



Continuing Education to Preschool Teachers  
and Education Directors through Online Trainings

## KA2 Strategic Partnerships - VG-SPS-BY-15-36-013864

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## Table of contents

Introduction.....	4
Presentation of the output.....	4
Activity 1: User Needs Analysis .....	5
Quantitative research .....	5
The survey design .....	5
The survey results .....	8
Qualitative research .....	23
Methodology used .....	23
Interviews' results.....	24
Activity 2: Methodological Guidelines .....	26
Topics .....	26
Strategies in content development.....	26
Strategies in teaching approaches.....	27
Conclusion.....	28
Annex 1 Survey .....	29
Annex 2 Protocol for semi-structured interviews.....	34
Annex 3 ECEC profiles and required degrees in EU countries.....	35



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## Introduction

As reported in the project application “In 2011, the Council of the EU formally recognizes the central impact of early years service provision for individual, societal, and economic success. In the EU 2020 strategy, providing high quality and accessible education and care are a key element. International skill survey results (Pisa 2012 (OECD) and Pirls/Iglu 2011 (IEA) document the relation between early childhood education and care (ECEC) and school performance which is fundamental for individual development and therefore the key to the future.”

The rationale of the EduTeach project is to develop “quality, innovative, and interactive ICT based modules for further professional training opportunities for preschool teachers and education directors”.

Specifically the aims of EduTeach are:

- Reaching different ECEC target groups (educators, managers/directors) making them interact for exchange of best practices, discussing real-life examples, and giving professional advice and support with the help of experts in the field;
- Designing a modular training programme to reach the previous goal. The implementation of an online environment will imply three educational approaches: 1. Self-study (reading & watching educational material provided in a digital learning environment) 2. Storytelling (educational problem cases that are in line with the module topic and which professionals from all over Europe share); 3. Webinars (moderated by a project partner and senior experts from the field).

Taking into account the goals and in order to get the proper background information about the target groups at European level a user needs analysis plays a priority role.

The analysis will provide a wide and updated overview of the target groups' profiles and their availability in participating to the online programme.

The output 1 has 3 activities and the present report contains: Activity 1 “User Needs Analysis”, and Activity 2 “Methodological Guidelines”.

## Presentation of the output

As agreed in the kick off meeting, that took place on 19 – 20/11/2015 and that was hosted by Innovation in Learning Institute in Fürth (Germany) Output 1 started in December 2015 with the design of the survey for the user needs analysis and will continue till the end of July 2016.

Activity 1 “User Needs Analysis” and Activity 2 “Methodological Guidelines” were finalized in March 2016 while Activity 3, “Tutoring Guidelines”, will be produced after the design of the course, since guidelines should be strictly connected to the approach and strategies used.

**Activity 1 “User Needs Analysis”** is a research activity managed by University of Macerata (UNIMC) and developed by all partners who committed in translating the research tools (survey) in their own language and report to UNIMC the collected data (interviews) in English.

UNIMC developed both the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data.



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**Activity 2 “Methodological Guidelines”** are meant to collect critical reflections and methodology suggestions on the basis of the needs analysis results. The guidelines underline needs and barriers perceived by the respondents and suggest actions to approach the audience and the topics selected as most interesting for the future learners in the EduTeach online course.

**Activity 3 “Tutoring Guidelines”** will be represented by a desk research run by all partners. A comprehensive document will be produced by UNIMC collecting and organizing the materials related to online tutoring and covering the following fields: teaching approaches, supporting strategies, tutor’s profile and competencies and tools that can be used for both synchronous and asynchronous communication/interaction. ILI will also provide specific guidelines about the use of the Learning Management System ILIAS.

## Activity 1: User Needs Analysis

The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data from questionnaires and interviews will help to obtain a clear picture about the needs and expectations of preschool teachers and education directors, to identify the skills that they should have given their role in childcare/preschool institutions and to get insights into how to create conditions to adequately support teachers in their training process. The document contains recommendations for the educational materials and tools to be developed as well as for the development of the curriculum.

### Quantitative research

#### The survey design

The design process was activated during the kick off meeting in November 2015 and was developed during the month of December 2015 with a collaborative writing online tool (google drive) in order to let all partners directly edit the document and put comments to discuss controversial issues.

The screenshot shows a Google Drive interface. At the top left is the Erasmus+ logo. To the right is the EduTeach logo with a small icon. Below the logos is a section titled "Please select at least 1 topic you would be interested in". A numbered list of topics follows, with the fourth item highlighted in yellow. After the list is a proposal for alternative formulation. To the right of the list are three comment cards from users: Laura Fedeli, zarkakis, and Svenja Pokorny. Each card includes a profile picture, the user's name, the time of their comment, and a "Resolve" button.

Please select at least 1 topic you would be interested in

1. Family relations (basic notions for designing and implementing a synergy between school and parents, for example indications on how to improve the relationship between educators and parents through periodical meetings)
2. Behavioral and emotional problems/disorders (definitions and guidelines to activate an improvement in the group-class , for example how to manage children' aggressive actions)
3. Group size and quality issues (mixed age-groups in kindergartens, educational and didactical guidelines to work in small and larger groups taking into account also children' different ages)
4. Special needs (general definitions of special educational needs and connection with integrative services)

Proposal for alternative formulation:

4. Emotional and social development: aggression and poor self-regulation during early years
5. integration of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and with fewer

Laura Fedeli 16:52 Yesterday  
In any translation partner can add the age (0-3/3-6), this is more realistic. In Italy we have 0-2,5/2,5-6

zarkakis 13:35 4 Dec  
Here I would add-offer topics that would be interesting in the trainings and are worked out already in E-learning  
Show more

Svenja Pokorny 11:51 3 Dec  
Special need it too wide. I know that the Finnish partner said that aggression is a "special need" but I would prefer to stick to "aggression"

Figure 1. Screenshot of a section of the survey in Google Drive with comments by partners.

Once agreed the format the survey was translated by partners into the following languages: Italian, Finnish, German, Greek, Hungarian, Slovenian, and Spanish and implemented in the LIME Survey system managed by UNIMC. The survey was tested in every language in order to correct typos and check the technical functioning and then disseminated. Survey was structured in a way respondents could be able to fill in the questionnaire in their own language, in fact the survey is browser sensitive and there was also added a menu to choose among the available languages (see Figure 2). After the completion of the survey respondents were redirected to the EduTeach project website.

The screenshot shows the front page of the EduTeach survey. At the top are the UNIMC and Erasmus+ logos. Below them is the EduTeach logo. The main title is "Eduteach survey". The text "Dear ECEC professionals" is followed by a message about the survey's purpose and the languages it is available in. A dropdown menu is open, showing "English" selected, along with other language options: ελληνικά, Deutsch, English, Español, Italiano, Magyar, Slovenščina, and Suomi. At the bottom, there is a note about privacy and a link to "Click NEXT to start the survey".

Dear ECEC professionals

the EDUTEACH project team is inviting you to fill in a survey to get useful inputs about your training needs. Your feedback, along with other design aspects, will be taken into account to adapt the training offer to your needs. We are looking for coordinators and other early childhood professional profiles who are involved in the field of education and training of preschool teachers and directors. Please, feel free to fill in the questionnaire in one of the following languages: English, Finnish, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, and Slovenian.

English

ελληνικά

Deutsch

English

Español

Italiano

Magyar

Slovenščina

Suomi

Click **NEXT** to start the survey.

There are 16 questions in this survey.

A note on privacy  
This survey is anonymous.  
The record of your survey responses does not contain any identifying information about you, unless a specific survey question explicitly asked for it. If you used an identifying token to access this survey, please rest assured that this token will not be stored together with your responses. It is managed in a separate database and will only be updated to indicate whether you did (or did not) complete this survey. There is no way of matching identification tokens with survey responses.

Figure 2. Screenshot of the front page of the survey



UNIMC sent the link of the survey (<http://eduteachproject.unimc.it>) to the partnership along with some recommended actions to disseminate it at national, European and international level:

- publishing a post in the NEST platform (in English and in each partner in its language);
- contacting the registered user in the NEST platform;
- publishing a tweet using the NEST account and/or partners' personal accounts (useful hashtags: #educator; #earlychildhood; #survey; #ECEC; #needanalysis; etc.);
- publishing the survey link in dedicated/interested groups of educators in social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, etc.);
- sending the survey link to dedicated/interested mailing lists;
- publishing a post in partners' websites.

