



# D1.2 Need-Assessment and Action Planning Report

## Summary

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## Current needs of Early Childhood and Education professionals in four countries: A Needs-Assessment Study

***A needs-assessment study was conducted in the four participating countries - Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, and Romania – to identify the specific needs of key educational stakeholders in early childhood. Results highlight the challenges of moving forward in a teaching career and the need for increasing professional development opportunities that match teachers' interests. Professionals indicate the absence of clear guidelines and structured practices for dealing with children's discipline issues. Promoting positive learning environments, implementing child-centered approaches, and fostering rich playful environments are, according to professionals, the pathways for preventing children's challenging behaviors.***

The ProW project recently launched a report presenting the findings of a needs-assessment study conducted in the four participating countries (Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, and Romania) to identify the specific needs of key educational stakeholders in early childhood and education and care (ECEC) around early childhood teachers' careers, well-being, professional development supports, school wide discipline prevention, and student socio-emotional supports.

The needs-assessment study was based on a web-based survey administered to nearly 100 professionals in each country. A purposive sampling method was adopted to better capture the existing system challenges and needs in each 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 (4) 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 ProWi 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 around staff well-being (PERMA). 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.