and stronger socio-emotional supports, the most important topic is to focus on early childhood teachers and promoting their relationships with colleagues and support of each other. In addition, they mentioned topics such as resilience and ways to promote it, training in positive education, and group forming and collaboration activities as top priority topics. As stated, "the need to inject joy to our colleagues is evident" through our interactions and through group support activities.

- **Training topics for promoting teachers' career**

Participants mentioned needs on training more on children's psychology and behavioral management.

- **Training topics for promoting socio-emotional skills/support**

It is important also to note as stated that, the need still remains for in-depth education and implementation of actions to enhance their support networks. The need for social support is even higher after the breakout of the covid-19 pandemic. Another important addition was their request to include technology and educational resources in a digital form. It was also mentioned that they consider 'Drama in Education' as a very important tool to convey the appropriate messages to children and would therefore be interested in more training on this topic. Finally, a designated counselor/ external coach was considered as important to guide them through a formal process. As the team mentioned, previous experiences which included the role of team empowerers/animators were highly beneficial and still impacting them positively. Lastly, the participants would like for a program to include the interaction between the school staff, the students, and the parents. Early childhood teachers also highlighted the importance of socioemotional support since it is the "fundamentals for cognitive development".

Main Conclusions

Taking into consideration all the responses of the participants of the focus group and the questionnaire, it is evident that early childhood teachers are highly motivated professionals and individuals who have as a main priority the safety, wellbeing, and learning outcomes of their children. They are professionals who love their job and teaching children and who have gone above and beyond in the last year due to the covid-19 pandemic to meet the educational needs and to safeguard the emotional stability of all school members as much as possible through being a constant encourager, a stable reference for children and their parents while having to adapt in many challenging situations and changing in their work environment. However, according to their testimonies and written responses, there are no programs or mechanisms in action to support their wellbeing as teachers while at the same time their career progression is facing critical challenges as prolonged service in years for promotion, a small number of positions to be filled added to the currently on-freeze promotion system. Despite the crucial need for promotion, there are no promotion places. This is due to economic reasons.

Early childhood teachers report as a main need to enhance and develop their in-between support in order to continue their personal and professional development at a systematic and continuous pace. On the topic of schoolwide discipline prevention and positive learning environments the participants mentioned in the focus group and also reported in the questionnaire that there is not a systematic approach to manage situations and the existing resources come into action after the escalation of problems. Thus, the need for supportive programs was identified as a main priority along with a behavioral program that will allow them to fulfill the socio-emotional needs, behavioral needs of their students along with their educational needs. In addition, the overall findings highlight the importance of the teachers' work environment outside the classroom in which main areas of need are communication, support, and collaboration with their colleagues and management. The same needs are transparent to their relationships with parents which are considered as strong allies and collaborators. The importance of having a shared vision and a positive climate was also highlighted and thus any efficient and effective program should include actions to align these topics. In addition, practices enhancing their professional development were also highly recommended as necessary, with a greater emphasis on their own wellbeing.

Therefore, actions involving the aforementioned areas appear to be welcomed and necessary since there are no programmes in Cyprus that aim to enhance teachers' wellbeing or their career development.

Greece

Need-Assessment Methodology

In order to conduct a needs assessment, a questionnaire was developed to be completed online by ECEC staff. This questionnaire aims at assessing the needs, efforts, and practices regarding early childhood teachers' professional development, careers, well-being, and existing children's socio-emotional supports. After identifying the main topics, a search on available measures was conducted, and a selection of items was made. The selected items were from widely used, well-known measures, such as TALIS SS from OECD. After partner input and piloting the questionnaire, to check for clarity and structure, an online version was created, and the link was widely disseminated. The Target Sample was 100 participants per country. The link was available for approximately one month, during June 2020.

In addition to the questionnaire, a focus group was conducted. The Focus Group aiming to identify the needs of the ProW project in Greece was conducted by the IHU. Due to COVID19 restrictive measures the Focus Group was conducted Online via ZOOM, to protect the health and safety of all parties involved. Anastasia Vatou the Project Manager on behalf of IHU was the main Interviewer – Facilitator of the Focus Group. The 1-hour duration online Focus Group in Greece took place on Wednesday 26/05/2021 between 17:10 – 18:10.

Needs-Assessment Results

Survey Results

Short description of response rate and sample demographics

Participants were reached by email messages to their unions, calling them to answer the online questionnaire (via google forms), which was available for approximately one month, during June 2020 on the internet.

As can be seen by Table 6, most of the participants were women (95%) with an average age of 39 years old (SD = 10.44; range 22-59; see Table 6). Half of them held a bachelor's degree (50%) and the other half held a master's degree (45%) or a doctoral degree (5%).

On average, classrooms were comprised of 17 children (SD = 4.96; range 6-28).

Most of the participants worked with mixed age groups (80%) in public settings (83%) than in private settings (17%).

Table 6

Demographic characteristics for key stakeholders (N= 100)

Variable	n (%)
<i>Gender [Item 1.1]</i>	
Female	95 (95%)
Male	5 (5%)
	Mean (SD)

Age (years) [Item 1.2]	38.92 (10.4)
n (%)	
Level of formal education [Item 1.3]	
Bachelor degree	50 (50%)
Master's degree	45 (45%)
Doctoral degree	5 (5%)
Other	0 (0%)
Mean (SD)	
Number of children in classroom [Item 1.4]	16.88 (4.97)
n (%)	
Classroom's age composition [Item 1.5]	
2 years-old	0 (0%)
3 years-old	12 (12%)
4 years-old	2 (2%)
5 years-old	5 (5%)
6 years-old	1 (1%)
Mixed age group	80 (80%)
Work setting [Item 1.6]	
Public school (ECEC + primary)	0 (0%)
Public setting (only ECEC)	83 (83%)
Non-profit private setting	0 (0%)
Self-financing private setting	17 (17%)

ECEC's professionals perspectives on their career progression and professional developmental

Career progression's indicators

Most of the participants were teachers (87%; see Table 7) than assistants (8%) or infant-toddler pedagogues and care providers (5%). Participants had on average 14.12 years of experience in the current job (SD = 16.72), from which 5.64 in the current setting (SD = 5.78). The vast majority had a full time (93%) and more than half of them had a permanent position (56%).

The mean for all career progression items suggests that past opportunities for career development were limited. The most frequent career progression events in the last 5 years were: i) having opportunities to display knowledge and skills (M = 2.22; SD = 0.72), ii) more freedom to organize my work (M = 2.12; SD = 0.78), iii) pursuing further qualifications (M = 2.10; SD = 0.74) and iv) carrying out dynamic and creative work (M = 2.10; SD = 0.66).

On the other side, the less frequent career progression events in the last 5 years were: i) getting a permanent contract (M = 1.23; SD = 0.51), ii) work in a different job not in the

ECEC sector ($M = 1.27$; $SD = 0.58$), iii) assuming a leading position ($M = 1.55$; $SD = 0.68$) and iv) moving to a different school/setting ($M = 1.59$; $SD = 0.71$).

Regarding expectations about career progression for the following 5 years, participants considered likely that they would i) pursuing further qualifications ($M = 3.92$; $SD = 0.89$), ii) having opportunities to display their knowledge and skills ($M = 3.68$; $SD = 0.99$), iii) carrying out dynamic and creative work ($M = 3.65$; $SD = 0.99$).

On the other hand, participants considered unlikely that, in the following 5 years, they would i) work in a different job not in the ECEC sector ($M = 2.47$; $SD = 1.39$), ii) get a permanent contract ($M = 2.83$; $SD = 1.44$), iii) receiving a salary increase ($M = 2.85$; $SD = 1.21$).

In an open question asking about the biggest career challenges they currently face, one of the most reported responses was the job insecurity and instability and the lack of personal and professional development. Issues about low salary, long work hours, and the stress they feel at work were also reported. Participants also mentioned the lack of in-service education and their difficulties in work-life balance, arguing that their work affects their personal and family life and that they feel exhausted after their everyday work. Another challenge for their career development, is the cooperation with parents, as they mention difficulties in dealing with children’s families and the education of children with special needs.

Table 7

Career progression indicators of the ECEC professionals (N= 100)

Variable	
	n (%)
Current position [Item 2.1]	
Teacher	87 (87%)
Assistant	8 (8%)
Infant-toddler pedagogues and care providers	5 (5%)
	Mean (SD)
Years of experience in current job [Item 2.2]	14.12 (16.7%)
Years of experience in current setting [Item 2.3]	5.64 (5.77%)
	n (%)
Employment status - type of contract [Item 2.4]	
Permanent employment	56 (56%)
Fixed-term for a period of 1 year or less	0 (0%)
Fixed-term for a period of more than 1 year	42 (42%)

Self-employed	2 (2%)
Employment status - working hours [Item 2.5]	
Full-time (more than 90% of full-time hours equivalent)	93 (93%)
Part-time (71-90% of full-time hours)	2 (2%)
Part-time (50-70% of full-time hours)	4 (4%)
Part-time (less than 50% of full-time hours)	1 (1%)
Mean (SD)	
Progression in the last 5 years ^a [Item 2.6]	
Receiving a salary increase	1.84 (0.77)
Moving to a different school/setting	1.59 (0.71)
Assuming a leading position	1.55 (0.68)
Getting a permanent contract	1.23 (0.51)
Pursuing further qualifications	2.10 (0.74)
Being able to develop professionally	1.79 (0.83)
Having opportunities to display my knowledge and skills	2.22 (0.72)
Carrying out dynamic and creative work	2.10 (0.66)
Job autonomy to be appropriate to reconcile my family and work life	1.97 (0.83)
More freedom to organize my work	2.12 (0.78)
Work in a different job not in the ECEC sector	1.27 (0.58)
Progression expectancy in the following 5 years ^b [Item 2.7]	
Receiving a salary increase	2.85 (1.21)
Moving to a different school/setting	3.47 (1.31)
Assuming a leading position	3.00 (1.25)
Getting a permanent contract	2.83 (1.44)
Pursuing further qualifications	3.92 (0.89)
Being able to develop professionally	3.46 (1.09)
Having opportunities to display my knowledge and skills	3.68 (0.99)
Carrying out dynamic and creative work	3.65 (0.99)
Job autonomy to be appropriate to reconcile my family and work life	3.23 (1.27)
More freedom to organize my work	3.42 (1.04)
Work in a different job not in the ECEC sector	2.47 (1.39)

^a Response range from 1 (“It was not met at all”) to 3 (“It was met”);

^b Response range from 1 (“Very unlikely”) to 5 (“Very likely”).