Here follows some examples of dissemination in social networks and in the NEST project website:



Figure 3. Screenshot of the post published in English in the NEST page in Facebook

A screenshot of a Spanish post on the NEST website. The title of the post is "¡Participa en el nuevo proyecto EduTeach!". It was posted by "Elvira Sanchez-Igual" on January 18, 2016, and there are no comments yet. The text of the post is: "Con EduTeach, los socios de NEST damos un paso más. Estamos llevando a cabo un proyecto para mejorar la formación y el intercambio entre maestros de 7 países de la Unión Europea. ¿Quieres participar? Por el momento estamos en fase...".

Figure 4. Screenshot of the post published in Spanish in the NEST website



Tweet   Tweet e risposte   Foto e video

**Laura Fedeli** @tutorlauraefeffe · 15 gen

Ci aiutate a conoscere i bisogni formativi degli educatori dell'infanzia? Completa il sondaggio [eduteachproject.unimc.it](http://eduteachproject.unimc.it) #primainfanzia

42 views · 0 Likes · 0 Comments

Figure 5. Screenshot of the post published in Italian in Twitter

Laura Fedeli  
Research Fellow at University of Macerata

Edit post   View stats

Un sondaggio per conoscere i bisogni formativi degli educatori della prima infanzia

Jan 15, 2016 | 42 views · 0 Likes · 0 Comments | [in](#) [f](#) [t](#)



*Il team del progetto EDUTEACH vi invita a compilare un breve questionario al fine di poter ricevere informazioni utili riguardanti i vostri bisogni di formazione. Il vostro feedback sarà una delle variabili prese in considerazione nella progettazione di un corso di formazione/aggiornamento che sarà avviato per tutti coloro che lavorano nell'ambito dell'educazione della prima infanzia.*

#### SONDAGGIO

Figure 6. Screenshot of the post published in Italian in LinkedIn.

The most productive dissemination actions, in order of effectiveness, were the following as resulted from the referrer urls of the respondents in the survey:

1. direct link: <http://eduteachproject.unimc.it>
2. <http://facebook.com>
3. <http://nest-project.eu>
4. <http://waece.org>
5. <http://twitter.com>
6. <http://linkedin.com>.

## The survey results

The survey is organized around 4 main groups of close-ended questions with a total number of 16 questions organized as follows (see annex 1):

- A) Demographic data: 9 questions
- B) Topics of interest: 1 question
- C) Language and technical skills: 2 questions
- D) EduTeach online course: 4 questions.

The participants who completed the questionnaire are 550 and their profile is described in the demographic data results.

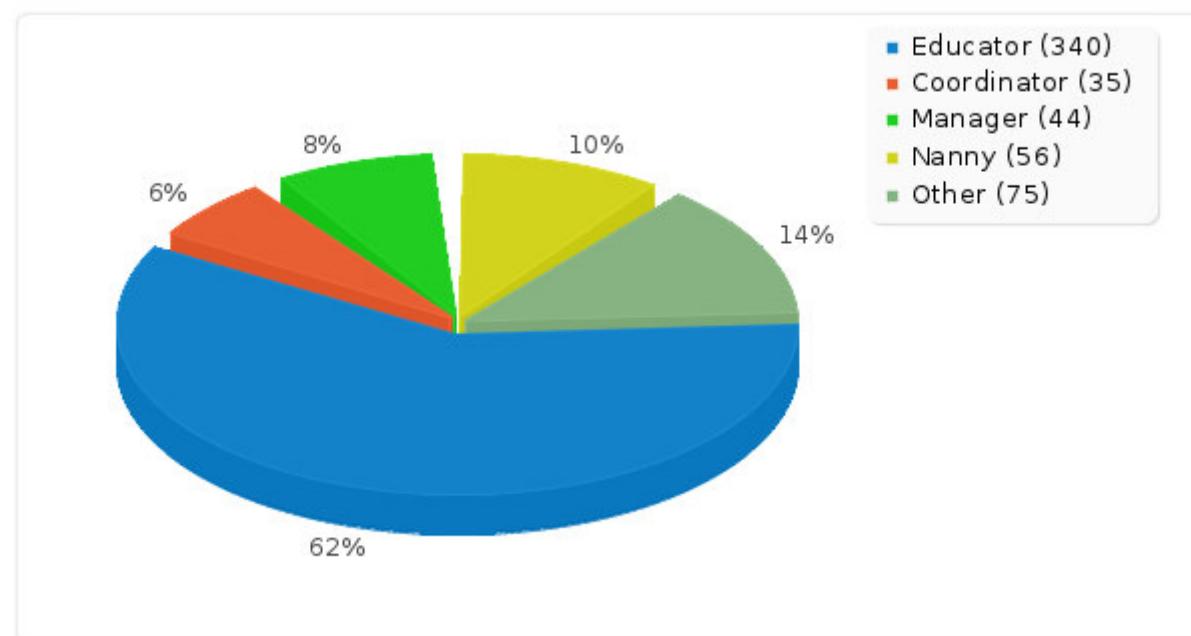


### Demographic data:

**Question A1:** Most respondents are educators (about 61 %), managers, directors and coordinators, but we also have a wide range of professionals who come from different contexts and disciplinary areas related to early childhood education such as psychologists, psycho-pedagogists and educators in the social field.

Field summary for A1		
What is your profile?		
	Count	
Educator (1)	340	61.82%
Coordinator (2)	35	6.36%
Manager (3)	44	8.00%
Nanny (4)	56	10.18%
Other	75	13.64%

Table 1. profile.



Graph 1. Profile.

Other:

- Director/technical director/ director and teacher **13**
- family daycare manager **4**



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- curriculum coordinator/ teacher and coordinator/ tutor and coordinator of childhood education **4**
- manager of childhood education/assistant manager **3**
- Psychologist/ psycho pedagogy and social education professional/pedagogy professional **3**
- Guidance worker
- teachers of higher pre-school education
- English teacher
- special education teacher; community educator
- professor of childhood education at the University of Vigo (also worked as childhood education professional before working for the University)
- researcher
- VET Teacher -childhood education
- trainer of trainers/ Training advisor -childhood education
- baby care/religion teacher
- family day care nursery in private homes
- I deliver a home-based service (nanny and educator)
- Fostress
- Social worker
- psychomotor education
- social psychologist working in a kindergarten
- mental hygiene graduate working at an ECEC related foundation
- Student.

**Question A2:** The most represented country is Spain with 44% of the respondents. Followed by Finland, Slovenia, Italy and Hungary. Germany and Greece appear to be the least represented countries.

The different level of participation is a relevant aspect to be taken into consideration when promoting the online course in the different countries in order to ensure that any involved target group in each country is present. Partners who can rely on the support of educators' associations like Spain and Germany can have a relevant role and help finding the right strategies to reach the target groups and motivate them to actively participate in the further project's steps.

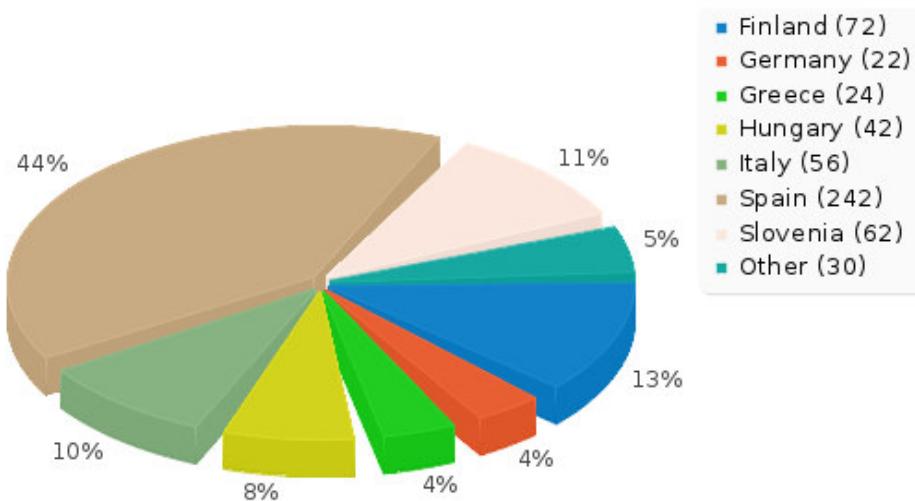


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Field summary for A2		
Where are you from?		
	Count	
Finland (1)	72	13.09%
Germany (2)	22	4.00%
Greece (3)	24	4.36%
Hungary (4)	42	7.64%
Italy (5)	56	10.18%
Spain (6)	242	44.00%
Slovenia (7)	62	11.27%
Other	Browse	30

Table 2. Country.



Graph 2. Country.

