SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN ECEC SETTINGS

A study conducted in five European countries

SEED
Social Emotional Education and Development

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The SEED Project Consortium:

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Chapter 1: Introduction

What is social and emotional well-being and why is it important?

International indicators for quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) endorse the concern for young children's well-being, specifically their social and emotional well-being.

Well-being is an abstract, multi-dimensional, social and culturally constructed phenomenon and broadly indicates that one is doing well emotionally and feeling comfortable with oneself as person. The term psychosocial well-being is often used inter-changeably with social and emotional well-being – both terms are used in this report.

Two main directions for understanding and researching well-being have been identified. The first is oriented to the child's achievement or demonstration of particular skills, abilities and behaviours, whereas the second focusses on the child's subjective experiences and perceptions of feeling socially, emotionally and intellectually recognized[1].

The following definition of psychosocial well-being, reflects the former understanding: 'the developing capacity of young children to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learning – all in the context of family, community and culture'[2].

This is the working definition also being used throughout this report.

Attention to psychosocial well-being is increasing across all levels of education. This is due to the recognition of the range of challenges that many children encounter in their daily life which may be unfavourable for their learning and mental health. These challenges include: poverty and social inequality; family conflict; bullying and cyberbullying, migration, mobility and changing family and community structures (NESET II, 2018).

Within ECEC specifically, renewed emphasis to psychosocial well-being is in response to the global trend to treat children as 'academic learners' at younger ages, giving children, their practitioners and parents the impression that mastery of academic skills is the only

[1] Mashford-Scott et al. 2012 cited in Sandseter and Seland, 2015.
[2] Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, 2008.

route to educational success and highly-paid employment[3]. Related to this is the tendency to artificially separate care and education, which is in contradiction to the holistic conceptualization of education where care and education is valued equally[4]. The formulation of the term 'educare' has been an attempt to describe an approach to education that offered 'a developmentally appropriate mixture of education and care; of stimulation and nurture; of work and play'[5].

Children's long term success at school is influenced as much by social, emotional and self-regulation skills as by academic skills and knowledge. Social and emotional development is a main contributor to successful school transitions and a significant preventative factor of disruptive behaviour, and mental health problems. Not paying attention to social and emotional development is harmful to children's capacity to learn and to thrive. It is also expensive in terms of the socio-economic costs associated with bullying, violence and mental health problems[6].

Early childhood educators are the most important partners in providing a rich learning environment in the classroom – this is often referred to as process quality[7]. The social-emotional and instructional features of educator-child and child-child interactions are positively related to children's development of self-regulation, and social skills[8]. Structural aspects of quality include group size; adult-child ratios, availability of materials, organization of space as well as accreditation, staff requirements and regulations and financing associated with the setting[9]. Separately, both process and structural features have an influence on children's learning and development. Less is known about how

[3] Sigrid Brogaard (2015) schoolification or early years democracy? A cross-curricular perspective from Denmark and England, Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 16(4) 355–373, DOI: 10.1177/1463949115616327; Sibel Sönmez & Burcu Ceylan (2017) Teachers' perceptions of well-being and involvement in preschool children, Early Child Development and Care, 187:1, 35-44, DOI: 10.1080/03004430.2016.1150272

[4] Van Laere, Peeters & Vandenbroeck (2012) The Education and Care Divide: the role of the early childhood workforce in 15 European countries', *European Journal of Education*, 47, 4, 527-541, 2012.

[5] Hayes, N. (2007) *Perspectives on the Relationship between Education and Care in Early Childhood.* Background Paper prepared for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Dublin: NCCA

[6] Cefai, C.; Bartolo P. A.; Cavioni. V; Downes, P. 2018. *Strengthening Social and Emotional Education as a core curricular area across the EU. A review of the international evidence*, NESET II report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018. doi: 10.2766/664439;

[7] Pianta, R.C., Paro, K.M.L. & Hamre, B.K. (2008). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System Pre-K Manual*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

[8] Slot, P.L. (2014) Early Childhood Education and Care in the Netherlands, Quality, Curriculum, and Relations with Child Development. Utrecht: Utrecht University.

[9]ISSA (2014) Review of documents on measuring and improving quality. Report on the International Consultation. Measuring and Improving Quality in Early Childhood Environments September 2014. Leiden Netherlands.

exactly structural and process factors interact with each other to have an impact on child outcomes[10].

What we do know is that frequent opportunities to engage in all types of play[11], outdoors and indoors, is positively associated with young children's psychosocial well-being[12]. So too is the support and encouragement of adults (parents and practitioners) who are responsive to young children's need for nurturance and care and their drive to explore, play and learn[13],[14].

Both practitioners and parents believe that social and emotional skills are important for young children to learn[15]. However, research points to a lack of training and continuous professional development on this topic, and the need to design effective methods to provide ECEC educators with skills and competences to promote children's psychosocial well-being[16]. Furthermore, there are few reliable and easy to use indicators for psychosocial development of young children, which link socio-emotional development to children's capacity to learn. Neither has there been much attention to researching young children's perspectives about their psychosocial well-being in ECEC settings.

