

Workforce profiles in systems of early childhood education and care in Europe ^[1]

30 country reports

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AVAILABILITY

Reports free to access individually online ^[2]

Description of project

From SEEPRO to SEEPRO-R

Based at the State Institute of Early Childhood Research (IFP) in Munich, the original SEEPRO project (lead researcher: Pamela Oberhuemer) was conducted between 2006 and 2009 and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Family and Youth Affairs (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend).

The study reviewed and analysed the professional education and training, occupational profiles and work settings of early childhood personnel in the context of the early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems in 27 European Union countries (EU27). Commissioned reports by national experts and semi-structured interviews with a range of stakeholders in each country provided the basis for two book publications in English and German. These presented 27 country profiles and a cross-national analysis of key features of the early childhood workforce (Oberhuemer & Schreyer 2010 bzw. Oberhuemer, Schreyer & Neuman 2010).

In mid-2015, the German Federal Ministry for Family and Youth Affairs commissioned a project to update and extend the existing country profiles. We called this new project SEEPRO-R (Systems of Early Education and Professionalisation - revised).

This website presents research findings from the updated and extended project, conducted between August 2015 and October 2017. Croatia, as a relatively new EU member state, as well as Russia and Ukraine, are included in the expanded compendium. For each country there are two main documents. On this website you will find:

30 Workforce Profiles (country reports) on the current status quo regarding the qualification requirements for early childhood education and care professionals (pedagogues, teachers, educators), the composition of the workforce, the systems of initial professional education and continuing professional development, current reform initiatives and research projects and selected aspects of the working conditions of staff in each of the 30 participating countries. The initial reports were provided by mostly long-standing cooperation partners according to a research specification which they received for comment before compilation of the data. The final versions are based on a long period of close collaboration between the editors and the authors. The reports vary in length between approximately 25 pages and 80 pages.

30 Key Contextual Data reports (country-specific background synopses) presenting the main features of the ECEC systems of the countries involved and also relevant demographic data. These were compiled by the project team and reviewed by our cooperation partners.

All documents are presented in English and in German, thus providing a resource for a wide audience of early childhood teacher educators in higher and vocational education, national and local government administrations, employers/service providers in the ECEC field, researchers, early years practitioners and other interested persons.

Rationale and project aims

Across Europe, national systems of early childhood education and care (ECEC) are undergoing both expansion and consolidation, and the staff working in early years settings continue to be viewed as the key contributing factor to the quality of daily interactions with the children, their learning environments and their learning processes. Since the end of the previous study, many countries have instigated fundamental reforms - not least regarding the qualification and competence requirements for the early childhood workforce and the structures of initial professional studies and continuing professional learning.

In Germany, knowledge about staff qualifications and conceptualisations of initial and continuing professional education in other countries is becoming ever more important - not only as a source for scrutinising and reflecting on one's own country-specific cultural practices and values, but also in the face of widespread staff shortages and increased mobility between countries. Regional state authorities, service providers and also recruitment agencies and individual ECEC centres are faced with the question as to whether, and if

so, in what way staff from other European countries, also from Russia and Ukraine, can be employed in early childhood settings in Germany. The new SEEPRO data provide a basis for making informed decisions. Moreover, in professional and research circles both in Germany and in international contexts, strong interest has been shown in an update of the original SEEPRO country profiles as resources for professional and research purposes.

Project design and research procedures

Building on a network of longstanding contacts in European universities, higher education institutions, research institutes and policy institutions, invitations to participate were sent out in September 2015. In some cases, new cooperation partners were recruited through international collegial networks. In the case of Croatia, a 5-day research visit was organised in January 2016 for interviews with ministry officials, professional education/training specialists, researchers, representatives of professional organisations and other key stakeholders. Contacts to Russia and Ukraine were enabled through an agency specialising in the recruitment and deployment of staff from these countries in Germany.

Between November 2015 and July 2017, the country experts worked on their Workforce Profile reports together with the project team. This detailed work was necessary to ensure that key concepts were accessible and comprehensible both to English-speaking and German-speaking readers. This was not a case of straightforward language editing (the greater majority of reports were written in a language other than the authors' home languages), but involved constant probing and revisiting to make sure that the key terms had been correctly understood.

Key contextual data were compiled by the two project team colleagues. Main data sources were international reports and websites and European and national statistical sites, using a triangulation approach for checking and cross-checking data. Systems of early childhood education and care are subject to continuing change. In this sense, the reports in this publication can only represent a picture of these systems at the time of data compilation.

-reprinted from SEEPRO-R

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