Countries other than the European partnership's ones are the following:

Mexico 7  
Argentina 6  
Perù 5  
Ecuador 2  
Croatia 1  
Ecuador 2  
Cataluña 1  
Colombia, San Andres Isla 1



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Ireland 1  
Pakistan 1  
Paraguay 1  
Portugal 1  
USA 1

**Question A3:** Female respondents are the vast majority (about 94 %).

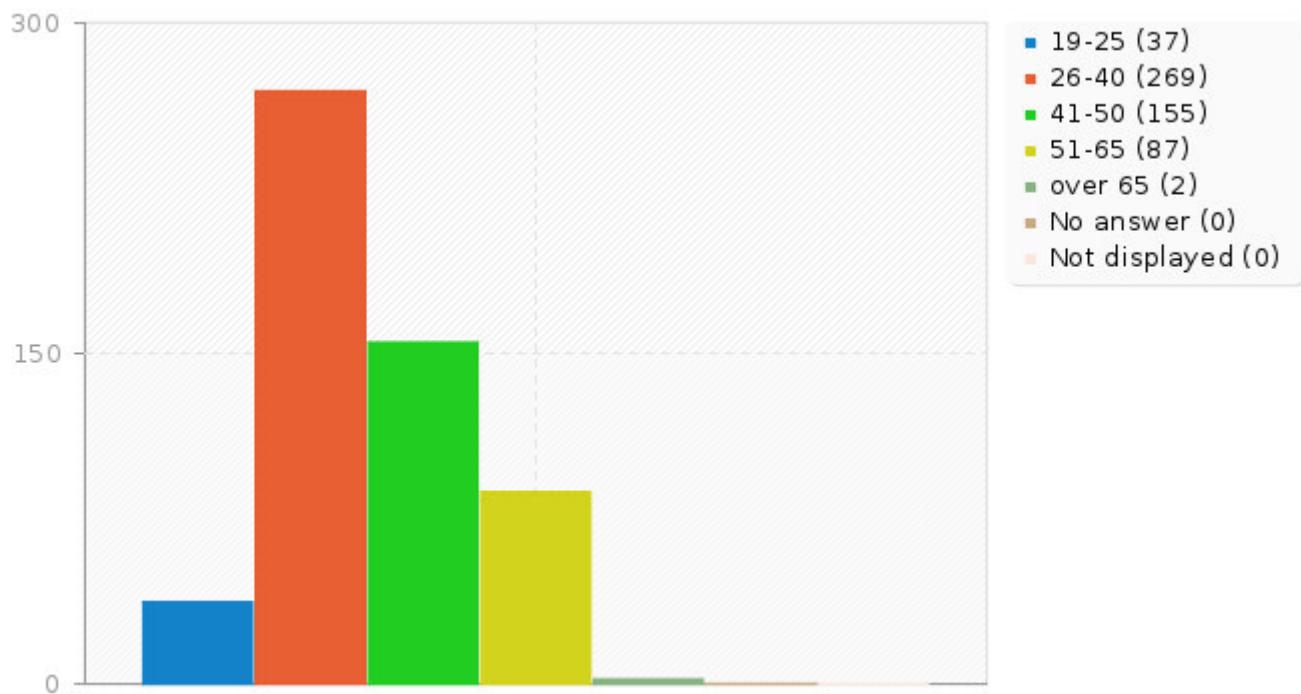
Field summary for A3		
What is your gender?		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Female (F)	520	94.55%
Male (M)	30	5.45%

Table 3. Gender

**Question A4:** The age range most represented is the one that goes from 26 years old and 40 years old, followed by 41-50.

Field summary for A4		
How old are you?		
	Count	
19-25 (1)	37	6.73%
26-40 (2)	269	48.91%
41-50 (3)	155	28.18%
51-65 (4)	87	15.82%
over 65 (5)	2	0.36%

Table 4. Age



Graph 3. Age.

**Question A5:** in terms of education most respondents states to have a basic university degree (three years of duration) and just a few (9 %) a post degree diploma. Respondents who didn't go through a university instruction are almost the same number of the ones who followed a specialized university course (five years degree). We need to take in to account that in every EU partners' country the education system is organized differently not only in terms of prerequisites to access the ECEC profiles, but also in terms of level of educations (e.g. in some systems the division 0-3/3-6 doesn't exist or is set differently). The table in annex 3 presents a description of existing ECEC profiles and the required degree/certification to access the procession.

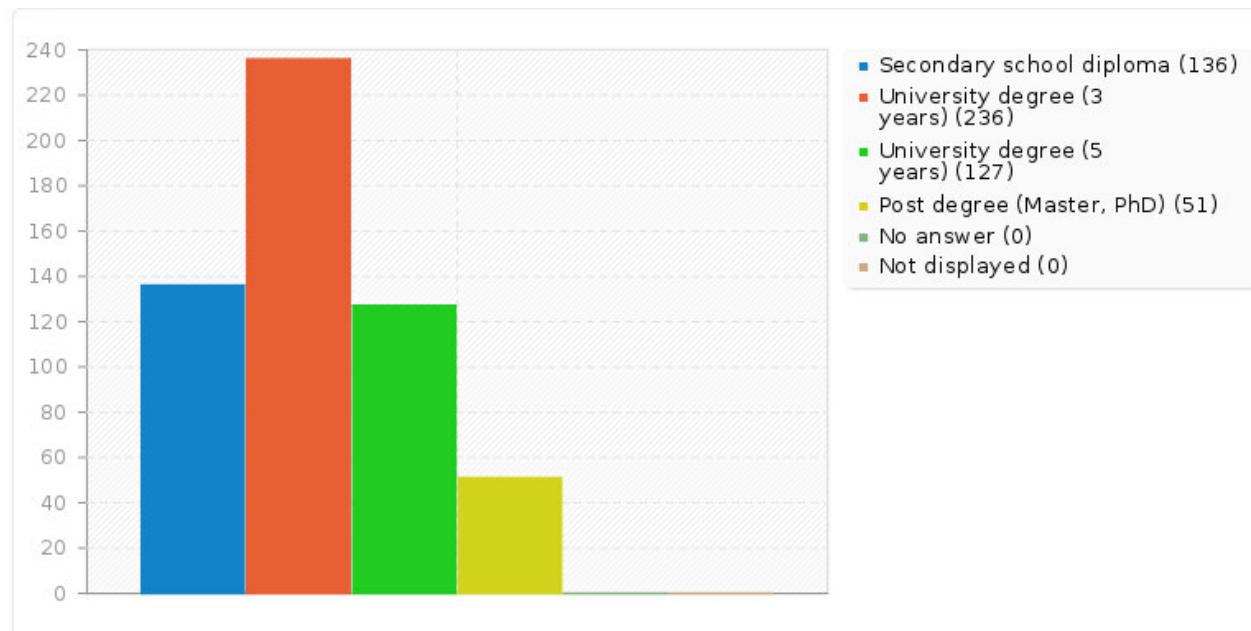
Field summary for A5		
What diploma/degree did you earn?		Count
Secondary school diploma (1)	136	24.73%
University degree (3 years) (2)	236	42.91%
University degree (5 years) (3)	127	23.09%
Post degree (Master, PhD) (4)	51	9.27%

Table 5. Education



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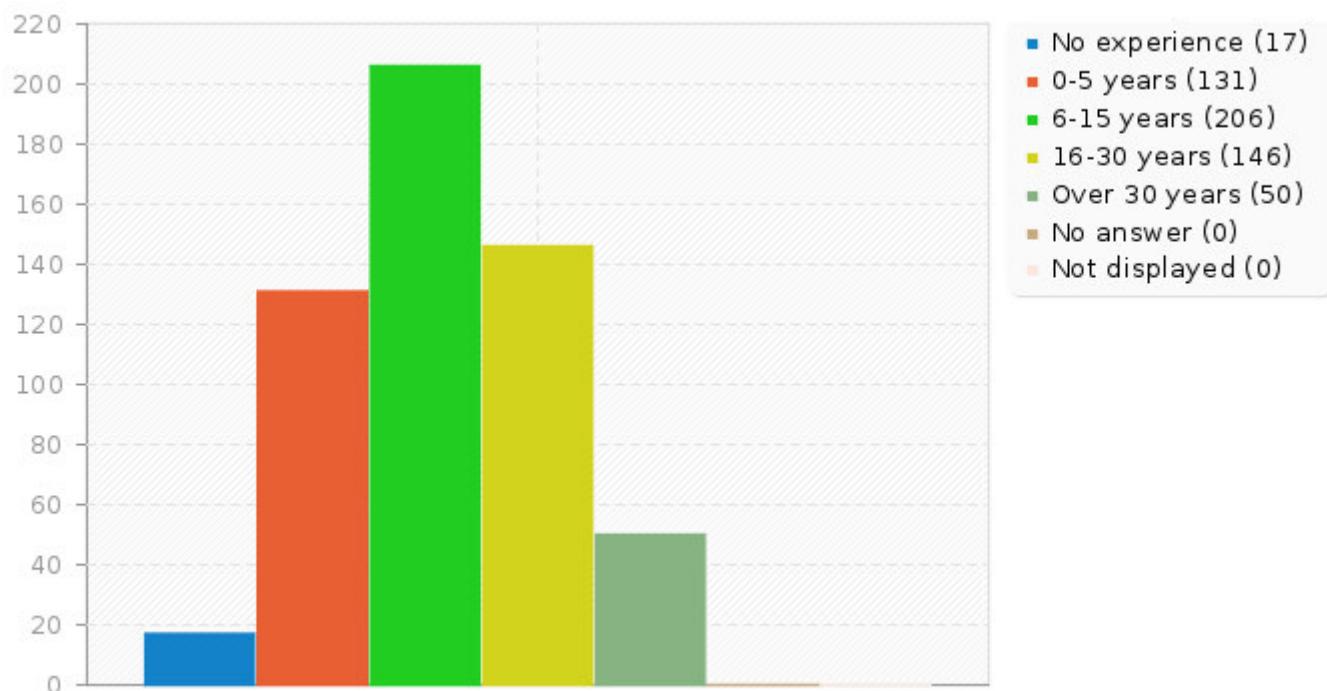