Aim of the research study

The aim of this research study is to firstly: to assess the psychosocial well-being of 5-year-old children in ECEC settings in five countries in Europe: Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands and Norway through interviews with ECEC practitioners and secondly: to

[10] Milotay, N. (2018) Early Childhood Education & Care in EU Policies: How Can They Help? Keynote address, EECERA Annual Conference, Budapest, August 2018.
[11] Including physical locomotor play; exploratory play; constructive play; creative play; pretend, fantasy and socio-dramatic play; language or word play: See Appendix 2 for a definition of these types of play.
[12] Mel McCree, Roger Cutting & Dean Sherwin (2018) The Hare and the Tortoise go to Forest School: taking the scenic route to academic attainment via emotional wellbeing outdoors, Early Child Development and Care, 188:7, 980-996, DOI: 10.1080/03004430.2018.1446430
[13] Ginsburg, K. R. (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. Pediatrics, 119 (1), 182–191.
[14] Kahn, P. H., & Weiss, T. (2017). The importance of children interacting with big nature. Children, Youth and Environments Natural Spaces and Development, 27 (2), 7–24.
[15] It has also been suggested that there may be differences between male ECEC practitioners and female practitioners with what is considered problematic behaviour, particularly in relation to play. See for example Sandra Bosacki, Heather Woods & Robert Coplan (2015) Canadian female and male early childhood educators' perceptions of child aggression and rough-and-tumble play, Early Child Development and Care, 185:7, 1134-1147, DOI: 10.1080/03004430.2014.980408 and Rune Storli & Ellen Beate Hansen Sandseter (2017) Gender matters: male and female ECEC practitioners' perceptions and practices regarding children's rough-andtumble play (R&T), European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 25:6, 838-853, DOI: 10.1080/1350293X.2017.1380881
[16]Hollingsworth, H. L. & Winter, M. K. (2013). Teacher beliefs and practices relating to development in preschool: importance places on social-emotional behaviours and skills. *Early Child Development and Care,* 1758-81.

identify the factors in ECEC settings that promote and hinder children's psychosocial well-being in each country.

The study is part of European project titled: SEED (Social and Emotional Education and Development). The activities in SEED, including this research study, are designed to draw attention to the importance of psychosocial well-being for children's learning and development, and support the continuing professional development of practitioners working with 2.5 to 6 year-olds in this area.

The SEED Project is funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme – Strategic partnerships for school education.

Participating partner organisations

The overall coordinator of SEED is International Child Development Initiatives, ICDI based in the Netherlands. The participating partner organisations responsible for implementing the SEED Project activities in their own country are: Centre for Education Initiatives, CEI, Latvia; Open Academy Step by Step, Croatia; Partners Hungary, Hungary; Queen Maud University College, QMUC, Norway; Windesheim University of Applied Science, in the Netherlands. VBJK, Centre of Innovations in Early Years in Belgium has a training and dissemination role in SEED.

Two associate partners, International Step by Step Association (ISSA) and Eurochild, are supporting the dissemination of the projects results and publications.

The research described in this report constitutes the first phase of the SEED Project.

The importance of context

Multi-country comparative research, such as the SEED project offer an important opportunity to reflect on and question values and practices in relation to the education of young children. Furthermore, as noted by Alexander (2012), *National education systems are embedded in national culture …[so that] no educational policy or practice can be properly understood except by reference to the web of inherited ideas and values, habits and customs, institutions and world views, that make one country distinct from another* (Alexander, 2012:5 cited in Moss and Urban, 2017).

Therefore, in designing this study due consideration was given to local and national contextual factors impacting on teachers' assessments of children's psychosocial well-

being. While it was not within the scope of the study to undertake an in-depth socio-historical analysis of services for young children in each of the participating countries, we did document the main national policy developments affecting 5 year-olds attending ECEC or school settings. Our main interest was to outline how and where education for this age group is organized in Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands and Norway, and whether or not psychosocial well-being and the development of social and emotional skills and behaviours are included in the national curricular frameworks (see Chapter 3).

In the following sections, we outline the specific objectives of the study and the approach taken to data collection and analysis.

Objectives of the research study

The specific objectives of the research were as follows:

1. To describe the context **in which 5 year-olds are educated** in Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands and Norway with reference to structural features such as educator/practitioner qualifications, group size, and adult-child ratios and governance.
2. To **explore practitioners' understandings of the psychosocial well-being and the factors that promote and hinder it** in the sample ECEC and primary settings.
3. To assess **the psychosocial well-being of 5-year-old children** attending ECEC settings in urban and rural areas in Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands and Norway based on interviews with their practitioners using the 'Universal Psychosocial Indicator for Five-Year-Old Boys and Girls (UPSI-5)[17].
4. To identify **commonalities and differences among the five countries** in practitioners and principals' understandings of young children's psychosocial well-being and the factors within ECEC settings and wider environment that promote and hinder it.
5. Based on insights gained from 1, 2, 3 and 4 above, **sensitize policy makers** to the importance of psychosocial well-being AND **formulate draft principles and practices of psychosocial well-being in ECEC for practitioners**, which will be further developed during the CPD pathway for ECEC practitioners.

[17] ICDI developed the UPSI-5, an easy-to-use global screening tool that assesses the psychosocial well-being of large populations of 5 year-old children. UPSI-5 was piloted in x countries worldwide and has already been used in studies in South Africa (2014-2016) and Ethiopia (2016 – 2018).

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. As well as assessing the psychosocial well-being of the children using the UPSI-5, we were also interested in whether there were significant differences in the ECEC experience and psychosocial well-being of young children in different countries; in girls compared to boys and in rural compared to urban areas. The qualitative data based on interviews with the participating practitioners and school principals (Managers) provided additional important insights into how psychosocial well-being is understood and the place it has in everyday pedagogical work. Throughout all stages in the analysis and interpretation, there were frequent discussions between all members of the research teams.

The results and the recommendations arising from the research study were discussed at national level in all participating countries, with the view to bring more attention to psychosocial well-being of children amongst practitioners, teacher trainers, policy makers and researchers. The findings are also informing a 9-month (October 2018 to June 2019) continuing professional development (CPD) pathway about the importance of psychosocial well-being, in which a subset of the ECEC practitioners in all participating countries are participating.