Professional development activities during the last 12 months

The last 12 months, participants spent on average 196.44 hours in professional development activities (SD = 289.09). Eighty-seven percent reported attending courses/seminars and 38% conferences, 44% reported participating in qualification programs, 35% addressed participating in peer and/or self-observation and 26% were part of a network of professionals working with children. Only 13% of the participants were engaged in observation visits to other schools and the least frequent professional development activity was being enrolled in an on-site coaching by an external person (11%). Results also showed that the maximum institutional support to professional development was to provide materials needed for the activities (29%) and the less frequent was reimbursement or payments of costs (4%). The most common topic addressed by professional development activities attended by participants were: i) facilitating play and learning (61%); ii) classroom management (58%); iii) child development (56%) and iv) working with children from diverse backgrounds (55%), working with parents/ guardians and families (55%). On the contrary, the less frequent topics fall in features at the school level, namely, i) dealing with work-related stress (23%); ii) learning about the school system (29%); and iii) teacher well-being (e.g. positive psychology, positive emotions, resilience) (30%).

Table 8

Professional development and training activities (N= 100)

Variable	Mean (SD)
Hours spent in professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.2]	196.44 (289.09)
	n (%)
Undertaken professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.1]	
Courses/seminars	87 (87%)
Conferences	38 (38%)
Qualification programme (e.g. a degree programme)	44 (44%)
Observation visits to other schools	13 (13%)
Peer and/or self-observation	35 (35%)
On-site coaching by an external person	11 (11%)
Participation in a network of professionals working with children	26 (26%)
Mentoring	15 (15%)
Other (e.g. visits in cultural places)	6 (6%)

Institutional support to professional development - last 12 months [Item 3.3]

Release from working with children for activities during the working hours	17 (17%)
Non-monetary support for activities outside working hours	14 (14%)
Reimbursement or payments of costs	4 (4%)
Provision of materials needed for the activities	29 (29%)
Non-monetary professional benefits	26 (26%)
Other (e.g. small salary increase for obtaining a master's degree)	2 (2%)

Topics addressed by professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.4]

Child development	56 (56%)
Child health or personal care (e.g. hygiene)	36 (36%)
Facilitating play and learning	61 (61%)
Working with children with special needs	39 (39%)
Working with children from diverse backgrounds	55 (55%)
Working with parents/ guardians and families	55 (55%)
Classroom management	58 (58%)
Monitoring/documenting child development, wellbeing and learning	31 (31%)
School discipline programs	41 (41%)
Learning about the school system	29 (29%)
Communicating with colleagues	52 (52%)
Dealing with work related stress	23 (23%)
Teacher well-being (e.g. positive psychology, positive emotions, resilience)	30 (30%)

Professional development interests

Participants appear to be very interested in professional development activities focusing on the following topics: i) school discipline programs (M = 4.02; SD = 0.94); ii) teacher well-being (M = 3.95; SD = 1.15); iii) classroom management (M = 3.89; SD = 0.95 and iv) dealing with work-related stress (M = 3.73; SD = 1.18). The mean levels for almost all other topics were between 3 and 4 suggesting that overall participants are interested in learning more on several issues.

Moreover, their interests contrast with the lack of support from the institution, with mean levels below 3. Participants addressed that only at times their professional development interests were taken into consideration by their institution. Although sometimes they consider as not difficult to have access to in-service courses (M = 3.18; SD = 1.25), rarely their institution considers their individual needs and interests (M = 2.67; SD = 1.29) or takes an active interest in their career development (M = 2.57; SD = 1.20). Moreover, opportunities in

their school to develop new skills ($M = 2.91$; $SD = 1.18$), and encouragement to pursue further professional development ($M = 2.74$; $SD = 1.24$) are considered relatively rare.

Table 9

Professional development interests (N= 100)

Variable	Mean (SD)
Topics of interest for professional development activities ^a [Item 3.5]	
Child development	3.24 (1.15)
Child health or personal care (e.g. hygiene)	2.90 (1.13)
Facilitating play and learning	3.53 (1.13)
Working with children with special needs	3.38 (1.22)
Working with children from diverse backgrounds	3.71 (1.05)
Working with parents/ guardians and families	3.70 (1.05)
Classroom management	3.89 (0.95)
Monitoring/documenting child development, wellbeing and learning	3.65 (1.05)
School discipline programs	4.02 (0.94)
Learning about the school system	3.33 (1.14)
Communicating with colleagues	3.55 (1.08)
Dealing with work related stress	3.73 (1.18)
Teacher well-being (e.g. positive psychology, positive emotions, resilience)	3.95 (1.15)
Institutions' consideration of professional development interests ^b [Item 3.6]	
My institution take an active interest in my career development	2.57 (1.20)
I am encouraged by my institution to pursue further professional development	2.74 (1.24)
School takes into account my individual needs and interests	2.67 (1.29)
There are opportunities in this school for developing new skills	2.91 (1.18)
It is not difficult to gain access to in-service courses	3.18 (1.25)

^a Response range from 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("Extremely"); ^b Response range from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Always").

School discipline procedures

Schools provide a social context in which students need to be supported while being taught how to accept responsibility for their own behavior. Behavior codes and discipline procedures are essential elements of effective partnerships. Expectations relating to student behavior and the school's procedures for management of student behavior are statements of a school

community's values. However, present survey results revealed that only 24% of the participants had explicit discipline guidelines in their schools and only 4% reported that their school followed a specific discipline program indicating infrequent employment of school-wide discipline policies in the Greek educational system.

Most participants considered that guidelines/programs ($M = 3.5$; $SD = 1.16$) and practices ($M = 3.10$; $SD = .91$) were rather moderately effective in reducing problem behavior and that practices were also moderately effective in supporting children's socio-emotional needs ($M = 3.18$; $SD = .86$).

The extent to which rules and sanctions are often well understood by staff ($M = 3.58$; $SD = 0.92$) and children ($M = 3.40$; $SD = 0.94$) are in the mid-range, suggesting that they are sometimes or often understood, but there is room for improvement. Similarly, expectations about discipline are sometimes to frequently shared among teachers ($M = 3.47$; $SD = 1.09$). Although professionals indicated that schools' philosophy on discipline is ranged from sometimes to very often agreed ($M = 3.52$; $SD = 1.07$), they believe that the rules and sanctions seem to be enforced consistently rather rarely ($M = 2.30$; $SD = 1.28$).

Participants perceived their classroom's behavioral adjustment as generally positive ($M = 2.33$; $SD = 0.87$) (response range from 1 "Behave exceptionally well" to 5 "Misbehave very frequently"). However, when answering open-ended questions about the 3 biggest challenges they are facing regarding students' behavior, participants reported several serious behavioral problems such as aggression, disobedience, conflicts, lack of respect, destructive and defiant behavior as well as adverse characteristics related to the school environment such as poor family involvement and lack of boundaries (i.e., excessively permissive parenting style).

The most meaningful limitations in promoting positive learning environments reported by survey participants were inadequacy of students' support ($M = 3.57$; $SD = .99$), lack of or insufficient teachers' training ($M = 3.47$; $SD = 1.05$) and lack/inadequacy of collaboration among staff ($M = 2.95$; $SD = 1.16$).

At last, when participating teachers were asked to describe their perception of a positive learning environment, they mainly referred to collaborative practices with parents and colleagues. The need to establish positive conditions through parent engagement and co-workers seems to be a priority for participants. Specifically, they emphasized tolerance, trust, respect, and rapport in order to create and maintain a safe, engaged, connected, and supported classroom environment. Other characteristics included good relationships, fair treatment and respect, flexibility, inspiration, openness, and clear communication, adequate school facilities and resources, and also access to opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Table 10

School discipline procedures (N= 100)

Variable
N=100 (%)

School has explicit discipline guidelines [Item 4.1]	24%
How were school discipline guidelines developed? [Item 4.2]	
Based on top-level guidelines	18%
Based on research-based evidence	16%
The school follows a specific discipline program [Item 4.3]	4%
	Mean (SD)
Guidelines/programs effectiveness in reducing problem behaviors ^a [Item 4.4]	3.50 (1.16)
Practices effectiveness in reducing problem behaviors ^a [Item 4.5]	3.10 (.91)
Practices effectiveness in supporting socio-emotional needs ^a [Item 4.6]	3.18 (.86)
Implementation of discipline within school ^b [Item 4.7]	
The rules and sanctions are well understood by staff	3.58 (.92)
The rules and sanctions are well understood by children	3.40 (.94)
There is an agreed philosophy on discipline in this school	3.52 (1.07)
Shared expectations about discipline among teachers	3.47 (1.09)
The rules and sanctions are not enforced in a consistent fashion in this school	2.30 (1.28)
Overall classroom behavior adjustment ^c [Item 4.8]	2.33 (.87)
School's limitations on promoting positive learning environments ^d [Item 4.9]	
Lack of or inadequate of number of personnel	3.57 (.99)
Lack of or inadequate of teacher training	3.47 (1.05)
Lack of or inadequate of students' needs support	3.40 (1.11)
Complaints from families	2.26 (1.10)
Lack of or inadequate of collaboration among staff	2.95 (1.16)

^a Response range from 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("Extremely");

^b Response range from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Always");

^c Response range from 1 ("Behave exceptionally well") to 5 ("Misbehave very frequently");

^d Response range from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree").