Graph 4. Education

**Question A6:** Most respondents have several years of work experience in their context and just 26% ranges from no experience (3%) and few years of experience (23%).

Field summary for A6		
How many years have you been working as ECEC professional?		Count
No experience (1)	17	3.09%
0-5 years (2)	131	23.82%
6-15 years (3)	206	37.45%
16-30 years (4)	146	26.55%
Over 30 years (5)	50	9.09%

Table 5. Years of experience.



Graph 5. Years of experience.

**Question A7:** the vast majority of respondents have a full time work contract.

Field summary for A7		
What is your job engagement in terms of time?		
	Count	
Full time (1)	461	83.82%
Part time (2)	89	16.18%

Table 6. work contract.

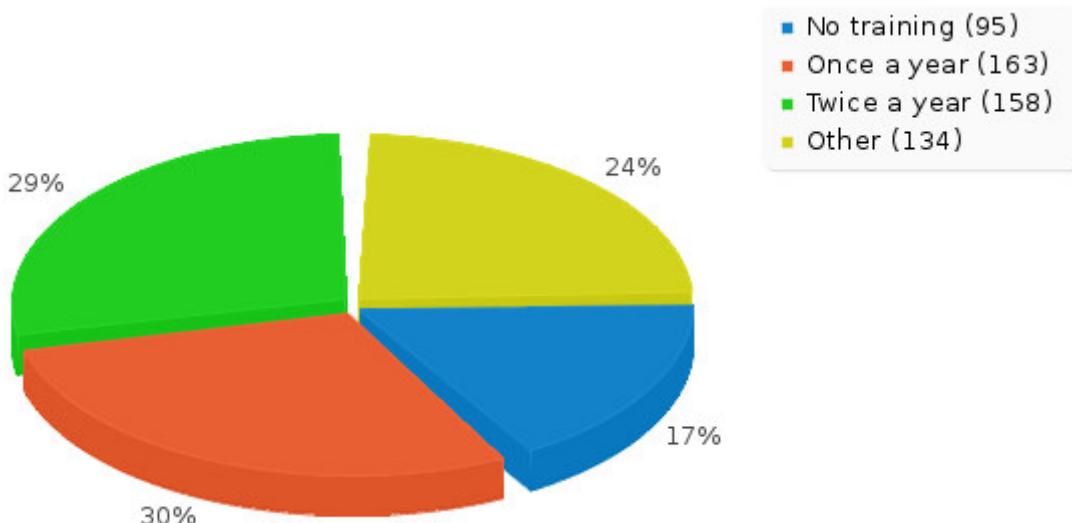
**Question A8:** the overview of training opportunities show a variety of options. Just 17 % states to receive no training at all, while the rest divides in once/twice a year and other options that ranges from a continuous training offer by the institution to several times a year. It's quite a heterogeneous landscape that strengthen the perception of a fragmented reality not only at European level, but at national level too.



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Field summary for A8		
What is the frequency of in-service training in your institution?		Count
No training (1)	95	17.27%
Once a year (2)	163	29.64%
Twice a year (3)	158	28.73%
Other	<a href="#">Browse</a>	134



Graph 6. Training habits.

#### Other:

- always
- daily through teachers' training centres and internal training of our public centre
- during evenings and weekends
- weekly
- All year long/ constantly/(very) frequently/ continuously/ very often/ quarterly
- monthly
- 4 times a year
- 3 to 5 times a year
- quarterly
- more than twice a year
- more than 3 times
- every person could spent 5 days per year on it
- six times according to our agreement/ various times a year
- five to ten courses are available every year



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- periodically
- yearly
- the offer of the University is wide and sometimes we offer it from our department yearly
- when interesting learning opportunities are available
- according to needs and financial possibilities
- as requested by the staff/ on demand, at least once a year
- specific training supply agreed by all the teachers
- different training supply provided in our Centre we also disseminate other training offers
- our training does not depend on the center but in our case, on ourselves, I personally follow many courses of the teachers' center
- my institution funds the trainings
- I look for courses and my company pays for them
- when there is training available according to our profile. In our centre is mandatory.
- the Basque government provides information but we do cover all costs
- we have a teachers training centre with a wide training offer
- there was an option for participation in training seminars, but since it was on the basis of limited number of prospect participants I haven't been selected
- rarely
- I do not work.

**Question A9:** the survey shows a balance between early childhood school and pre-school as contexts of work of the respondents. In the "other" replies it's interesting to notice the presence of respondents who are involved in ECEC care services at home.

What is your target pupils' age?		
	Count	
early childhood school (0-3) (1)	246	44.73%
pre-school (3-6 years) (2)	275	50.00%
Other	94	17.09%

Table 6. Target pupils' age.

Other:

- Providing care services to children at home
- primary school children
- 2-6 years old children
- both cycles (0-3/3-6)
- from 18 years on
- actually 7-8
- 7-10 yrs (first 4 years of elementary school)



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- University students
- I work in a teacher's training Centre and do not have pupils
- I am at a coordinator's post (or Head of institution In other replies) and I do not have pupils
- I work in a childrens' leisure centre
- on demand
- educator in a family day care nursery
- family daycare (from 6 months up tp 14 years as an after school child care institution)
- education specialists.

### **Topics of Interests**

The following data (Table 7) are related to all participants (550) who gather European and extra European countries. The first ten preferences identified are the following:

1. Behavioral and emotional problems/disorders
2. Emotional and social development: aggression and poor self-regulation during early years
3. How to design educational materials and instructional methods
4. The use of music in childhood
5. Development of motor skills
6. Family relations
7. Development of intelligence in children
8. Special needs
9. Conflict resolution in the early childhood education classroom
10. Storytelling and tales as tool for learning



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Please select at least 1 topic you would be interested in		
Answer	Count	
Family relations (1)	192	34.91%
Behavioral and emotional problems/disorders (2)	292	53.09%
Group size and quality issues (3)	126	22.91%
Special needs (4)	189	34.36%
Emotional and social development: aggression and poor self-regulation during early years (5)	272	49.45%
Integration of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and with fewer opportunities (6)	137	24.91%
How to design educational materials and instructional methods (7)	237	43.09%
How to mentor new teachers, give workshops and seminars (8)	125	22.73%
How to manage educational institutions professionally (9)	92	16.73%
Pre-reading and writing skills (10)	144	26.18%
Development of intelligence in children (11)	192	34.91%
Multicultural education (12)	126	22.91%
Conflict resolution in the early childhood education classroom (13)	183	33.27%
Development of motor skills (14)	198	36.00%
The use of music in childhood (15)	203	36.91%
Storytelling and tales as tool for learning (16)	168	30.55%
Peace Education from Early years (17)	69	12.55%
Health basics (18)	78	14.18%
Childhood diseases (19)	74	13.45%
Psychology basics (20)	127	23.09%
Pedagogy basics (21)	120	21.82%
Technical knowledge (of daycare settings: safety, heating, maintenance) (22)	66	12.00%
Equipment prerequisites (23)	46	8.36%
Dietetic basics (catering and hygiene) (24)	75	13.64%
Education in daycare (25)	121	22.00%

Table 7. EU and extra EU respondents' preferred topics

If we select just participants from the European countries related to the partnership we have exactly the same preferences in the first 10 topics as shown in the table below (table 8):