In parallel with the CPD pathway, practitioners will also interview young children about their experience of well-being in the ECEC setting they attend in three of the countries: Latvia, the Netherlands and Norway. This will be done using the ECEC Wellbeing Monitor, which includes questions about child-child relations, teacher-child relations and activities [18]. This activity is being coordinated by the team from QMUC, who were responsible for researching and developing the ECEC Wellbeing Monitor, which has already been extensively applied by practitioners across Norway.

In conclusion, SEED aims to develop the skills of ECEC practitioners working with young children about the importance of psychosocial well-being for children's capacity to learn and to thrive and to support them to engage with children and parents of different backgrounds on this issue. Ultimately this will lead to quality improvements in ECEC, to improvements in children's social and emotional skills and behaviours and a greater understanding of children's subjective well-being, in the study countries and further afield.

A note on terminology: It is recognised by the authors that amongst the participating countries a wide range of terms are used to describe settings, which are attended by 5-

[18] The ECEC Wellbeing Monitor is an electronic interview guide for structured interviews with 4-6 year old children about their everyday life and relations in ECEC institutions. The interview is conducted by the teacher and takes the form of a conversation. Developed by Sandseter and Seland https://dmmh.no/for-barnehagene/trivselsmonitor-2

year-olds. These include: kindergartens, preschools, preschool institutions, general education institutions and primary schools.

Similarly a variety of terms are used to describe adults working in a professional capacity with young children in education settings, which often depends on which type of setting they are working and/or their level of responsibility or qualifications e.g. kindergarten teacher, class teacher, assistant teacher, nurse.

For the sake of clarity and consistency in this report, in most instances, we use the umbrella term **ECEC setting** or just **setting,** to capture all of the participating settings where data were collected. We also use the term **ECEC practitioner** or just **practitioner** to describe the adult working directly with the children in the classroom. The term **principal** is used to describe the person in a management role at the setting level responsible.

The research report is organised as follows: The research study methodology is described in **Chapter 2** including a description of the sampling strategy, the research tools, interviews, data analysis and ethical considerations. **Chapter 3** provides a synthesis of how ECEC is organized in each of the participatory countries in the study with the particular reference to governance of ECEC services, group size, practitioner qualifications and the place of psychosocial well-being and curricula, which 5-year-olds experience in ECEC settings. Practitioners' assessment of psychosocial well-being of 5-year-olds in each country, i.e. the UPSI-5 results are presented in **Chapter 4.** This chapter also provides a comparative perspective highlighting the commonalities and differences across countries with respect to practitioners' understandings of children's psychosocial well-being and the factors that promote or hinder it. The final chapter, **Chapter 5** discusses the main findings also highlighting key issues to be explored in the professional development component of SEED.

A summary version of this report is available here. Additionally, summary reports in Croatian, Dutch, Hungarian, Latvian and Norwegian are also available. These pay particular attention to the respective country level findings and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Introduction

In this Chapter we explain how the research participants (settings, children, teachers and principals) were selected. We also describe the research tools and interviews and the data collection process.

The sampling strategy

The participating settings

The most important goal was to have comparable sample in each country i.e. 200 five year old children attending formal ECEC settings (whether that be in preschool or primary school) in urban and rural areas.

Secondly, given the particular educational challenges encountered by **children dealing with difficult circumstances** and the potential impact this might have on psychosocial well-being (see Chapter 1), we were also keen that these children were represented in the research. Another important consideration was to involve settings and teachers who were **willing to** participate in the research study and who potentially could also participate in the continuing professional development pathway - Phase 2 of the SEED project. All these factors influenced the common sampling strategy, which was agreed by all research partners. In summary: first select one geographical region, which included both urban centres and rural areas. In each selected region, select ten to fifteen ECEC settings (preschools, kindergartens, or schools[19]), ensuring a balance between urban and rural settings and if possible making sure that the ratio between urban and rural in the sample matched the national ratio.

Because organization of ECEC provision varies across countries and administrative systems, the type of settings varied from country to country. For example, in Croatia, the law allows that a single kindergarten can have up to 30 educational separate settings, also

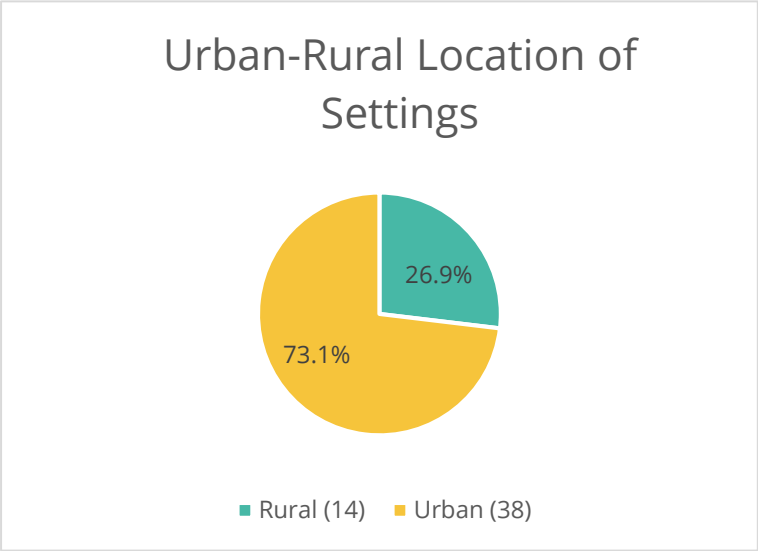
[19] 5-year-olds may attend different educational institutions based on the national education policy. In this case, 5-year olds in Croatia, Hungary and Norway are all attending kindergartens (1 to 6 years); in Latvia they might be either in kindergarten (1 to 6 years) or in primary schools (classes for 5-6 year olds); in the Netherlands, all 5-year-olds are to be found in primary schools. For more information on the ECEC policy in each country involved in this study, please refer to Chapter 2.

located in different locations and/or 600 children. Only two Croatian kindergartens participated in the study, each of which including respectively 5 and 10 settings in total, some located in rural and some in urban areas. Therefore, for the ten sampled settings in Croatia, only two principals were interviewed.