Focus Group Interview Results

Demographics of the target group

Six participants attended the Focus Group, five of whom stayed to the end, only one had to leave due to other obligations. The majority of the participants were women and only one male was present. All the participants have been informed about the overall aim of the project and they have agreed to participate. Consent forms of all participants were conducted, along with all other relevant information.

The majority of the participants reported a long-standing work experience as coordinators of educational planning, and all are currently employed and active in the field. One of them was a School advisor/coordinator of educational planning in special education. Two of the participants noted that they are currently serving as preschool teachers. All of the participants exhibited an impressive zest for knowledge and understanding about the sectors' needs and mentioned an exceptional collection of post-graduate studies (master and Ph.D.) in education.

Main challenges for early childhood teachers

All participants agreed that the main challenge that ECE teachers are currently facing is the children's challenging behavior and not their academic performance. Below a list of all important points mentioned is included:

- Emphasis is given mostly on academic knowledge; participants suggest that the holistic development of children should be taken into consideration, i.e. socio-emotional development and not just academic performance.
- The curriculum is not in line with the needs of the children and teachers. It is knowledge-centered and addressed to a specific type of child, it does not take into account the diversity of children.
- The lack of cooperation between teachers in general education and teachers in special education. Lack of programs, lack of didactic materials, etc.
- The lack of knowledge regarding the home learning environment. The lack of cooperation between teachers and parents also causes stress to preschool teachers.
- The heterogeneity of children per classroom/educator, in terms of the socioeconomic and cultural background of each child, in terms of the cognitive and emotional development stage of each child, in terms of specific limitations (e.g., special needs in speech and language development, learning), which require new skills and knowledge regarding classroom management and more attention/intervention from the preschool educator to manage children in their class efficiently.
- The lack of knowledge regarding classroom management and children's behavior acts as a stressor factor for preschool teachers, especially for preschool teachers with limited work experience.
- Occupational insecurity also causes stress to teachers as there is no stable professional framework in relation to their work.
- The lack of space and safety in preschools settings, such as materials and equipment.
- Responsibilities regarding the school administration that teachers are called upon to take on also cause anxiety and stress.

Describe the main priority and school needs for promoting positive and preventative learning environments.

- **Main priorities**

All participants agreed that the main priority for promoting positive and preventative learning environments is the development of a positive school climate. Creating a supportive learning environment requires time, reflection, and planning. Also, participants noted that the collaboration between teachers and parents is crucial for the beginning of the preschool year because parents give important information to teachers regarding children's interests, behavior, and needs. Finally, one of the participants stated that the development of an effective pedagogical framework that consists of an appropriate space learning environment, materials and equipment, and inclusive practices may prevent negative behaviors in schools.

- **School needs for positive and preventative school environment**

All participants suggested that a positive classroom environment helps and prepares children for learning and may be especially important for children at-risk who may not have high-quality relationships outside of the preschool environment. Moreover, teachers' inclusive and discipline practices (e.g., setting rules and boundaries) may foster children's self-regulation regarding children's behavior. Results from the focus group interview indicated that school-family cooperation and a common framework regarding rules and children's behavior enable children to have a smooth school adjustment and learn how to be members of their social environment.

However, all participants agreed that the biggest barrier to promoting school-wide prevention of negative behaviors and stronger social-emotional support for children is the lack of teachers' training and professional development in issues about negative behaviors, as well as being well-equipped in a supportive context. Another barrier that should be regulated is the school-family cooperation. Results from the focus group interview indicated that parents sometimes deny to recognize that their children exhibit challenging behaviors and consequently they refuse to establish rules and boundaries for their children.

Identify current practices for supporting teacher's well-being, careers, career development, schoolwide discipline prevention and positive learning environments.

• Existing practices on teachers' wellbeing

Participants noticed a small number of programs that are offered for the psychological empowerment of teachers such as the RESCUE, a European resilience-focused curriculum; the Resilience and Positive psychology during COVID19 program by the Smile of the Child. A number of conferences and training about teachers' resilience and well-being were also offered by the Regional Centres for Educational Planning (PEKES).

• Existing opportunities for teachers' careers/ career development

Preschool teachers mentioned that existing opportunities for teachers' careers come from the training that takes place within the official school framework. One of the coordinators of educational planning suggested that preschool teachers have the opportunity to teach in schools abroad.

• Existing practices on discipline prevention and positive learning environments

All participants agreed that the most important practice on discipline prevention and positive learning environments is to develop sensitive and supportive teacher-child relationships. Below all the points raised are summarized:

- A supportive and well-organized environment with a variety of activities around children's interests.
- Rules and boundaries developed and accepted by all children and teachers
- A learning environment with many interest areas to suit children's development
- Establishment of a communication system among teachers, parents, and children
- Establishment of daily routines regarding rules and expected positive behaviors
- A positive reward system for children's specific behaviors
- Teachers acting as a positive role model

Important teacher training topics for promoting teacher's wellbeing, career, career development, and schoolwide prevention and stronger socio-emotional supports.

- **Training topics for promoting teachers' wellbeing**

One of the coordinators of educational planning suggested training topics regarding classroom management, development, and organizing socio-emotional learning environments.

- **Training topics for promoting teacher's careers**

Participants suggested training topics regarding school administration (e.g., how to prepare and fill -in official government documents).

- **Training topics for promoting socio-emotional skills/ support**

One of the coordinators of educational planning suggested training topics regarding both children's and teacher's socio-emotional development and practices focused on differentiated teaching. Teachers could be trained on the "pedagogical management of behaviors". According to participants, it is essential for teachers to be educated on how to prevent or how to manage negative behavior in the classroom.

General

Participants raised many other important factors that influence the discipline practices and social-emotional support for students. According to two of the coordinators of educational planning, it is crucial the existing educational policies to be reformed and enriched with parameters, which support teachers, children, and families in issues related to discipline practices and socio-emotional support. The educational policies need to assist and support teachers to apply an official educational framework for promoting positive and preventative learning environments. Finally, other important factors may be the teachers' evaluation and policies regarding inclusive education.

Main Conclusions

In summary, our findings presented a broad array of needs emerged from participants' responses in the survey study as well as from the responses shared by stakeholders participated in the focus group study. Both studies identified several needs for the staff working in ECEC settings and it is highlighted their concerns for their professional development in order to secure their work status, to improve their skills and knowledge in issues related to preschool education, and to enhance their collaboration skills with parents and their colleagues in school.

First, most of the participants raised the issue of collaboration with parents and teachers in their school and highlighted the need for building fruitful relationships that will reduce the stress in their work. Interestingly school-family partnerships have been raised as a challenging issue by both teachers and stakeholders that it is needed to be improved for supporting both teachers' well-being and teacher's work in the classroom. Second, participants reported that their well-being is influenced by the condition of their work in ECCE settings such as the job insecurity and instability, workload which interferes with their personal and family life needs. Therefore, they reported that they will be very interested to attend seminars for dealing with

work-related stress and teachers' well-being. Third, most of the participants underlined the value of a positive school climate and their need to develop skills for making an effective classroom management and a supportive environment for a holistic child development including socio-emotional development beyond the growth of academic skills. Fourth, participants pointed out that a common philosophy within schools it is not the norm and the discipline rules are not enforced consistently by all the staff in each school. A number of serious behavioral problems have been reported by teachers as well as most of them did not report explicit discipline practices to be followed by their schools. In addition, they raised the need for a supportive professional development by their schools in order to deal with these problem behaviors effectively and establish fruitful ways to manage children's behavior in their classrooms.

Therefore, it seems that actions are needed to be taken for supporting teachers' professional empowerment regarding their well-being as persons and as personnel in preschool settings dealing with children and families of diverse background and needs.

Portugal

Need-Assessment Methodology

In order to conduct a needs assessment, a questionnaire was developed to be completed online by ECEC staff. This questionnaire aims at assessing the needs, efforts, and practices regarding early childhood teachers' professional development, careers, well-being, and existing children's socio-emotional supports. After identifying the main topics, a search on available measures was conducted, and a selection of items was made. The selected items were from widely used, well-known measures, such as TALIS SS from OECD. After partner input and piloting the questionnaire, to check for clarity and structure, an online version was created, and the link was widely disseminated. The Target Sample was 100 participants per country. The link was available for approximately one month, during June 2020.

In addition to the questionnaire, a focus group was conducted. The Focus Group, aiming to identify the needs of the ProW project in Portugal, was implemented by the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Porto (FPCEUP) as a partner in the ProW project consortium. Due to COVID19 restrictive measures, the Focus Group was conducted online, via ZOOM, to protect the health and safety of all parties involved. Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Teresa Leal, from the FPCEUP, on behalf of Portugal project team, was the main Interviewer – Facilitator of the Focus Group. The online Focus Group in Portugal took place on Monday, 21/06/2021, between 14:30 and 16:30.