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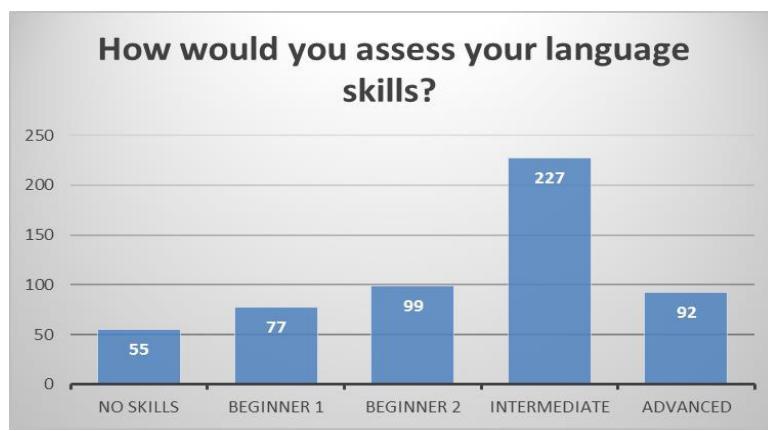
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Field summary for B1		
Please select at least 1 topic you would be interested in		
Answer	Count	
Family relations (1)	183	35.19%
Behavioral and emotional problems/disorders (2)	282	54.23%
Group size and quality issues (3)	123	23.65%
Special needs (4)	181	34.81%
Emotional and social development: aggression and poor self-regulation during early years (5)	261	50.19%
Integration of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and with fewer opportunities (6)	132	25.38%
How to design educational materials and instructional methods (7)	229	44.04%
How to mentor new teachers, give workshops and seminars (8)	117	22.50%
How to manage educational institutions professionally (9)	86	16.54%
Pre-reading and writing skills (10)	139	26.73%
Development of intelligence in children (11)	184	35.38%
Multicultural education (12)	116	22.31%
Conflict resolution in the early childhood education classroom (13)	176	33.85%
Development of motor skills (14)	192	36.92%
The use of music in childhood (15)	195	37.50%
Storytelling and tales as tool for learning (16)	161	30.96%
Peace Education from Early years (17)	60	11.54%
Health basics (18)	74	14.23%
Childhood diseases (19)	70	13.46%
Psychology basics (20)	120	23.08%
Pedagogy basics (21)	113	21.73%
Technical knowledge (of daycare settings: safety, heating, maintenance) (22)	61	11.73%
Equipment prerequisites (23)	44	8.46%
Dietetic basics (catering and hygiene) (24)	68	13.08%
Education in daycare (25)	108	20.77%

Table 8. EU respondents' preferred topics

### Language and technical skills

*Language skills:* Most respondents (41%) states that they have an "intermediate" English language competence, a minor percentage (16%) shows advanced competencies and the rest find a position at a beginner level. Just few respondents (10 %) admit to have no competence.



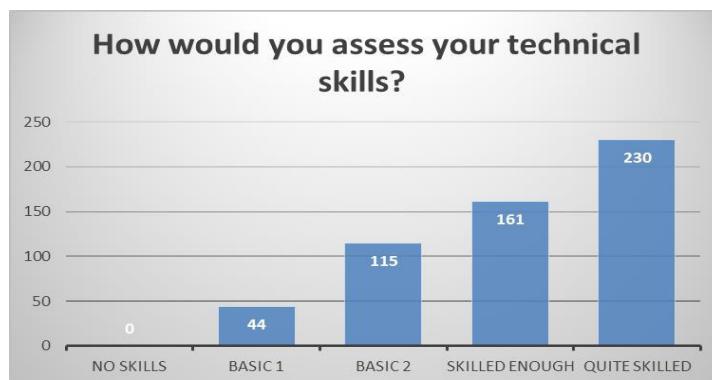
Graph. 7. Language skills.

The available answers for language skills were the following:



- **no skills**
- **Beginner 1** (I can: read and comprehend the general meaning of a simple text; I can't: write and understand an audio/video file)
- **Beginner 2** (I can: read and comprehend the general meaning of a simple text; write simple sentences; I can't: understand an audio/video file)
- **Intermediate** (I can: read and comprehend the general meaning of texts ; write simple texts, understand the general meaning of audio/video file, but without catching detailed information)
- **Advanced** (I can: read and comprehend the meaning of texts, even argumentative ; write texts and participate to discussions, understand the general meaning of audio/video file catching even detailed information)

*Technical skills:* In this case the vast majority (41 %) states to have advanced skills and just a low percentage (8%) shows very basic technical skills. All the rest have the opportunity to connect to Internet and is able to take active part to synchronous and asynchronous events. No one appears to be completely not skilled.



Graph. 8 Technical skills.

The available answers for Technical skills were the following:

- **No skills**
- **Basic 1:** I can connect to the Internet and make basic online activities (writing an e-mail, registering to a website/platform)
- **Basic 2:** I can connect to the Internet and participate to asynchronous online activities (writing an e-mail, registering to a website/platform; taking part to a written discussion in a forum)
- **Skilled enough:** I can connect to the Internet and participate to both online synchronous and asynchronous activities (writing an e-mail, registering to a website/platform; taking part to a written discussion in a forum; taking part to a webinar connecting my headphones and mic)
- **Quite skilled:** I can connect to the Internet and be both a “consumer” and a “producer” of online activities (writing an e-mail, registering to a website/platform; taking part to a written discussion in a forum; taking part to a webinar connecting my headphones and mic; create web presentations; create audio/video files).



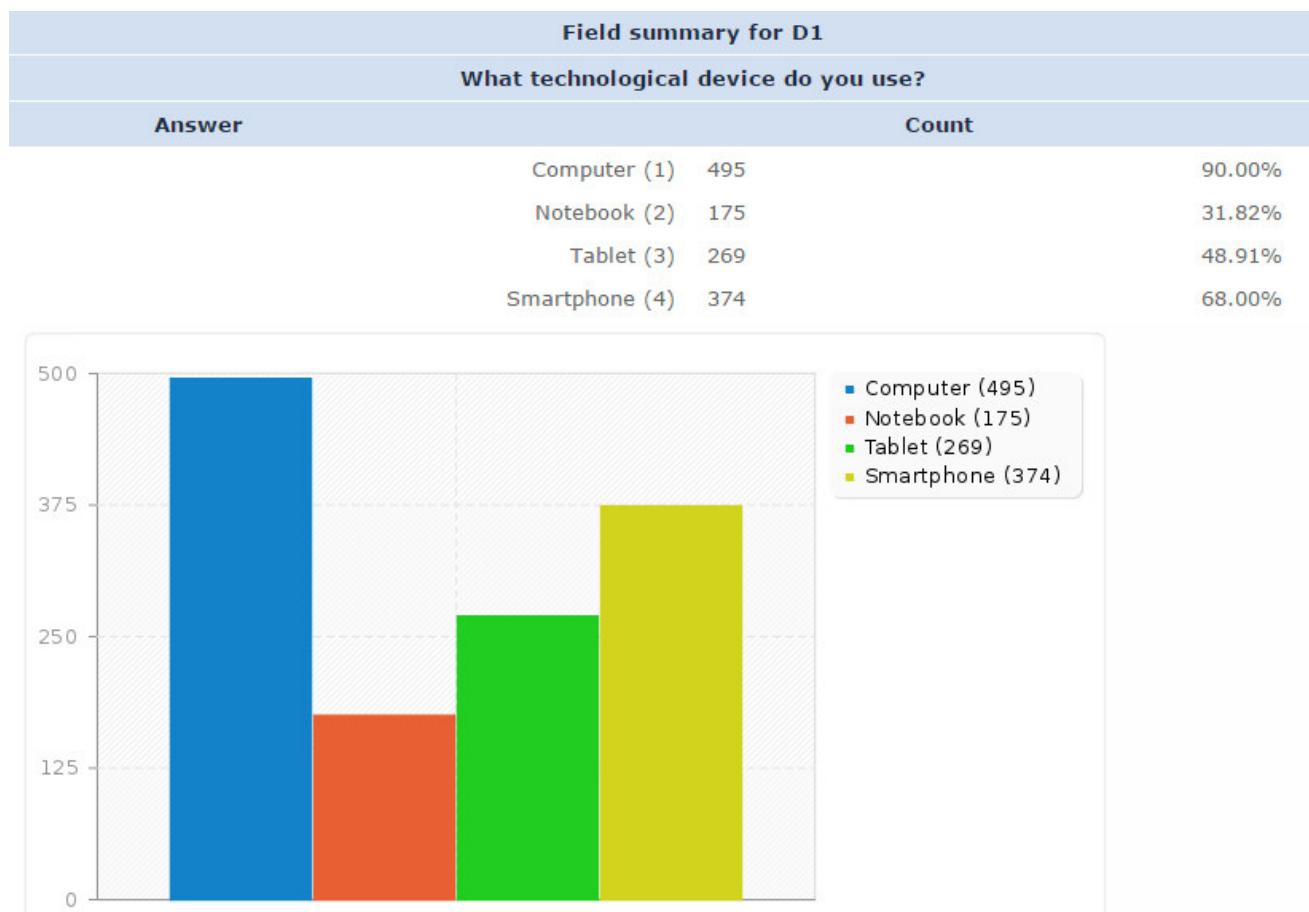
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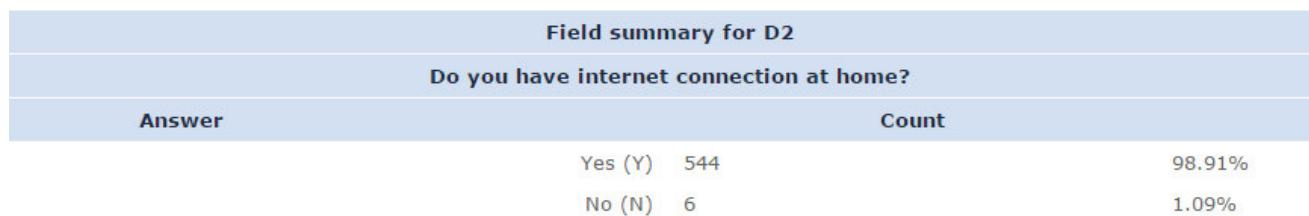
## EduTeach online course