In total **52 ECEC settings** participated in the study, the majority of which were located in urban areas and classified as kindergartens (ECEC settings including only pre-school children between 1 and 6 years old). Each country had between 9 to 12 settings participating.

73 percent of the settings overall were situated in urban areas, whereas 27 percent of the settings were in rural areas (see Figure 1 below). In Hungary, only urban settings were sampled, though one setting can be more accurately described as semi-urban.

Figure 1 – Number and percentage of settings in urban and rural locations



The children

Early childhood practitioners work on a daily basis with children and families with diverse backgrounds and also with those who may encounter challenges in their daily lives. In each country, the study aimed to collect data about 200 five-year-old children from rural and urban areas. It was agreed by the research teams to strive for a sample whereby 30 per cent of the sample children (+/- 10%) in each country children dealing with difficult

circumstances. For the purposes of the study 'dealing with difficult circumstances' was defined as low SES/living in poverty and/or home language of children different from the dominant language[20]. This guideline[21] was also kept in mind in selecting the sample settings.

Each research team established contacts with the selected ECEC settings through their principals to seek permission for the research. Within each setting, practitioners working with 5-year-olds willing to participate in study were identified. Time was taken to explain the purpose of the study, the interviews (see below) and to organize the sampling of children. In some of the countries parental permission was also necessary to conduct the study[22].

In Croatia, Hungary and Latvia and in Norway, it is common for practitioners to work in pairs or groups i.e. two practitioners are responsible for one group of children. Therefore, in these countries in some cases more than one teacher for each group was interviewed as part of the study and pairs of teachers filled out the questionnaires together.

In cooperation with the practitioners, data collectors compiled a list of boys and girls where permission has been granted. Random selection was applied to pick equal subgroups of boys and girls.

In practice, more than 200 children were sampled in four of the five countries involved in this study in order to achieve a balance between boys and girls and to include sufficient proportion of children dealing with difficult circumstances. It was decided to use all the data collected for this analysis.

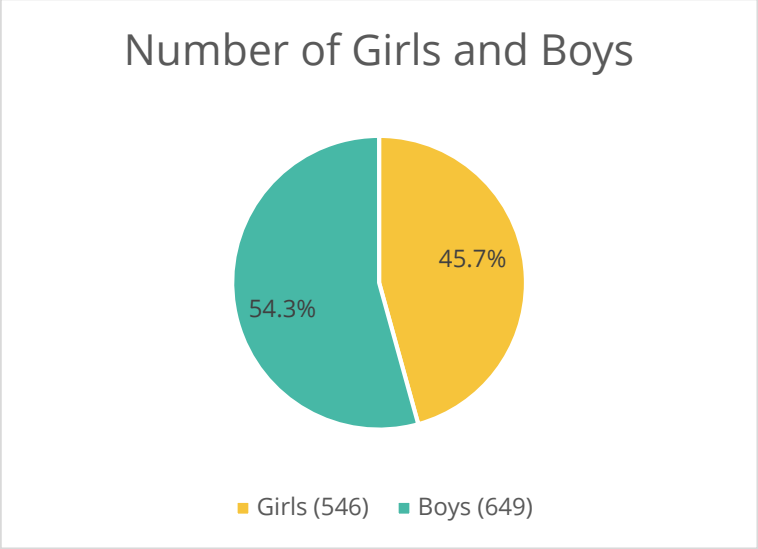
In total, **1195 children participated in the study, 46 percent of which were girls and 54 percent were boys.** In every country, more boys than girls were included in the sample, although the difference wasn't large.

Figure 2 – Number and percentage of girls and boys who participated in the study

[20] It is acknowledged having a home language which is different to the dominant language may be a strength (bilingual) and should not therefore be associated with disadvantage. However, the cumulative effect of living in poverty, being a migrant or belonging to an ethnic minority and speaking a different language at home puts many children at a disadvantage in ECEC settings.

[21] This was considered a reliable factor indicating a possible migrant or minority background.

[22] Parental permission was required in the Netherlands. In Norway the national centre for ethics in research (NSD) was contacted. Because of full anonymity and confidentiality in the data collection process, parents did not have to approve, but information was sent out in advance, which also gave parents the possibility of withdrawing if they wanted to. Parental permission was not required in Latvia or Hungary.