Needs-Assessment Results

Survey Results

Short description of response rate and sample demographics

Most of the participants were women (98%) with an average age of 45 years old (SD = 9.58; range 26-63; see Table 11). The majority had a master's degree (64%) and bachelor's degree (20%). Seventy percent of all participating teachers had a master's degree and 23% of had a bachelor's degree. Thirty-one percent of the participating assistants had also a master's degree. Most of the participating assistants had concluded high school education (44%). On average, classrooms were comprised of 19 children (SD = 5.17). Most participants worked with mixed age groups (47%) in private settings, either non-profit (44%) or self-financing (21%).

Most of the participants were teachers (85%; see Table 11). Participating teachers and assistants had on average 19.86 years of experience in the current job (SD = 10.64), from which 12.12 in the current setting (SD = 9.28). The vast majority had a full-time (98%) and permanent position (80%).

Table 11
Demographic characteristics for key stakeholders (N= 100)

Variable	n (%)
Gender [Item 1.1]	
Female	105 (98%)
Male	2 (2%)
Mean (SD)	
Age (years) [Item 1.2]	45.00 (9.58)
n (%)	
Level of formal education [Item 1.3]	
Bachelor degree	21 (20%)
Master's degree	69 (64%)
Doctoral degree	2 (2%)
Other	15 (14%)
Mean (SD)	
Number of children in classroom [Item 1.4]	19 (5.17)
n (%)	
Classroom's age composition [Item 1.5]	
2 years-old	24 (22%)
3 years-old	12 (11%)
4 years-old	9 (8%)
5 years-old	10 (9%)
Mixed age group	50 (47%)
Work setting [Item 1.6]	
Public school (ECEC + primary)	11 (10%)
Public setting (only ECEC)	10 (9%)
Non-profit private setting	48 (44%)
Self-financing private setting	22 (21%)

School community [Item 1.7]

Village, or rural area (fewer than 3 000 people)	20 (19%)
Small town (3 000 to about 15 000 people)	18(17%)
Town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)	52 (49%)
City (100 000 to about 1 000 000 people)	17(16%)

Missing values: Classroom's age composition, n = 2.

ECEC's professionals perspectives on their career progression and professional developmental

Career progression's indicators

The mean for all career progression items suggests that past opportunities for career development were limited. The most frequent career progression events in the last 5 years were: i) carrying out dynamic and creative work (M = 2.46; SD = 0.59); ii) being able to develop professionally (M = 2.42; SD = 0.66); iii) having opportunities to display knowledge and skills (M = 2.24; SD = 0.59).

On the other side, the less frequent career progression events in the last 5 years were: i) work in a different job not in the ECEC sector (M = 1.25; SD = 0.54); ii) getting a permanent contract (M = 1.32; SD = 0.65); iii) assuming a leading position (M = 1.44; SD = 0.72).

Regarding expectations about career progression for the following 5 years, participants considered likely that they would i) carry out dynamic and creative work (M = 4.01; SD = 1.10), ii) be able to develop professionally (M = 3.87; SD = 1.18), iii) have opportunities to display their knowledge and skills (M = 3.75; SD = 1.26). On the other hand, participants considered unlikely that, in the following 5 years, they would i) assume a leading position (M = 2.05; SD = 1.22) and ii) get a permanent contract (M = 2.11; SD = 1.28).

In an open question asking about the biggest career challenges they currently face, one of the most referred aspects was the lack of recognition of preschool education and preschool teachers. Participants also mentioned excessive work demands and struggles with time issues related to the accumulation of tasks, extensive contact time with children, and lack of time incentives for non-contact time tasks. The lack of support from institutions and leaders and few opportunities for professional development were also frequently mentioned.

Participants also referred to issues such as the existing rules for career progression, salary, and instability, namely not knowing where they will work in the next year.

Interestingly, as a challenge for career progression, participants also mentioned features such as a lack of teamwork, difficulties in dealing with children's families, and the large number of children in the classroom. Additionally, ageing, tiredness, and a lack of motivation to pursue further in their careers were also mentioned as career challenges

Table 12
Career progression indicators of the ECEC professionals (N= 100)

Variable	
	n (%)
Current position [Item 2.1]	
Teacher	91 (85%)
Assistant	16 (15%)
	Mean (SD)
Years of experience in current job [Item 2.2]	19.86 (10.64)
Years of experience in current setting [Item 2.3]	12.12 (9.28)
	n (%)
Employment status - type of contract [Item 2.4]	
Permanent employment	86 (80%)
Fixed-term for a period of 1 year or less	11 (10%)
Fixed-term for a period of more than 1 year	2 (2%)
Self-employed	1 (1%)
Employment status - working hours [Item 2.5]	
Full-time (more than 90% of full-time hours equivalent)	105 (98%)
Part-time (71-90% of full-time hours)	1 (1%)
Part-time (50-70% of full-time hours)	1 (1%)
	Mean (SD)
Progression in the last 5 years ^a [Item 2.6]	
Receiving a salary increase	1.90 (0.75)
Moving to a different school/setting	1.53 (0.82)
Assuming a leading position	1.44 (0.72)
Getting a permanent contract	1.32 (0.65)
Pursuing further qualifications	1.88 (0.78)
Being able to develop professionally	2.42 (0.66)
Having opportunities to display my knowledge and skills	2.24 (0.59)
Carrying out dynamic and creative work	2.46 (0.59)

Job autonomy to be appropriate to reconcile my family and work life	2.10 (0.72)
More freedom to organize my work	2.13 (0.71)
Work in a different job not in the ECEC sector	1.25 (0.54)
Progression expectancy in the following 5 years ^b [Item 2.7]	
Receiving a salary increase	2.82 (1.54)
Moving to a different school/setting	2.87 (1.39)
Assuming a leading position	2.05 (1.22)
Getting a permanent contract	2.11 (1.28)
Pursuing further qualifications	3.46 (1.46)
Being able to develop professionally	3.87 (1.18)
Having opportunities to display my knowledge and skills	3.75 (1.26)
Carrying out dynamic and creative work	4.01 (1.10)
Job autonomy to be appropriate to reconcile my family and work life	3.38 (1.45)
More freedom to organize my work	3.47 (1.41)
Work in a different job not in the ECEC sector	2.54 (1.43)

^a Response range from 1 (“It was not met at all”) to 3 (“It was met”);

^b Response range from 1 (“Very unlikely”) to 5 (“Very likely”).

Professional development activities during the last 12 months

In the past year, participants spent on average 86.44 hours in professional development activities (SD = 185.73). Sixty five percent reported attending courses/seminars and conferences, 51% reported participating in peer and/or self-observation and 30% were part of a network. Only 21% of the participants were engaged in on-site coaching and the least frequent professional development activity was being enrolled in a qualification program (10%). The most common topic addressed by professional development activities attended by participants were: i) child development (73%); ii) facilitating play and learning (68%); iii) classroom management (53%). On the contrary, the less frequent topics fall in features at the school level, namely i) dealing with work related stress (21%); ii) learning about the school system (22%); and iii) school discipline programs (28%).

Table 13
Professional development and training activities (N= 100)

Variable	Mean (SD)
Hours spent in professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.2]	86.44 (185.73)
	n (%)
Undertaken professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.1]	
Courses/seminars	70 (65%)
Conferences	70 (65%)
Qualification programme (e.g. a degree programme)	11 (10%)
Observation visits to other schools	22 (21%)
Peer and/or self-observation	55 (51%)
On-site coaching by an external person	22 (21%)
Participation in a network of professionals working with children	32 (30%)
Institutional support to professional development - last 12 months [Item 3.3]	
Release from working with children for activities during regular working hours	21 (20%)
Non-monetary support for activities outside working hours	9 (8%)
Reimbursement or payments of costs	8 (8%)
Provision of materials needed for the activities	34 (32%)
Non-monetary professional benefits	18 (17%)
Topics addressed by professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.4]	
Child development	72 (73%)
Child health or personal care (e.g. hygiene)	48 (49%)
Facilitating play and learning	67 (68%)
Working with children with special needs or from diverse backgrounds	50 (50%)
Working with parents/ guardians and families	46 (47%)
Classroom management	52 (53%)
Monitoring/documenting child development, wellbeing and learning	46 (47%)
School discipline programs	27 (28%)
Learning about the school system	21 (22%)
Communicating with colleagues	40 (40%)

Dealing with work related stress	20 (21%)
Teacher well-being (e.g. positive psychology, positive emotions, resilience)	33 (34%)

Professional development interests

Participants appear to be very interested in professional development activities focusing on the following topics: i) facilitating play and learning (M = 4.37; SD = 0.94); ii) child development (M = 4.24; SD = 1.02); iii) teacher well-being (M = 4.22; SD = 1.07). The mean levels for the other topics were between 3 and 4 suggesting that overall participants are interested in learning more on several issues.

However, their interests contrast with the lack of support from the institution, with mean levels generally below 3. Participants considered that only at times their professional development interests were taken into consideration by their institution. Specifically, although sometimes they perceive as not difficult to have access to in-service courses (M = 3.19; SD = 1.29), rarely the school considers their individual needs and interests (M = 2.74; SD = 1.33) or takes an active interest in their career development (M = 2.75; SD = 1.24). Moreover, opportunities in their school to develop new skills (M = 2.88; SD = 1.35), and encouragements to pursue further professional development (M = 2.81; SD = 1.34) are considered relatively rare.