In this section we aimed at identifying core aspects for the successful implementation of the online training course, that is if the target group is fully equipped in terms of devices and internet connection, but also in terms of inner motivation and availability of time.

Most respondents have a device connected to the Internet that could be used to follow an online course, most of them use a computer (90 %), but the percentage of respondents who uses a smartphone is high as well (68%). Most respondents use more than 1 device.



Graph. 9. Devices



Most respondents state they would like to follow an online in service course and that they would be able to spend no more than 4 hours a week to participate.



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#### Field summary for D3

Would you like to follow an online course designed for early childhood professionals?

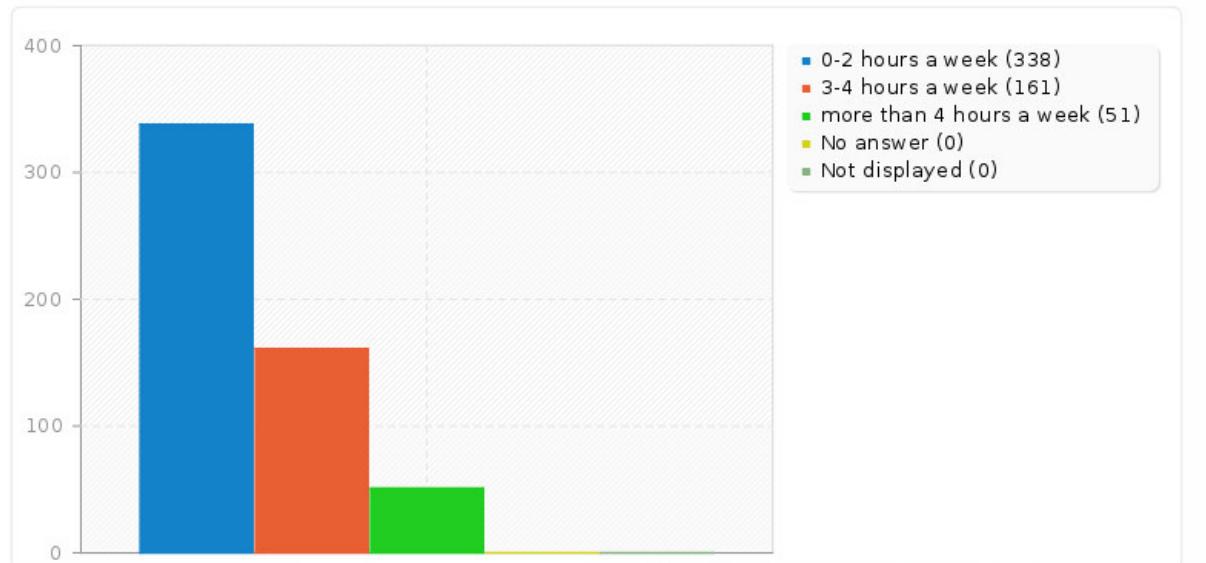
Answer	Count	
Yes (Y)	477	86.73%
No (N)	73	13.27%

Table 9. Motivation

#### Field summary for D4

How much time would you have available to participate in the EDUTEACH online course?

Answer	Count	P
0-2 hours a week (1)	338	61.45%
3-4 hours a week (2)	161	29.27%
more than 4 hours a week (3)	51	9.27%
No answer	0	0.00%
Not displayed	0	0.00%



Graph 10. Availability

## Qualitative research

### Methodology used

As reported in the project's application "Interviews will help to obtain a clear picture about the needs and expectations of preschool teachers and education directors, to identify the skills that they should have given their role in childcare/preschool institutions and to get insights into how to create conditions to adequately support teachers in their training process".



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It was, thus, suggested that each partner run individual interviews with ECEC staff in their country to collect useful information from a selected sample of participants (at least 3) about their own practices, current perceived expectation about trainings and beliefs in ECEC procedures.

Interviews can both be used with the purposes of gathering personal opinions and perceptions on the effectiveness of current services and background information about description of educational/administrative/policy processes and procedures.

UNIMC, as leading partner, recommended to run focused semi-structured interviews where a set of guiding questions are used in order to delve deeply into specific topics.

Open ended questions were built by each partner to understand the respondent's point of view and get useful inputs/insights on aspects the interviewer might not have considered.

Questions can consist of: *descriptive questions* (are meant to get the description of a situation/status) and *structural questions* (are meant to get information about processes and dynamics activated in the ECEC institution).

The need of training and the perceived obstacles/doubts are topics that can be developed in the interview passing through the following steps:

- Perception: participants' point of view about training in their context;
- Experience: participants' report of experiences about programmes, projects, practices in previous ECEC trainings;
- Opinion: participants' opinion about training organizational elements (organization, methodology, strategies) they consider of relevant importance in the context they know and work in.

Partners were asked to design their own list of questions since we believe it's more useful to keep the interviewer free to adjust the interview to the context/individual he/she is dealing with. UNIMC provided a protocol to follow to collect demographic data and to report the respondents answers (see Annex 2).

## Interviews' results

As already described in the methodological section the semi-structured interviews took place in different countries with the same protocol. Even if we took in consideration the objective difference between the characteristics of the educational contexts in the partners' countries there are several analogies concerning the educators' practices.

Interviewee discuss their positive feedback about initial teacher training at university, but at the same time they underline that the preparation they got was not always deep enough in relation to educational practices (even if universities set internship opportunities within the degree courses). The reference to a needed approach to practice during trainings has a relevant connection to the functions of educators/teachers in the development of their profession.



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The feedback about in-service training, instead, shows some lacks with the exception of few cases (connected to inner motivation of professional improvement). The reasons range from difficulties in terms of available budget, the lack of time (for example they cannot get permission from skipping their daily school duties and they are forced to attend courses in their free time) and the missing recognition by the educational context/institution for the career progress. Educators feel, thus, demotivated.

In fact, even if the majority of interviewees highlights the importance of spending their time in trainings, make it clear that such opportunities should be organized in periods in which they are free from institutional “task deadlines” and, most of all they should be distributed on more days to get the chance to reflect on the inputs received and have time to re-organize them and ask for deeper clarifications.

We need also to report that some participants expressed the wish to attend training courses during their work time and proposed to organize in a more functional way the collegial meetings which should be fruitfully used not only to have an exchange about specific topics, but also to share reports by the colleagues that narrate the experiences in previous training courses.

All interviewees agree on the fact that such events should be focused on more practical/concrete experiences to be used in the daily activities with children and, at the same time, they agree that there's a need of follow-up activities on what has been studied and experienced in the educational routines.

A further dimension is the one connected to the modalities chosen for the trainings. Online learning is seen by a section of interviewee as a mere alternative to face-to-face training without recognizing a specific value to interaction dimension made possible by Learning Management Systems. Online training is accepted just when the presence solution is not available for a number of reasons. Teaching learning processes that take pace online are seen as not flexible (not able to meet learners' needs), not dynamic (there's no change in the content/ strategy along the process) and characterized by isolation of the learner. Also those portion of interviewee state that topics that can be successfully addressed in online trainings are the ones related to law and regulations, security and hygiene norms, but not the topics which are connected to children development and the educator's professional development. But there's also a number of participants in the sample who recognize an added value to online trainings and specifically:

- The opportunity to assemble more profiles and more participants from different countries;
- The easiness in sharing best practices;
- The chance to draw connection and integrate different contexts.