The research tools

Assessing psychosocial well-being: the UPSI-5

Participating practitioners were interviewed about the psychosocial well-being of the sampled 5-year-olds using the Universal Psychosocial Indicator for Five-Year-Old Boys and Girls (UPSI-5). The UPSI-5 is a one-page list of 29 statements concerned with the social and emotional behaviours of 5-year-old children. Example of statements are: 'S/he hurts other children more than most children do'; 'S/he can express his/her feelings'.[23]

The UPSI-5 is not an individual diagnostic instrument, but is instead designed to ascertain the psychosocial well-being of large populations of children in ECEC or school settings, at district, province or country level, to make comparisons and note changes over time. The tool should be administered by those who know the children well e.g. their teachers. Each statement can easily be scored by ticking 'agree' or 'disagree', which may or may not give an indication of concern. Data collectors know when a question corresponds to either a grey or a white box, but these are not displayed to practitioners. When for instance, 10 % of a representative sample of young children score more than five (5) 'in the grey', then there is **reason to be concerned** about the psychosocial well-being of 10 % of the broader

[23] The development and piloting of the UPSI-5 consisted of a rigorous piloting process in six countries. For more information see van Oudenhoven, N., Miedema, E., Euwema, M., Kernan, M., Berkhof, H. and Knol, D. (2012). UPSI-5: The Universal Psychosocial Indicator for Five-Year-Old Boys and Girls. Garant Publishers.

population of 5-year-old children in the setting of which the sample was drawn. See Appendix I for a copy of UPSI-5 tool.

In each setting the trained data collectors requested the practitioner (class teacher) to complete one form per sampled child. The practitioner was asked to read each statement carefully, think about the child in question, and then tick the appropriate box.

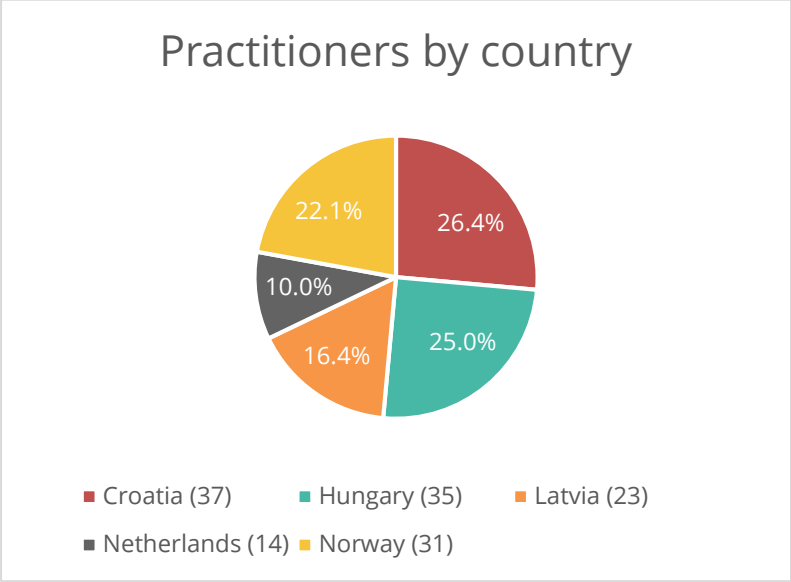
After completing the UPSI-5 scoring sheets, each practitioner was also asked how they understand the concept of psychosocial well-being, what are the factors in the setting, which promote or hinder psychosocial well-being of the children they work with. They were also asked to comment on the backgrounds of the general child population in their school, including the common challenges that children may face. Practitioners were also asked whether or not they were interested in the continuing professional development (CPD) pathway, designed to stimulate practitioners to reflect on how they promote psychosocial well-being of children in their class and improve their practice. This constitutes Phase 2 of the SEED project (see Chapter 1).

Most interviews were conducted on an individual basis. There was one focus group with the data collector and four practitioners in Hungary and in the Netherlands, some interviews were done with two practitioners together[24]. See Appendix II for a copy of the practitioner's interview.

In total, 140 practitioners were interviewed and completed UPSI-5 forms about the sampled children in their classes. All were women, except for Norway where 36 percent of participating practitioners were men (11 out of 31). Note, there was quite large range in the number of practitioners interviewed between countries, ranging from 14 in the Netherlands to 37 in Croatia. This can be explained by whether or not two practitioners were with the same group; group size, the number of 5-year-olds in one group and whether the groups are same age or mixed ages groups.

[24] One of the data collectors in the NL interviewed two practitioners/teachers together and counted them as one. This means that 15 teachers participated in the Netherlands. However, for the purposes of analysis we are counting 14 teachers. Similarly, the focus group of 4 teachers are being counted as one practitioner for the purpose of analysis although in actual fact 38 practitioners participated in total in Hungary.

Figure 3 – Number and percentage of practitioners interviewed per country

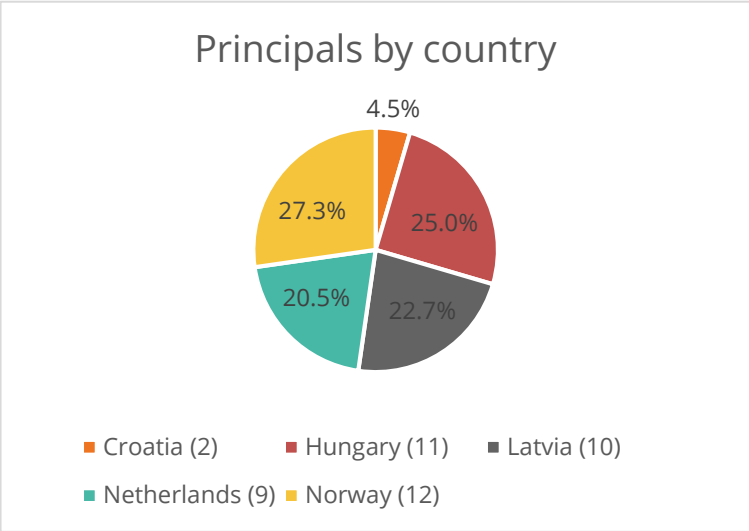


Interviews with principals

Children's psychosocial well-being is influenced by the interaction between their innate capacities and their environment at home, at educational settings and in their community. This includes the quality of relationships and the nature of the physical environments they encounter every day. Qualitative and quantitative information about children's ECEC experiences and home life was collected from principals via a structured interview with questions about: setting size; class size and pupil/practitioner ratio and practitioner qualifications. Principal interviews also had a question in common with the practitioner interview, which required them to comment on the backgrounds and common challenges of the general child population in their school. See Appendix III for a copy of the principal's interview.