Table 14

Professional development interests (N= 100)

Variable	Mean (SD)
Topics of interest for professional development activities ^a [Item 3.5]	
Child development	4.24 (1.02)
Child health or personal care (e.g. hygiene)	3.89 (1.08)
Facilitating play and learning	4.37 (0.94)
Working with children with special needs or from diverse backgrounds	4.02 (1.07)
Working with parents/ guardians and families	4.03 (1.03)
Classroom management	4.10 (0.99)
Monitoring/documenting child development, wellbeing and learning	4.06 (1.02)
School discipline programs	3.88 (1.05)
Learning about the school system	3.64 (1.09)
Communicating with colleagues	3.92 (1.02)
Dealing with work related stress	4.10 (1.04)
Teacher well-being (e.g. positive psychology, positive emotions, resilience)	4.22(1.07)

Institutions' consideration of professional development interests ^b [Item 3.6]

My institution take an active interest in my career development	2.75 (1.24)
I am encouraged by my institution to pursue further professional development	2.81 (1.34)
School takes into account my individual needs and interests	2.74 (1.33)
There are opportunities in this school for developing new skills	2.88 (1.35)
It is not difficult to gain access to in-service courses	3.19 (1.29)

^a Response range from 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("Extremely");

^b Response range from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Always").

School discipline procedures

Only 28% of the participants reported that their school had explicit discipline guidelines and only 7% reported that their school followed a specific discipline program.

Most participants considered that guidelines/programs ($M = 2.94$; $SD = 1.12$) and practices ($M = 2.80$; $SD = 1.05$) were slightly to moderately effective in reducing problem behavior and that practices were also slightly to moderately effective in supporting children's socio-emotional needs ($M = 2.80$; $SD = 1.03$).

The extent to which rules and sanctions are often well understood by staff ($M = 3.41$; $SD = 0.95$) and children ($M = 3.34$; $SD = 0.83$) are in the mid-range, suggesting that they are sometimes or often understood, but there is room for improvement. Similarly, expectations about discipline are sometimes to frequently shared among teachers ($M = 3.27$; $SD = 1.13$). Still, professionals indicated that schools' philosophy on discipline is only sometimes agreed ($M = 3.08$; $SD = 1.12$) and that the rules and sanctions are sometimes inconsistently enforced ($M = 2.78$; $SD = 1.07$).

Participants perceived their classroom's behavioral adjustment as positive ($M = 1.98$; $SD = 0.62$). Even though, when answering the open question about the 3 biggest challenges regarding children's behavior, participants refer to several behavioral problems, such as handling frustration, difficulties in social relationships (e.g., sharing, managing conflicts, and respecting others), and more general features such as not following/understanding classroom rules.

Still, features related to the school environment were also frequently stated, such as difficulties with families (e.g., deal with parents' permissive parenting style and manage parental behaviors towards children), lack of strong family-school partnerships (e.g., to be synchronized with parents regarding ways to deal with children's disruptive behaviors) and lack of shared goals within the community (e.g., all the participants in the educative process being attuned regarding perceptions about childhood). Other features related to human resources, group sizes, little time for play, physical conditions (such as adequate spaces to play outside), and teacher's own expectations to achieve their goals.

Participants reported that the schools' lack/inadequacy of students' support ($M = 3.68$; $SD = 1.08$), lack/inadequacy of collaboration among staff ($M = 3.54$; $SD = 1.13$) and lack of or inadequate teachers' training ($M = 3.48$; $SD = 1.07$) were among the most meaningful limitations in promoting positive learning environments.

At last, when describing what does a positive learning environment mean to them, participants mainly referred to child-centered approaches, such as i) providing opportunities for play and meaningful learning, ii) creating a respectful and warm climate; ii) stimulating children's active participation; iii) attending to individual needs and interests, and iv) respecting children.

Even though, other aspects not directly related to children were also frequently referred, such as close relationships with family, through open communication, teamwork where everyone shares learning/experiences, support one another, work towards the same goals, and learn together. Also, participants mentioned the importance of a positive working environment, including being valued for their work, with fair treatment and respect, access to opportunities for professional growth, and access to adequate human and physical resources.

Table 15

School discipline procedures (N= 100)

Variable	n (%)
School has explicit discipline guidelines [Item 4.1]	30 (28%)
How were school discipline guidelines developed? [Item 4.2]	
Based on top-level guidelines	27 (25%)
Based on research-based evidence	18 (17%)
The school follows a specific discipline program [Item 4.3]	7 (7%)
	Mean (SD)
Guidelines/programs effectiveness in reducing problem behaviors ^a [Item 4.4]	2.94 (1.12)
Practices effectiveness in reducing problem behaviors ^a [Item 4.5]	2.80 (1.05)
Practices effectiveness in supporting socio-emotional needs ^a [Item 4.6]	2.80 (1.03)
Implementation of discipline within school ^b [Item 4.7]	
The rules and sanctions are well understood by staff	3.41 (0.95)
The rules and sanctions are well understood by children	3.34 (0.83)
There is an agreed philosophy on discipline in this school	3.08 (1.12)
Shared expectations about discipline among teachers	3.27 (1.01)
The rules and sanctions are not enforced in a consistent fashion in this	2.78 (1.07)

school

Overall classroom behavior adjustment ^c [Item 4.8]	1.98 (0.62)
School's limitations on promoting positive learning environments ^d [Item 4.9]	
Lack of or inadequate of number of personnel	3.43 (1.25)
Lack of or inadequate of teacher training	3.48 (1.07)
Lack of or inadequate of students' needs support	3.68 (1.08)
Complaints from families	2.27 (1.21)
Lack of or inadequate of collaboration among staff	3.54 (1.13)

^a Response range from 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("Extremely"); ^b Response range from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Always"); ^c Response range from 1 ("Behave exceptionally well") to 5 ("Misbehave very frequently"); ^d Response range from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree").

Focus Group Interview Results

Six participants attended the Focus Group, four of them were women. Five participants stayed until the end of the session while one had to leave earlier due to other obligations. All participants have been informed about the overall aim of the project and they have agreed to participate. Consent forms were delivered and signed by all participants.

All the participants reported a longstanding work experience in education and are currently employed in the public education system. All participants have higher education courses (bachelor's and master's degrees) and three of them have a professional background in early childhood education. The two male participants are directors of school clusters. Two other participants belong to the school direction, one as a deputy director and the other as an assistant director. The group also included a coordinator of the preschool department and the president of the general council of a school cluster.

Main priority school needs for promoting positive and preventative learning environments

Participants again referred to the need to ensure ECE attendance from 3 years onwards.

They all agreed that one of the priorities for promoting a positive learning environment was the work with families ensuring good communication about the children.

They also underscored the importance of multidisciplinary teamwork in which professionals have well-defined roles and articulate effectively. Also, they point out the importance of networking with community resources.

Participants emphasized that operational assistants have an important role in promoting a positive school environment but frequently they lack specific training on how to deal with the children. As such, all agreed on the need to provide these professionals with skills and knowledge on this matter.

Existing practices for supporting schoolwide discipline prevention and positive learning environments

- Existing practices on teachers' wellbeing

Participants referred that the collaborative teamwork of ECE teachers with professionals from different areas is an important support for their wellbeing.

Also, the Ministry of Education provides some opportunities to apply for more human resources to support schools and for training in specific domains.

- **Existing opportunities for teachers' careers/career development**

Each school cluster (includes preschool, elementary and secondary education) has the possibility to identify specific training needs and priorities and to develop a training plan in conjunction with school association training centers.

A participant referred that in her school there is the practice of replication and "self-training". The professional who participates in a training course will have to replicate it in his/her school with other ECE teachers.

All participants agreed that there is no valorization of career development. Career development rules are constantly changing and there is a lack of continuity in evaluation criteria. Evaluation practices are inadequate and do not provide any incentive and opportunities for progression.

- **Existing practices on discipline prevention and positive learning environments**

Participants referred that ECE curriculum guidelines comprise directions on socioemotional development. These guidelines should be translated into practice to support children's socioemotional needs. They point out that socioemotional wellbeing is necessary for the child to attain fulfillment and good learning.

There is a commitment between the school and the children's families. Consequently, socio-emotional problems are dealt with by parents. The younger the child, the more the school depends on families to deal with these issues. Therefore, it is necessary to establish well-defined communication channels with the families since children start to attend preschool education. Also, it is necessary to define the role of each intervenient: family, professionals, community services, and state.

One participant, a school director, pointed out the need to have well-defined schedules and well-defined communication channels so that everything can flow with normality.

They emphasized, however, that there are situations that they cannot resolve without the help and support of other professionals. As there is a lack of professionals to work on a multidisciplinary basis, it is expected that ECE teachers can assume all these different roles (psychologist, social worker, parent, ...).

Important teacher training topics for promoting schoolwide prevention and stronger socio-emotional supports

- **Training topics for promoting teachers' wellbeing**

Participants considered it urgent to develop training actions to provide an in-depth understanding of the curriculum guidelines and their translation into practice. Moreover, they emphasized the importance of a joint reflection on quality practices in ECE.

They added that there is a set of topics in which further training is needed, namely literacy issues in five-year-old children, technology, cultural diversity, and inclusive education.

- **Training topics for promoting teachers' career**

One participant underlined the importance of comprehensive initial training including domains as curriculum development, psychology, and sociology.

- **Training topics for promoting socio-emotional skills/support**

Participants agreed that it is a very important domain. Emotional stability is a prerequisite for learning consistently and in a positive way.

They suggested training actions on resources and the development of skills to support children with socio-emotional problems.