Several interviewees also pointed out that it's necessary to set a teaching/learning approach based on a community of peers.

Priorities in the training needs are some of the following topics:

- Emotional and behavior problems (to be able to manage the conflicts);
- Emotional and relational development (to activate useful strategies and design proper educational resources);
- Relation with the family (taking into account the social and cultural evolution of the recent years);



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- Cultural and linguistic mediation (taking into account the increase of immigrant children in the early childhood educational institutions and the need to communicate with their families).

A further interesting issue raised by the interviews is the one related to the documentation/archiving process. This aspect could be very useful to activate self-reflection not only about the educators' actions/strategies, but also to promote initiatives of social reflection with parents and children themselves.

## Activity 2: Methodological Guidelines

The methodological guidelines are structured in topical directions/suggestions to be applied in the design and implementation of the training online course. Three areas have been identified and specifically:

- Topics;
- Strategies in content development;
- Strategies in teaching approaches.

### Topics

Even if respondents in the survey identified a list of preferred topics the partnership needs to take into serious account that a negotiation between the respondents' perceived needs and the partner institution's competencies and areas of expertise is necessary.

In order to ensure the quality of the training offer we suggest that each partner makes it explicit in what areas he/she feel comfortable, not only to design and/or select existing learning material, but also to support learners in their training process.

For this reason it's strictly recommended that each partner makes a reflection on available internal and external staff (in this case we need to remember that no funds are available to pay experts).

If the partnership wishes to rely on existing resources, rather than producing original learning materials we suggest to take into consideration the following issues:

- Checking the authority of the source (especially in online published material): is the author clearly identifiable? What is his/her field of expertise?
- Using resources that can be re-used (and modified) for educational purposes (with a clear licence or author's permission);
- Can the partnership rely on a subject matter expert to adapt the identified material to the course needs?

### Strategies in content development

Most respondents (41%) states that they have an "intermediate" English language competence, that is, they are able to read and comprehend educational resources (e.g an article, a recorded interview, a video recorded narrative). This means that additional



resources in English language can be suggested to the target audience and, thus, enrich the learning offer in the mother tongue.

Those materials can also be proposed in different media formats since the analysis underlined that the potential audience has the proper skills to manage audio/video and not just textual documents.

Also it will be relevant to make the course “mobile friendly” since a large number of learners may be using their smartphone to connect to the learning platform and access the modules and the related resources/activities.

When selecting/producing contents we suggest to take into consideration the following guiding questions:

- What is the most appropriate format to deliver the learning material? ;
- Can the specific learning material be offered in more than one medium format to enhance its effectiveness? (e.g. an audio recorded interview and the textual document with the transcript that could be also enriched by notes attached by the teacher/tutor);
- Is the specific learning material flexible enough to let the course designer connect a valuable activity to it?
- Is the level of in-depth analysis present in the specific learning material consistent with the potential audience background?
- Is the study time required to go through the learning material consistent with the potential audience' availability?

### Strategies in teaching approaches

The strategies in teaching approaches are strictly related to course design. We are here highlighting a set of basic principles that could be helpful to follow taking into consideration the profile of the audience as resulted by the needs analysis.

Since the potential audience can have few hours a week to spend in the course we suggest to keep the structure of the course flexible in order to let learners pass from one module to the other without being forced to conclude one module to access the others.

The role of a tutorship will be relevant to guide the learners’ path and suggest an effective way to face the different steps set in each module. We suggest to ensure the presence of one tutor for each country group. When the number of learners is higher than 20 it would be recommended to consider the presence of more tutors

The potential audience can vary a lot in terms of experience in online courses. We suggest to activate a team-centered approach in which the cohesion of the group can overcome the risk of demotivation in learners who are not familiar with online learning management systems and the communication/interaction dynamics which can occur in it.

The same topic can be covered at different levels for the two main target groups: educators and directors. For example, a learning path addressing “family-school relation” as a general topic can have:

- a case-based approach for educators: real and/or fictional cases (e.g best practices to make school activities visible to parents) are presented asking learners to identify



strategies adopted (what communication channels? What kind of interaction between family and school staff?, etc.);

- a problem-solving approach for directors: real and/or fictional cases (in relation to specific problems families complain that there are no proper space/time to interact with school staff) are presented asking learners to reflect on possible strategies to adopt (e.g. external professional to involve; negotiation/conflict resolution actions to propose, etc.).

Of course, it's recommended to set a common space where the two approaches can enrich each other with the shared opportunity for both educators and directors to compare their viewpoints.

In this process the support of the tutor will be relevant. Learners may be not confident in exposing themselves in the interaction forums and in expressing their own opinions. For this reason the tutor will be required (if needed) to start the discussion and, along the way, to valorize the learners' inputs enriching their contribution and, when needed, providing a summarizing post that can include the different contribution and make it clear the rationale and the main issues raised in the discussion.

Learners should perceive, since the beginning, that they are not left alone and that they will always receive some feedback from the partnership.

We suggest to take into account the following guiding questions:

- Is the partnership offering the support of a qualified tutor for each module?
- Is the partnership offering the support of a qualified tutor in each country's group of learners?
- Is the learning module management (in terms of communication/interaction) appropriate for the two target groups (educators/directors)?
- Is the learning module management (in terms of communication/interaction) appropriate to different levels of technical expertise of the audience?
- Is the partnership providing a quick and effective feedback to learners' request during the course?
- Is the partnership providing the needed starting input in each module activity?
- Is the partnership supporting the development of the discussion and knowledge construction during the learning path?

## Conclusion

After analyzing the results of the needs analysis we can say that it was surely a successful research method not only to identify the target group learning needs, but also to go deeper in the understanding of its perception/opinion about the opportunity to be involved in an online course.

The data highlighted the barriers hidden in the respondents' previous experiences and/or in their naïve vision of what an online training can offer in their position. But we also gathered useful inputs about strengths perceived by a portion of the same sample. Both inputs, positive and negative ones will help the designer to focus on interaction strategies that can support the target groups in getting the needed motivation to approach online learning and, hopefully, to become "change agents" in their educational contexts.



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## Annex 1 Survey

### EduTeach survey

**Dear ECEC professionals**

**the EDUTEACH project team is inviting you to fill in a short questionnaire to get useful inputs about your training needs. Your feedback, along with other design aspects, will be taken into consideration for a learning path we are planning for educators, coordinators and other early childhood professional profiles. Please, feel free to fill in the questionnaire in one of the following languages: English, Finnish, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, and Slovenian.**

**Click NEXT to start the survey.**

There are 16 questions in this survey

#### Demographic data

##### What is your profile? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Educator
- Coordinator
- Manager
- Nanny
- Other

If you choose "other" please specify.

##### Where are you from? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Finland
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Italy
- Spain
- Slovenia
- Other

If you choose "OTHER", please, specify

##### What is your gender? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Female
- Male

##### How old are you? \*



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Please choose **only one** of the following:

- 19-25
- 26-40
- 41-50
- 51-65
- over 65

**What diploma/degree did you earn? \***

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Secondary school diploma
- University degree (3 years)
- University degree (5 years)
- Post degree (Master, PhD)

**How many years have you been working as ECEC professional? \***

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- No experience
- 0-5 years
- 6-15 years
- 16-30 years
- Over 30 years

**What is your job engagement in terms of time? \***

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Full time
- Part time

**What is the frequency of in-service training in your institution?\***

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- No training
- Once a year
- Twice a year
- Other

If you choose "OTHER", please, specify

**What is your target pupils' age? \***

Please choose **all** that apply:

- early childhood school (0-3)
- pre-school (3-6 years)
- Other:

**Topics of interest**



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### Please select at least 1 topic you would be interested in \*

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Family relations
- Behavioral and emotional problems/disorders
- Group size and quality issues
- Special needs
- Emotional and social development: aggression and poor self-regulation during early years
- Integration of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and with fewer opportunities
- How to design educational materials and instructional methods
- How to mentor new teachers, give workshops and seminars
- How to manage educational institutions professionally
- Pre-reading and writing skills
- Development of intelligence in children
- Multicultural education
- Conflict resolution in the early childhood education classroom
- Development of motor skills
- The use of music in childhood
- Storytelling and tales as tool for learning
- Peace Education from Early years
- Health basics
- Childhood diseases
- Psychology basics
- Pedagogy basics
- Technical knowledge (of daycare settings: safety, heating, maintenance)
- Equipment prerequisites
- Dietetic basics (catering and hygiene)
- Education in daycare

### Language and technical skills

#### How would you assess your English language skills? \*

Only numbers may be entered in this field.