In total, 44 principals were interviewed for this study, 9-12 principals in each country with the exception of Croatia where only two principals were interviewed. This is because of the organization of ECEC settings in Croatia whereby one principal may be responsible for up to 30 kindergarten groups or 600 children (see Chapter 3 for more information).

Figure 4 – Principals interviewed per country



Data collection training and supervision

Prior to the data collection, a 3-day training was organized in Leiden (Netherlands) by International Child Development Initiatives to introduce data collectors from five countries to the study. Topics addressed included: an introduction to study; interview skills; exploring the UPSI-5 scoring form; exploring practitioner and principal interviews and first contacts with schools and interviewees. Role-play formed an integral part of the training. Additionally, considerable attention was paid to ensuring an accurate and meaningful translation of the concept of psychosocial well-being and adaptations of the tools to the country contexts.

After the training each national research team translated the tools in their own national language: Croatian, Latvian, Norwegian, Hungarian and Dutch. A back translation process was undertaken to ensure accuracy of translation.

A research coordinator in each country was responsible for introducing the data collectors to the practitioners and setting principals, checking whether the collected data was complete, and also for entering the data into Excel.

Data were collected between March and June 2018. Throughout the data collection process, data collectors also kept a logbook, in which they noted their observations,

reflections on the research process and kept track of appointments made. These notes have helped the interpretation of the data presented in this report.

Data collectors spent between 1and 4 days in each setting where data were collected, depending on the number of practitioners per setting participating.

Data analysis and interpretation of findings

All quantitative and qualitative data collected were entered in Excel spreadsheets by data collectors under the supervision of the national research coordinator or by the national coordinator itself. With the support of a statistician, quantitative data were then analyzed using SPSS statistical software, to identify trends and relationships between different variables.

To deepen the analysis and to better understand the relationship between variables such as gender, location of ECEC setting, the reason for concern have been related with these variables. Chi-square statistic and other association measures were computed. The Chi-square statistic is the primary statistic used for testing the statistical significance of the cross-tabulation table. This test is useful when you need to discover if there is a relationship between two variables and if it is statistically significant, even if it doesn't tell you how strong this association is. In order to know the effect size of the association Phi and Cramer's V were also computed. Findings in relation to gender have been corrected for the fact that there are more boys in the sample.

The analysis of the qualitative data is described at the beginning of Chapter 4.

Ethical considerations

At each setting, the practitioners and principals were briefed about the UPSI-5 prior to data collection by the national research teams and given the opportunity to clarify any concerns. No names of settings, practitioners, school principals, and children were recorded on any interview or scoring form. To preserve anonymity, each child and school was assigned a unique ID number. Furthermore, dates of birth of children were not collected, instead only month and year of birth were recorded on the forms. As per ICDI's **Child Protection Policy**, the ethical guidelines that all researchers followed also included: *"when interacting with practitioners and principals (and potentially children at the school settings), researchers must do no harm, be respectful and understanding, act and record observations in an objective and appropriate manner; researchers must ensure that a culture*

of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed; researchers must be aware of situations that may present risk, and manage these; all participants are kept informed about the findings of this research; this involves sending a report of the study to all governmental departments, principals, practitioners, parents and children that participated."

Additionally, some research teams applied additional guidelines in accordance with the ethical policy of their organisation or institution in relation to research.

The findings and analyses from all parts of the research are presented and discussed in the remaining chapters.

Chapter 3: Psychosocial well-being in ECEC policy: a cross-national perspective

Introduction

This chapter provides background information about organization of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) for 5-year-olds in each of the participating countries in the SEED project. The topics addressed include governance of ECEC, regulations regarding group size and practitioner qualifications, whether a country has a national curriculum or framework for ECEC and the place of psychosocial well-being in the curriculum. This information was compiled via desk research and the interviews undertaken by research team in each country as well as via interviews with participating setting principals in the study. The concluding section of the chapter summarizes commonalities and differences between countries.

Croatia

According to the Law on Pre-school Education in the Republic of Croatia (2013), **pre-school education (**referred to as **kindergarten) is a constituent part of the educational system** and each child has the right to receive pre-school education[25]. Children can attend kindergarten **from age six months until they are 6 years,** when they begin primary school[26]. The younger children (6 months to 3 years) participate in the nursery groups and the 3 to 6-year-olds in kindergarten educational groups. Children who do not participate in these are obliged to participate in the Preschool Programme in the year before they start primary school. [27] In 2016, 59.2 per cent of 3 to 6-year-olds attended kindergartens

[25] Croatian Parliament (2014), Strategy for Education, Science and Technology, http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_10_124_2364.htm

[26] Children who turn six years of age by the end of March of the current year are eligible to start primary school in September.

[27] Children with disabilities are obliged to attend preschool programme two years before they start primary school

nationally. For the Medimurje region, where data was collected for the SEED research enrolment in kindergarten for children aged 3-6 years old was 54%[28].

Kindergartens are managed and funded by local municipalities, while the Ministry of Science and Education is responsible for developing the ***National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education*** (2014). Every kindergarten is responsible for developing their own curriculum (on the institutional level) which is based on the national curriculum.