Main Conclusions

Overall, several needs can be identified based on participants' highlights and values. First, the importance of and need for improving school-family partnerships: Participants underline the value of developing warm, open, and strong partnerships with families, through which reciprocal channels of communication are at place, as well as a shared vision on learning and discipline issues. But participants also point struggling in establishing such partnerships. Second and relatedly, the value of teamwork was also emphasized, as well as the need for support from colleagues, other staff and from leaders. As such, creating opportunities for communication, collaboration and for developing a common framework on positive learning can be a valuable means for improving levels of support and reinforce a shared vision on learning, emotional climate, and behavior management. Interestingly, participants highlight the value of child-centred approaches, including play and meaningful learning. Thus, project actions should be connected and aligned with such vision. Participants revealed to be interested in professional development in general and, in particular, in regard to teachers' well-being. Therefore, actions involving teachers' learning opportunities appear to be welcomed.

Romania

Needs-Assessment Methodology

Early childhood educators had to complete a survey that was developed in order to assess their needs, efforts, and practices regarding their professional development, careers, well-being, and existing children’s socio-emotional supports. After translating the questionnaire in Romanian and after piloting it to check for clarity and structure, an online version was created, and the link was widely disseminated. The link was sent to school and kindergarten principals and teachers. The participants had to give their consent so that their answers could be used in this research. The Target Sample was at least 100 participants. The link was available for approximately two months, in June and July 2020. The completed questionnaires were securely stored in a private computer and the information is available only for being used in this particular project. The answers were analyzed using Jamovi, “a free and open statistical software developed to bridge the gap between researchers and statisticians”.

We had a total of 113 questionnaires. One of them was removed because it was completed by a high school teacher. Some teachers (3) completed the survey more than once, so we also removed the duplicates (6 copies).

Needs-Assessment Results

Survey Results

Short description of response rate and sample demographics

Most of the participants were women (99.1%). The average age of all participants was 40.2 years (SD = 10.8; range 21–62; see Table 16). The majority had a bachelor’s degree (48.12%) and a master’s degree (40.56%). Some of them, i.e., 6.6%, had a short-cycle tertiary-level degree, and 2.83% had an upper secondary level qualification. On average, classrooms were comprised of 22 children (SD = 6.72). The participants worked with homogeneous age groups: 31.13% worked with groups of 5-year-old children, 22.64% worked with groups of 4-year-old children, 17.92% had groups of 3-year-old children, 12.28% worked with mixed age groups, and 16.03% worked with primary school students (6–7 years old).

53.77% of the respondents worked in public settings (only ECEC), 45.28% of them worked in public schools (ECEC + primary), and 0.95% worked in a self-financing private setting.

Table 16

Demographic characteristics for key stakeholders (N= 106)

Variable	n (%)
<i>Gender [Item 1.1]</i>	
Female	105 (99.1%)
Male	1 (0.9%)
	Mean (SD)

Age (years) [Item 1.2]	40.2 (10.8)
	n (%)
Level of formal education [Item 1.3]	
Bachelor's degree	51 (48.12%)
Master's degree	43 (40.56%)
Other	12 (11.32%)
	Mean (SD)
Number of children in classroom [Item 1.4]	22 (6.72)
	n (%)
Classroom's age composition [Item 1.5]	
3-year-old children	19 (17.92%)
4-year-old children	24 (22.64%)
5-year-old children	33 (31.13%)
6–7-year-old children	17 (16.03%)
Mixed age group	13 (12.28%)
Work setting [Item 1.6]	
Public school (ECEC + primary)	48 (45.28%)
Public setting (only ECEC)	57 (53.77%)
Self-financing private setting	1 (0.95%)
School community [Item 1.7]	
Village, or rural area (fewer than 3 000 people)	41 (38.68%)
Small town (3 000 to about 15 000 people)	10 (9.43%)
Town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)	13 (12.26%)
City (100 000 to about 1 000 000 people)	27 (25.47%)
Large city (over 1 000 000 people)	15 (14.16%)

ECEC's Professionals perspectives on their career progression and professional developmental

Career progression's indicators

All participants were teachers (100%; see Table 17). Participating teachers had on average 17.07 years of experience in the current job (SD = 11.87), from which 12.05 in the current setting (SD = 9.93). All participants had a full-time position. 84.9% of them had a permanent position, and 15.1% had a temporary position.

The most frequent career progression events in the last 5 years were: i) being able to develop professionally (M = 2.74; SD = 0.5); ii) carrying out dynamic and creative work (M = 2.68; SD = 0.56); iii) having opportunities to display knowledge and skills (M = 2.63; SD = 0.54).

On the other side, the less frequent career progression events in the last 5 years were: i) assuming a leading position (M = 1.33; SD = 0.67); ii) work in a different job not in the ECEC sector (M = 1.42; SD = 0.71); iii) moving to a different school/setting (M = 1.48; SD = 0.84).

Regarding the expectations about career progression for the following 5 years, participants considered that they would i) carry out dynamic and creative work (M = 4.46; SD = 0.89); ii) be able to develop professionally (M = 4.45; SD = 0.96); iii) have opportunities to display their knowledge and skills (M = 4.41; SD = 0.92). On the other hand, participants considered unlikely that, in the following 5 years, they would i) work in a different job not in the ECEC sector (M = 2.01; SD = 1.36); ii) move to a different school/setting (M = 2.11; SD = 1.31); iii) assume a leading position (M = 2.15; SD = 1.29).

Table 17
Career progression indicators of the ECEC professionals (N= 106)

Variable	
	n (%)
Current position [Item 2.1]	
Teacher	106 (100%)
	Mean (SD)
Years of experience in current job [Item 2.2]	17.07 (11.87)
Years of experience in current setting [Item 2.3]	12.05 (9.93)
	n (%)
Employment status - type of contract [Item 2.4]	
Permanent employment	90 (84.9%)
Fixed-term for a period of 1 year or more	3 (2.83%)
Fixed-term for a period of 1 year or less	13 (12.27%)
Full-time (more than 90% of full-time hours equivalent)	106 (100%)
	Mean (SD)
Progression in the last 5 years ^a [Item 2.6]	
Receiving a salary increase	2.35 (0.7)
Moving to a different school/setting	1.48 (0.84)
Assuming a leading position	1.33 (0.67)
Getting a permanent contract	2.01 (1)
Pursuing further qualifications	2.2 (0.79)
Being able to develop professionally	2.74 (0.5)
Having opportunities to display my knowledge and skills	2.63 (0.54)
Carrying out dynamic and creative work	2.68 (0.56)
Job autonomy to be appropriate to reconcile my family and work life	2.47 (0.63)
More freedom to organize my work	2.53 (0.58)
Work in a different job not in the ECEC sector	1.42 (0.71)

Progression expectancy in the following 5 years ^b [Item 2.7]

Receiving a salary increase	3.38 (1.32)
Moving to a different school/setting	2.11 (1.31)
Assuming a leading position	2.15 (1.29)
Getting a permanent contract	3.2 (1.66)
Pursuing further qualifications	3.85 (1.39)
Being able to develop professionally	4.45 (0.96)
Having opportunities to display my knowledge and skills	4.41 (0.92)
Carrying out dynamic and creative work	4.46 (0.89)
Job autonomy to be appropriate to reconcile my family and work life	4.13 (1.08)
More freedom to organize my work	4.23 (0.97)
Work in a different job not in the ECEC sector	2.01 (1.36)

^a Response range from 1 (“It was not met at all”) to 3 (“It was met”);

^b Response range from 1 (“Very unlikely”) to 5 (“Very likely”).

Professional development activities during the last 12 months

In the past year, participants spent on average 131.85 hours in professional development activities (SD = 147.07). 88.7% reported attending courses/seminars, 81.1% reported participating in peer and/or self-observation, 47.2% were part of a network, and 34% took part in mentoring activities. The least frequent professional development activity regarded observation visits to other schools (28.3%). The most common topics addressed by professional development activities in the last 12 months were: i) child development (88.7%); ii) facilitating play and learning (87.7%); iii) classroom management (80.2%). On the contrary, the less frequent topics were: i) dealing with work-related stress (42.5%); ii) school discipline programs (49.1%), and iii) teacher well-being (49.1%).

Table 18

Professional development and training activities (N= 106)

Variable	Mean (SD)
Hours spent in professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.2]	131.85 (147.07)
	n (%)
Undertaken professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.1]	
Courses/seminars	94 (88.7%)
Conferences	85 (80.2%)
Qualification programme (e.g. a degree programme)	71 (67%)
Observation visits to other schools	30 (28.3%)
Peer and/or self-observation	86 (81.1%)
On-site coaching by an external person	52 (49.1%)
Participation in a network of professionals working with children	50 (47.2%)

Induction or mentoring activities	36 (34%)
Others	38 (35.85%)
Institutional support to professional development - last 12 months [Item 3.3]	
Release from working with children for activities during regular working hours	14 (13.2%)
Non-monetary support for activities outside working hours	12 (11.3%)
Reimbursement or payments of costs	41 (38.7%)
Provision of materials needed for the activities	47 (44.3%)
Non-monetary professional benefits	56 (52.8%)
Others	25 (23.59%)
Topics addressed by professional development activities - last 12 months [Item 3.4]	
Child development	94 (88.7%)
Child health or personal care (e.g. hygiene)	72 (67.9%)
Facilitating play and learning	93 (87.7%)
Working with children with special needs or from diverse backgrounds	70 (66%)
Working with parents/ guardians and families	75 (70.8%)
Classroom management	85 (80.2%)
Monitoring/documenting child development, wellbeing and learning	65 (61.3%)
School discipline programs	52 (49.1%)
Learning about the school system	56 (52.8%)
Communicating with colleagues	62 (58.5%)
Dealing with work related stress	45 (42.5%)
Teacher well-being (e.g. positive psychology, positive emotions, resilience)	52 (49.1%)

Missing values: hours spent in professional development activities, n = 10

Professional development interests

Participants appear to be very interested in professional development activities focusing on the following topics: i) teacher well-being (M = 4.45; SD = 0.79); ii) working with parents/guardians and families (M = 4.28; SD = 0.96); iii) working with children with special needs or from diverse backgrounds (M = 4.28; SD = 0.94). The mean levels for the other topics were between 4 and 5 suggesting that participants are interested in learning more about certain topics.