Please write your answer here:

Write the answer's number that most suits you:

1. no skills
2. Beginner (I can: read and comprehend the general meaning of a simple text; I can't: write and understand an audio/video file)
3. Beginner (I can: read and comprehend the general meaning of a simple text; write simple sentences ; I can't: understand an audio/video file)



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4. Intermediate (I can: read and comprehend the general meaning of texts ; write simple texts, understand the general meaning of audio/video file, but without catching detailed information)
5. Advanced (I can: read and comprehend the meaning of texts, even argumentative ; write texts and participate to discussions, understand the general meaning of audio/video file catching even detailed information)

#### **How would you assess your technical skills? \***

Only numbers may be entered in this field.

Please write your answer here:

Write the answer's number that most suits you:

1. no skills
2. I can connect to the Internet and make basic online activities (writing an e-mail, registering to a website/platform)
3. I can connect to the Internet and participate to asynchronous online activities (writing an e-mail, registering to a website/platform; taking part to a written discussion in a forum)
4. I can connect to the Internet and participate to both online synchronous and asynchronous activities (writing an e-mail, registering to a website/platform; taking part to a written discussion in a forum; taking part to a webinar connecting my headphones and mic)
5. I can connect to the Internet and be both a “consumer” and a “producer” of online activities (writing an e-mail, registering to a website/platform; taking part to a written discussion in a forum; taking part to a webinar connecting my headphones and mic; create web presentations; create audio/video files).

#### **EduTeach online course**

#### **What technological device do you use? \***

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Computer
- Notebook
- Tablet
- Smartphone

#### **Do you have internet connection at home? \***

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

#### **Would you like to follow an online course designed for early childhood professionals? \***

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No



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**How much time would you have available to participate in the EDUTEACH online course? \***

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- 0-2 hours a week
- 3-4 hours a week
- more than 4 hours a week

Thank you for your collaboration!

Please note that:

the course that will be delivered by the EDUTEACH project team is meant as an opportunity for early childhood educators/coordinators to be part of a European community in which ECEC experts from different partners' countries will contribute to the collective learning experience with valuable professional inputs about a set of topics of interest. The course is not meant as an institutional qualifying training course ending with a formal competences certification.

Submit your survey.

Thank you for completing this survey.



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## Annex 2 Protocol for semi-structured interviews

***Please use a different document for each participant. Each document will contain demographic data + related narrative section.***

### Demographic data

Profile	.....
Context of work <i>where he/she plays his/her role and with what audience</i>	.....
Gender	.....
Age	.....
Years of experience <i>in the current role and/or in previous similar ECEC roles</i>	.....

### Narrative

Please, list the questions you asked (put as many as you asked)

- Question 1
- Question 2
- Question 3
- Question 4

Please, report the participant's answers in a narrative way

### Annex 3 ECEC profiles and required degrees in EU countries

COUNTRY	ECEC EDUCATOR (0-3)	PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER (3-6)	DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL/INSTITUTE	COORDINATOR OF ECEC SERVICES
<b>GERMANY</b> (The German system does not make any distinction between professions in childhood care for 0-3 and 3-6).	state-certified educators (3-4 yrs, depends on regional law). Educators can come from vocational colleges for educators and social assistants/childcare workers (Berufsfachschulen/Erzieherschulen) daycare parents/childminder (Tagesmütter/Tagesvätern)  Attending course of 160 hours, ends with a certificate, initiated and given by the Youth Welfare Office	state-certified educators  state-certified social assistants/childcare workers 2-3 years degree (depends on regional law)  Social assistants/childcare workers who want to work with children aged 0-3 have to be supervised by an ECEC-educator OR must obtain a diploma in ECEC-education (1 year additionally)	3 years degree plus university diploma OR diploma of further education OR B.A. ECEC or any similar university diploma (depends on the regional law)	We have the profile of pedagogical consultants (Kita-Fachberater) who need to have a specific qualification (university degree in childhood education/social education/pedagogy)



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<b>GREECE</b>	<p>For all Day Care centers (up to the age of 5 and compulsory kindergarten) the teachers and educators can come from post-secondary education structures in ECEC or HEI relevant structures. Duration of studies vary according to the structure (approx, from 2 to 4 years until degree). These persons have certain professional rights to be occupied in public and private ECEC structures except kindergarten. The ECEC structures in question do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, but under this of the Municipalities at the local level and the Ministry of labour at the national level. Kindergartens are falling on the other side under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, being a formal part of the educational system of Greece. A further distinction is present, where certain educational paths (post-secondary and VET) address the issues of care for very young infants, starting from 40 days old babies, focusing relatively less on later development phases as involved in pre-school education (difference between <i>vrefonipiakos</i> and <i>paidikos stathmos</i>, where in the latter case, kids that can attend must be older than approx. 2 ½ years).</p> <p>Kindergarten teachers come exclusively from HEIs (4 years degree) but can be occupied in pre-kindergarten structures, while non-kindergarten teachers cannot do the same i.e. be occupied in kindergartens.</p> <p>This is not always the case in reality, as informally, private structures often allow for the merging of ECEC staff across departments (ECEC and kindergarten).</p>	<p>In public ECEC structures and kindergartens the directors must have certain degrees as described in the column at the left. They are hired on the basis of an open call, subject to criteria and evaluation methods.</p> <p>For private ECEC structures, the owner can be anyone, but in order to obtain a license, a responsible person (director) must be in place having a degree from the educational structures as described in the column at the left respectively for ECEC (non-kindergarten) and kindergarten, or mixed provisions covering both aspects.</p>	<p>Not a clearly defined concept and position. It is similar to that of the Director (see column at the left).</p>
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<b>FINLAND</b>	University degree, Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood education (4 years) OR degree from secondary vocational college, a degree in social and pedagogical studies with emphasis in early childhood education (4 years). National law (Law of eligibilities for professionals in social welfare).	SAME	SAME	Masters degree in Early Childhood Education (university degree 5 years)
<b>ITALY</b>	3 years Degree (Scienze dell'Educazione) or secondary school diploma (depends on the regional law). The new law 107/2015 Could change the prerequisites at a national level to access this role	5 years Degree (Scienze della Formazione Primaria). This kind of degree trains both pre-school and primary school (children aged 6-10) teachers	5 years degree or 4 years degree (old degree system) + national selection.	We have the profile of pedagogical ECEC coordinator who need to have a specific qualification (university degree /regional course, but it may vary from province to province). The new law 107/2015 could change the prerequisites to access this role.



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<b>SLOVENIA</b>	Degree from secondary vocational college, in early childhood education or high school (gymnasium) degree + course in early childhood education	University degree, Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood 3 years	University degree, Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood + 5 years of experience in ECEC + examination for principal	
<b>SPAIN</b>	University Level: DEGREE IN INFANT EDUCATION (4 courses, 240 ECTS) An example of the content is available at Universidad de Alcalá de Henares ( <a href="https://portal.uah.es/portal/pls/portal/UXXIPO_RTAL_DATOS.PORT_AL_INTERNACIONAL.VER_ASIGNATURAS?COD_CENTRO=202&amp;COD_PLAN=G420&amp;paso_anno=2015-16">https://portal.uah.es/portal/pls/portal/UXXIPO_RTAL_DATOS.PORT_AL_INTERNACIONAL.VER_ASIGNATURAS?COD_CENTRO=202&amp;COD_PLAN=G420&amp;paso_anno=2015-16</a> ). Ratio: 1 teacher per 25 children.	Professional Training on ECEC or Bachelor's Degree is enough (2 years).  But the pedagogical proposal of the Center has to be written by a person who has a DEGREE IN INFANT EDUCATION, in Pedagogic or in Educational Science.  The Ratio is as Follows: -0-1 years: 1/8. -1-2 years: 1/13. - 2 a 3 years: 1/20		By law, the centers -In both cases (0-3 and 3-6) - should have the Pedagogical proposal. This document should be written by a person with a Degree in Infant Education.



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EduTeach The EduTeach logo features the word "EduTeach" in a pink, sans-serif font. To the right of the text are three 3D-style blocks: a grey rectangular block, a smaller grey block behind it, and a pink spherical block to the right of the grey block.

<b>HUNGARY</b>	Infant and Early Childhood Educator BA (3 years) or 10 semester course from the National Training Register (Kisgyermekgondozó, -nevelő - OKJ 54 761 02, available upon completed secondary education - maturity exam). Private family daycares (max 7 children): 40 hours training course.	Pre-school teacher BA (3 years)	5 years of work experience as pre-school teacher (BA) + a 4 semester postgraduate specialist training course for directing public educational institution.	We have a secretary of institution position both in ECEC and in schools for person dealing with administrative and financial matters of an educational institution. Dedicated National Training Register course OKJ 52 3462 01(200 hours), available upon completed secondary education - maturity exam.
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