Most kindergartens are public. Private kindergartens can follow the National Curriculum, but can also draw up their own programmes based on education approaches such as Montessori, Waldorf, Agazzi pedagogy, etc.)

Children can participate in **a full day programme** (maximum 10 hours per day) or half day (4 hours), and hours of operation can be adjusted to the identified needs of parents and in holiday periods.

Optimal size of kindergarten, according the ***National Pedagogical Standards for Preschool Education and Care***[29], is 17-20 educational groups in regular programmes or 340-400 children in total. Some kindergartens have multiple settings, and optimal size for those kind of kindergartens is 30 educational groups or 600 children. Children are placed either in **same-age or mixed-age groups.** All day programs (10 hours) have two practitioners (teachers) in a group, who overlap for 2 hours. In 4-hour programs there is one practitioner**.** The maximum **group size for 5-year-olds is 20**, although results from a recent study showed that average number of children per group was actually 22.6[30]**.**

The National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education (2014) highlights a holistic approach to the child, and the integrated nature of his learning and well-being, referring to the personal, emotional and physical; the educational and the social.

The professional staff working in **kindergartens** includes: teachers (practitioners), nurses, pedagogues, psychologists, special needs teachers and speech therapists. Teachers are trained in teacher-training faculties and all of them are required to hold at least a bachelor's degree.

[28] Analysis of accessibility, quality, capacity and financing of early and pre-school education in Croatia, 2018.
[29] National Pedagogical Standards for Preschool Education and Care (2010) https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2008_06_63_2128.html
[30] Ibid.

Hungary

In Hungary children between **3 and 6 years go to a kindergarten** *("óvoda"* in Hungarian) and attendance is compulsory from age 3. Most kindergartens are established and maintained (financed) by the State under the Department of Human Capacities, however maintainers can be other legal entities like churches, foundations or private individuals. Local governments receive allocated funds from the central budget to finance kindergarten education in their areas.

According to the Public Education Act (2011) the **maximum number of children in a kindergarten group is 25.** Children are either placed into same age or mixed age groups – this decision is made by the principal.

The content of educational work in kindergartens is defined by pedagogical plans, which are developed in each kindergarten. These are based on the objectives and tasks specified in the **National Core Programme of Kindergarten Education**. As long as they follow this framework and abide by the relevant regulations, Kindergarten teachers are free to choose the material and methods they use.

The National Core Programme **specifically mentions social – emotional well-being**. According to the document one of the major characteristics of kindergarten aged children is that "their behaviour is emotion-controlled". Therefore, it is essential that the kindergarten environment is **emotionally safe** - there is a loving, balanced atmosphere in the kindergarten. Also emphasized is the importance of positive adult-child and child-child relationships; the development of social sensitivity; openness; sense of basic ethics, and foundations of habits and norms in the child. Kindergarten teachers are viewed as important behaviour role models.

The typical staff in a kindergarten is: the principal, kindergarten teachers (practitioners), kindergarten nurses (teacher assistants), other professional staff (e.g.: speech therapist) and technical staff (e.g.: janitors, kitchen crew, maintenance crew etc.). Required qualification for kindergarten teachers is a college diploma.

Latvia

Pre-school education (ECEC) in Latvia is considered a comprehensive first stage of general education and all children have to complete it by the time they are 7 years old[31]. Pre-school

[31] This deadline may be extended for a year due to specific health or psychological problems by parental request or doctors' request or recommendations.

education is available from the age of 1.5 years, but children may enter at 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 years of age. It can be delivered at various pre-primary education institutions (kindergartens) or at special pre-primary classes at general education institutions such as primary schools. **It is mandatory to participate in pre-primary education programmes for five and six year old children** who do not attend pre-school education institutions. **About 87 per cent of children aged 3 to 7 years** participate in some form of formal pre-school education in Latvia.

Children can be placed either in same-age or mixed-age groups. There are no regulations related to group size, however, this doesn't mean that one group can attend an unlimited number of children. **All settings have to comply with hygiene requirements, which defines the minimum space for one child**[32]. It is also necessary to **evaluate the quality of the implementation of the pre-school education program**.

There are public and private pre-primary education institutions. Public sector institutions require that parents make a financial contribution to cover the cost of meals, but access to educational activities is free of charge. The fee in the private sector institutions covers full costs of the programme, except for salaries of pedagogues teaching pre-primary education to 5 and 6-year-olds (www.izm.gov.lv, Ministry of Education and Science).

The objective of the pre-school education curriculum, which is set out in *The Education Law* (1999)[33], is to ensure multi-faceted development of a child's personality, to promote health and readiness for primary education. The new **Preschool Education Guidelines** are expected to come into force in 2019. The image of the preschool child, according to the new Guidelines is: "a curious, creative and joyful child who is healthy and active, works independently, is motivated and happy to learn, who gains experience about himself, others, in mutual interactions with the surrounding world". One of the main pedagogical tasks within the framework of pre-primary education is to develop the child's social and emotional skills, which includes the identification of oneself, ones emotions, thoughts and behavior, the ability to understand others and build positive relationships.

According to the Guidelines **play is the most important pedagogical activity** in the pre-school. There should be a balance between play which should be purposefully organized or indirectly directed by the teacher and children's free play, both indoors and outdoors.

[32] Cabinet Regulation No. 890 (Adopted 17 September 2013) Hygiene Requirements for the Providers of the Child Supervision Service and Educational Institutions Implementing a Pre-school Education Programme
[33] https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/50759-education-law

The professional staff working in **pre-school** includes: the principal, the deputy principal (who is a preschool education methodologist/pedagogue) teachers (practitioners) and teachers' assistants. The staff may also be supplemented by psychologists, special needs teachers and speech therapists. Teachers are trained in teacher-training programs and all of them are required to hold at least a bachelor's degree.