Participants have received support from their institution to engage in several activities regarding their professional development (M = 2.74; SD = 1.26). Their individual needs and interests were taken into consideration (M = 3.42; SD = 1.26). The participants said it was not difficult to gain access to in-service courses (M = 3.58; SD = 1.26) and that they had opportunities to develop new skills (M = 3.6; SD = 1.21).

Table 19
Professional development interests (N= 106)

Variable	Mean (SD)
Topics of interest for professional development activities ^a [Item 3.5]	
Child development	4.18 (0.93)
Child health or personal care (e.g. hygiene)	4.03 (1.02)
Facilitating play and learning	4.25 (0.93)
Working with children with special needs or from diverse backgrounds	4.28 (0.94)
Working with parents/ guardians and families	4.28 (0.96)
Classroom management	4.11 (0.92)
Monitoring/documenting child development, well-being, and learning	4.21 (0.91)
School discipline programs	4.08 (0.96)
Learning about the school system	3.9 (1.02)
Communicating with colleagues	3.98 (1.04)
Dealing with work related stress	4.25 (0.94)
Teacher well-being (e.g. positive psychology, positive emotions, resilience)	4.45(0.79)
Institutions' consideration of professional development interests ^b [Item 3.6]	
My institution takes an active interest in my career development	3.58 (1.15)
I am encouraged by my institution to pursue further professional development	2.74 (1.26)
School takes into account my individual needs and interests	3.42 (1.26)
There are opportunities in this school for developing new skills	3.6 (1.21)
It is not difficult to gain access to in-service courses	3.58 (1.26)

^a Response range from 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("Extremely");

^b Response range from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Always").

School discipline procedures

Only 47.2% of the participants reported that their school had explicit discipline guidelines and only 6.6% reported that their school followed a specific discipline program.

Most participants considered that the guidelines/programs related to reducing problem behaviors (M = 3.02; SD = 1.35), practices related to reducing problem behavior (M = 3.5; SD = 0.99) and practices related to supporting children's socio-emotional needs (M = 3.5; SD = 1.01) were effective. These items were not completed by all participants (only 41 of them answered these questions) due to the fact that not all schools have implemented discipline programmes.

The staff (M = 4.02; SD = 1.03) and children (M = 3.6; SD = 0.94) understand very well the rules and the sanctions. Similarly, expectations about discipline are usually shared among teachers (M = 3.92; SD = 1.02). Professionals indicated that there is an agreed philosophy on discipline

in their school (M = 3.48; SD = 1.24), but that the rules and sanctions are sometimes inconsistently enforced (M = 2.74; SD = 1.33).

The mean of the overall classroom behavioral adjustment was 3.02 (SD = 0.53). When answering to the open question about the 3 biggest challenges regarding children's behavior, participants stated several behavioral problems (lack of attention, use of inappropriate language, violent behavior), difficulties in being accepted in a group of students, and features related to the relationship between students, parents, and teachers.

One of the most important challenges stated by the participants was related to working with children who have special educational needs. Some others referred to a lack of a proper education either of the children or even of the parents, to a lack of a proper understanding of rules and instructions, to properly managing conflicts, and to difficulties in communicating effectively with the students and the parents due to the fact that parents often refuse to accept that their children need appropriate support. Other features related to human resources and to group sizes (there are too many children in groups).

Participants reported that the inadequate number of personnel (M = 3.16; SD = 1.17), the inadequate support for meeting students' needs (M = 3.16; SD = 1.25), and the lack of enough teacher training (M = 3.15; SD = 1.26) were among the most meaningful limitations in promoting positive learning environments and positive behaviors.

When describing what a positive learning environment means to them, participants said that it is important i) to develop an effective partnership between principals, teachers, students, and parents; ii) to create a playful environment to suit the characteristics of each child; iii) to have adequate learning materials for each age group; iv) to promote children's well-being; v) to have less paperwork to complete; vi) to have the support of a counselor and of a speech therapist.

Table 20

School discipline procedures (N= 106)

Variable	n (%)
School has explicit discipline guidelines [Item 4.1]	50 (47.2%)
How were school discipline guidelines developed? [Item 4.2]	
Based on top-level guidelines	40 (37.7%)
Based on research-based evidence	39 (36.8%)
Others	20 (18.9%)
The school follows a specific discipline program [Item 4.3]	7 (6.6%)
	Mean (SD)
Guidelines/programs effectiveness in reducing problem behaviors ^a [Item 4.4]	3.02 (1.35)
Practices effectiveness in reducing problem behaviors ^a [Item 4.5]	3.5 (0.99)
Practices effectiveness in supporting socio-emotional needs ^a [Item 4.6]	3.5 (1.01)

Implementation of discipline within school ^b [Item 4.7]	
The rules and sanctions are well understood by staff	4.02 (1.03)
The rules and sanctions are well understood by children	3.6 (0.94)
There is an agreed philosophy on discipline in this school	3.48 (1.24)
Shared expectations about discipline among teachers	3.92 (1.02)
The rules and sanctions are not enforced in a consistent fashion in this school	2.74 (1.33)
Overall classroom behavior adjustment ^c [Item 4.8]	3.02 (0.53)
School's limitations on promoting positive learning environments ^d [Item 4.9]	
Lack of or inadequate of number of personnel	3.16 (1.17)
Lack of or inadequate of teacher training	3.15 (1.26)
Lack of or inadequate of students' needs support	3.16 (1.25)
Complaints from families	2.80 (1.25)
Lack of or inadequate of collaboration among staff	2.87 (1.27)

^a Response range from 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("Extremely");

^b Response range from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Always");

^c Response range from 1 ("Behave exceptionally well") to 5 ("Misbehave very frequently");

^d Response range from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree").

Missing values: Guidelines/programs effectiveness in reducing problem behaviors, n = 65

Practices effectiveness in reducing problem behaviors, n = 1

Focus Group Interview Results

The Focus Group meant to identify the current school needs regarding efforts made in Romania to establish schoolwide discipline prevention and create positive learning school environments in early childhood education was implemented by the University of Pitesti as partner in the ProW project consortium. Due to COVID19 restrictive measures, the Focus Group was conducted online via Skype, to protect the health and safety of all parties involved. Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Manuela Ciucurel, from the University of Pitesti, on behalf of the Romanian project team was the main Interviewer – Facilitator of the Focus Group. The online Focus Group took place in Romania on Monday, 24th May 2021, between 6 and 8 p.m.

Demographics of the target group

The target audience of this Focus Group consisted of specialists in preschool education (educators employed in the public system, but also in the private one, who work in a kindergarten), representatives of the management of kindergartens and primary schools, and representatives of the county leadership in the education sector (representatives of the Argeş County School Inspectorate).

Eight participants attended the Focus Group. All the participants were women and they had been informed about the overall aim of the project. Consent forms of all participants were collected, along with all other relevant information. The majority of the participants reported a long-standing work experience as coordinators of educational planning, and all are currently employed and active in the field. Five of the participants noted that they are currently serving as preschool teachers, three of whom are also principals. All participants exhibited an

impressive zest for knowledge and understanding about the sectors' needs and stated that they hold an exceptional collection of post-graduate studies (Master and Ph.D.) in education.

Main priority school needs for promoting positive and preventative learning environments ***What do you see as a priority to prevent negative behaviors in school?***

Even if the respondents did not answer straight to the question, they have emphasized that **consultation with the team of specialists** and **identification of solutions through teamwork** are methods used when problems exceed the teacher's ability to manage and solve different issues. The children's crisis situations are managed through various techniques, such as **attracting them towards the teacher, involving them in direct work with the teacher, giving them some work, or allowing them to play with their favorite objects**. One method is to **invite and keep the child on the soothing couch or in the quiet corner**. At the same time, the teachers seek to reassure the class of students and also themselves, because they will all be affected by the tense situation. **Discussions with children**, based on the desirable behaviors expected of them, is another method used, or **therapeutic stories, examples of behaviors** that have good short-term effects. The participants explained that they also use their **personal example**: the teacher talks to the children from a personal perspective (giving examples of how s/he reacts in certain situations). There are therapeutic stories for aggressive, anxious, angry, misunderstood children. These stories can give children another perspective that communicates the fact that it is okay to feel angry or upset, and also how we should behave when we feel this way. **The method of counting to ten and deep breathing** are also indicated as helpful in such tense situations. **Parental help** in managing more difficult cases of negative behavior is sometimes needed.

- **School needs for positive and preventative school environment**

Why do you think it is important to promote the social-emotional and behavioral needs of all students?

Promoting the social-emotional and behavioral needs of all students is crucial for establishing a good and auspicious climate in the classroom or the school. In order to create positive environments for learning and discipline, the school creates partnerships with various partner institutions to support and contribute to this goal. For example, the church, the police, doctors, psychologists, children's theaters, or other kindergartens are such partners in the dialogue initiated to create moral behaviors and a socially correct attitude. Sharing experience with other classes or kindergartens helps to learn correct discipline behaviors. It is important that students feel rewarded, valued, and supported by colleagues and educators, and thus develop a positive climate, through hugs, encouragement, small rewards, supportive discussions, various classroom habits.

Existing practices for supporting schoolwide discipline prevention and positive learning environments

- **Existing practices on teachers' well-being**

Do you have in mind any programs that exist for the psychological empowerment of teachers? (well-being, resilience, positive psychology). Please give us some examples.

In Romania there are several projects with European funding, carried out by the Ministry of Education or universities/schools, which offered teachers the opportunity for the empowerment of teachers (CRED - Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All), ETIC – Inclusive and Qualitative Early Childhood Education). Participants noticed that there is only a small number of programs that are offered for the psychological empowerment of teachers.

- **Existing opportunities for teachers' careers/career development**

What options/opportunities are there for your professional development?

The career development opportunities mentioned by the teachers are:

- sharing experience with other colleagues – an opportunity to develop professionally
- professional meetings
- debates on educational topics (such as this Focus Group), training and improvement courses organized by universities, school inspectorates, and/or the Teaching Staff House
- informal experiences – for personal development.

The accessibility of these courses is increasing, and the openness of the trainers is encouraging teachers to attend such courses. The possibilities and opportunities for career development are more and more numerous; through the courses provided by the Ministry of Education or universities, human resources in schools can expand their area of competence and skills in various directions, such as developing online work techniques, child and group psychology and groups, adult/parent psychology, educational leadership, educational management, and others.

How do you think your career could be developed further?

The development of human resources in kindergartens will have to focus on the needs of children and on keeping up with technological changes (digitalization of education). The children's better technology skills are evident, the use of online devices and resources being available to any kindergarten child, and educators will have to be aware of all these trends and innovations, to apply them in early education so that children learn as they like.

Teachers need to remain concerned with career development even after the moment of reaching some essential stages of the career (periodic or on the spot assessments, obtaining teaching degrees) through continuing development and training based on readings and attending various courses, especially in areas related to teacher training (not only in the specialty field).

- **Existing practices on discipline prevention and positive learning environments**

All participants agreed that the most important practice on discipline prevention and positive learning environments is to develop sensitive and supportive teacher-child relationships. All the points that the participants have emphasized are summarized below:

- A supportive and well-organized environment with a variety of activities around children's interests.
- Rules and limits/restrictions set and accepted by all children and teachers.
- A learning environment with many interest areas to suit children's development.

- Establishment of a communication system among teachers, parents, and children.
- Establishment of daily routines regarding rules and expected positive behaviors.
- A positive reward system for children's specific expected or desired behaviors.
- Teachers acting as a positive role model.

Important teacher training topics for promoting schoolwide prevention and stronger socio-emotional supports

- **Training topics for promoting teachers' well-being**

What programs exist to promote the welfare of teachers? / What would you propose?

The participants did not mention any programs for teachers' welfare (we do not have information if they are not aware of such programs or if such programs do not exist).

Training topics on classroom management, development, and organization of socio-emotional learning environments were suggested by participants.

- **Training topics for promoting teachers' career**

What training programs exist to enhance the careers of kindergarten teachers? What would you suggest?

As above, the respondents did not express any opinion or idea in relation to the posed questions, but they pointed out that an important help for early-stage educators is given by colleagues, from whom they can learn many practical things, derived from their daily experience with children and school documents.

- **Training topics for promoting socio-emotional skills/support**

What teacher training topics are important for promoting school-wide discipline and stronger social-emotional support?

Socio-emotional development of children and teachers and also the practices in the field focused on differentiated teaching were indicated as important topics. Teachers need to be trained in the field of "pedagogical behavior management". According to the participants, it is essential that teachers are taught how to prevent or manage negative behavior in the classroom, how to cope with new changes in children's behavior under the effects of the pandemic and digitalization, and also how to work with parents to create a good teacher-child-parent relationship.

Main Conclusions

Most participants have at least a bachelor's degree and that means they have a certificate of higher education. The children they work with are between 3 and 7 years old. All participants were teachers who had a full-time position. Most of them had a permanent contract and some others occupied a temporary position.

The most important events which occurred in the last 5 years were related to professional development, to being able to take part in activities that would allow them to use their

creativity and to use their knowledge and skills appropriately. Regarding their career progression, the participants had the same goals as the ones previously mentioned.

The participants undertook several development activities such as seminars, webinars, conferences, and courses. They were also interested in visiting other schools and taking part in teachers' meetings which are organized twice a year in each county. Some topics teachers were interested in during their professional development were related to child development, child health, working with children who have special educational needs and with their parents/guardians, and also to improving teacher-student-parent relationships. Poor relationships are a consequence of a lack of proper and effective communication and of negative behaviors that are tolerated by some of the parents. Teachers also lack proper support due to the fact that in Romania there is only one teacher who is responsible for a large number of students (sometimes the ratio is 1:40).

There seems to be a lack of discipline procedures in many schools and teachers have difficulties in finding the best solutions to managing conflict and to reducing problem behaviors. They also try to develop positive behaviors and to ensure the well-being of children. Another problem was related to the increasing number of students who have special educational needs and to the fact that most teachers have not received proper training to create a proper learning environment for all of them.

Except for the aspects and examples previously mentioned, the respondents did not wish to approach or make a point on any other issues during the Focus Group.

Despite all the logistical and material difficulties, the teachers declare themselves dedicated to this profession that they understand to do in the interest of the children, being in a permanent adaptation of the working methods and tools in the classroom. Teachers have the obligation to tell the parents that they are a team that works together to support children. The well-being of educators is very important in creating well-being in the classroom for children. Any change in the teacher's behavior is immediately perceived and felt by the children.

PART B: Action Planning

Overall, findings from the country reports provide useful information for the implementation of the proW intervention. First, the PERMA and SWPBS frameworks seem indeed to be relevant tools to address current needs and challenges in the four countries. Findings showed that professionals of the four countries are open to learning opportunities through Professional Development and identified as a main interesting topic staff well-being, further highlighting the usefulness of the PERMA model. Additionally, managing stress and developing positive and respectful relationships among professionals, parents, and children were pointed out in the open questions by many respondents.

It is also striking from the questionnaires, and again common to all countries, the scarce percentage of schools/settings that implement school-wide discipline guidelines and relatedly, the remarkably large number of challenges and difficulties identified by participants, including the prevalence of behavioral problems, lack or inadequacy of teamwork and lack of opportunities for strong collaboration with parents and families. The SWPBS framework can be a powerful means to address these features by helping to develop a shared vision, implement whole-school coherent and consistent strategies, and establish strong partnerships among professionals, parents, and children. Common to both approaches and aligned with the main findings are the relevance of an intervention framed by capacity building and powerful relationships. Professionals seem to be particularly interested in building their own skills and knowledge while feeling valued, appreciated, and supported in their work, which can be accomplished by strong partnerships as perceived in the PERMA and SWPBS frameworks.

Still, it is important to acknowledge several challenges for the successful implementation of these programs. For a start, findings highlight the specificities of ECEC and throughout the reports, one can get a sense that professionals highly value child-centered and playful approaches. As such, proposed activities and strategies should be aligned with such views, respecting and facilitating children's participation through play. In addition, while raising opportunities for consistency across professionals and implementing whole-school approaches, meeting children's needs should be respected, which calls for flexibility and attention to the specific needs and interests when choosing the best approaches to child management behavior. Participants' active participation in the choice, development and implementation of the intervention seems not only desirable but also necessary to help meet the needs of all involved in a particular school.

Moreover, while participants seem to highly value collaboration and close relationships with both colleagues and parents, it also appears that, at least in some cases and schools, relationships are degraded and may even be conflictual, which means that interventions may not start at a neutral point, calling for sensitive and respectful coaches who are able to manage existing tensions and conflicts.

Two last points should be mentioned. The findings highlight that many professionals feel stress, excessive work demands, and lack of time for their ongoing tasks. Whereas the PERMA model, in particular, can better support professionals in stress management, it will be important to ensure that all proposed activities from coaches are not too demanding in terms of effort and time, but rather supportive. Again, this point calls for sensitive coaches who are attentive and respect participants' needs. At last, building upon a positive approach is a continuous, progressive process that requires time and collaboration. The development of strong and respectful partnerships between coaches and participants is at the core of the intervention and requires time, an aspect that should not be overlooked.

Table B shows action goals and steps formulated based on these concluding issues.

Table 21

Action Planning

Action goal (What?) (E.g. Improve Teachers Career and Well-being)	Action step (Describe the what) (e.g., Culturally adapt the tiered SWPBS framework in local context)	By whom?	When?	Assessment Status: Yes (Y) No (N) In Progress (IP)
Create opportunities for teachers to develop professionally	Culturally adapt the tiered SWPBS framework in local context	Coaches	2021/2022	IP
Improve shared vision in the community	Culturally adapt the tiered SWPBS framework in local context	Coaches	2021/2022	IP
Improve school-family partnerships	Culturally adapt the tiered SWPBS framework in local context	Coaches	2021/2022	IP
Improve teacher well-being	Culturally adapt the PERMA framework in local context	Coaches	2021/2022	IP
Create opportunities for teamwork	Culturally adapt the tiered SWPBS framework in local context	Coaches	2021/2022	IP
Explaining the concept of positive behavior	Culturally adapt the tiered SWPBS framework in local context	Coaches	2021/2022	IP
Sustain child-centred and playful approaches	Culturally adapt the PERMA and SWPBS frameworks to ECEC	Coaches	2021/2022	IP