Netherlands

Primary education in the Netherlands starts at age 4. It is compulsory for children in the Netherlands **to attend primary school from age 5 years,** though almost all children attend primary school from their 4th birthday. Typically, all children attend **school five days a week and five hours per day.**

Subsidized preschool education for 0 to 4 year-olds is available in day care centres and preschools. **Free preschool play group facilities are available for children considered at risk concerning their primary school career**, usually related to not being proficient in Dutch and/or low social-economic status. Subsidized supplementary day care during the pre- and after school hours is on a voluntary basis available for children who attend primary school (i.e the 5-year-old children in this project).

There is **no national mandatory curriculum for either preschool or primary education,** although there is a national institution that provides curricular suggestions. Instead, the Ministry of Education has formulated **core objectives (2006)** which indicate what children need to know and what skills they need to develop during their primary school years. Core objectives address mathematics, language, sciences, history, art and physcial education.

Some core objectives pertain to psychosocial well-being, e.g., 'The pupils learn to care for their own physical and psychological health and that of others'; and 'The pupils learn to behave from a sense of respect for generally accepted standards and values'. The pedagogical or philosophical approach (e.g. Montessori or Jenaplan) and the educational materials the school uses are determined by the school itself. Schools are accredited when they demonstrate they work towards achievement of the core objectives and the children's general needs and interests are being taken into account. All schools are monitored by the inspector of the Ministry of Education on an annual basis to monitor progress regarding the achievement of the core objectives.

It is the responsibility of the teachers to achieve **a safe and pedagogical climate in the classroom**, which matches the need of every child. Whilst there is no regulation regarding maximum group size, according to figures from 2017, **average group size in primary schools was 23.1.** Furthermore, there are standards in relation to minimum space per child in school. Every child must have 3.5m^2 floor area. This includes stairways and playcorners in the open spaces between classrooms.

In 2018, most schools use a child monitoring system to assess the development of children throughout the primary school years. This includes the social competencies of children which are understood as: social-emotional development (well-being, self-image, independence, regulation of emotions, etc.), social skills (cooperation, self-reliance, dealing with conflicts, etc.) and attitudes/skills to function successfully in diverse situations (involvement, self-management, dealing with differences, democratic behavior, social responsibility, being able to judge morally. Schools and practitioners have freedom to follow or develop their own methods and approaches in achieving these objectives.

The professional staff working in primary schools usually consists of a principal, classroom teachers (practitioners), a remedial teacher, an internal supervisor/coach, a janitor and several teaching assistants. Teachers are required to hold at least a bachelor's degree (Level 6 [34]) with respect to primary education. Teaching assistants usually have a professional degree (Level 4). Schools can decide how the teaching assistants are deployed in the school. Not all classes have a teaching assistant.

Norway

All Norwegian children from 1 to 6 years of age have the legal right to be educated and cared for in an ECEC institution, also known as kindergarten ("Barnehage" in Norwegian). The education and care of children below school age is defined as the first, non-compulsory step of the educational system and is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research. Compulsory primary education begins in August the year the child turns 6.

Approximately 91 per cent of all Norwegian children age 1-5, and 97 per cent of the 5-year-olds attend ECEC institutions, and most of them full time (Statistics Norway 2018). There are no regulations related to group size, but the most common group size for 5 year olds

[34] See http://ecahe.eu/w/index.php/European_Qualifications_Framework for more information

is between 18 and 25 children[35]. Children are placed either in **same-age or mixed-age groups.** In a group of 18 children age 3-5 there must be one qualified teacher. The average adult-child-ratio for this age group is almost 1:6.

The Norwegian ECEC has a strong emphasis on free play and friendships among children, and securing good social relations between children and staff as a means of promoting children's well-being and health. The national framework plan (NMER 2017), which applies to all ECEC institutions in Norway, emphasizes that everyday life in ECEC should be characterized by the children experiencing play, care and learning in a good physical and psychosocial environment, protected from psychological harm such as exclusion, discrimination and bullying.

In recent years there has been a shift in the preschool education in Norway towards a more "school readiness" dominated practice, where children's skills regarding self-regulation, language, literacy and early mathematics is stressed as important.

At the time of data collection, one third of practitioners were required to have a bachelors degree in early childhood education and care. There are no educational requirements for the rest of the staff, but national statistics reveal that 20% have a certificate of apprenticeship in work with children (Statistics Norway 2018). In addition each ECEC setting has access to special needs teachers, speech experts and physiotherapists.

Commonalities and differences between countries

In addition to identifying the commonalities and differences in ECEC context for each country, this section also reports on the findings relating to group size and teacher qualifications as reported by the principals of the participating settings in the study.

Governance of ECEC

The Ministry for Education or its equivalent is overall responsible for ECEC services where 5-year-olds attend in all participating countries. Specifically, in Croatia, this is Ministry for Science and Education; in Hungary, the Ministry of Human Capacities; in Latvia, the Ministry for Education and Science; in the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education; and in Norway, the Ministry of Education and Research.

[35] https://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/tall-og-forskning/rapporter/barnehagespeilet/udir_barnehagespeilet_2016.pdf

However, the age-range of children included in public provision for ECEC under the responsibility of these Ministries varies. For example, in Croatia preschool education (ECEC), to which all children have the right to access is for children aged between 6 months and 6 years, in Latvia it is between 1.5 and 7 years and Norway it is between 1 to 6 years.

In Croatia and Hungary, responsibility of governance and funding of ECEC services is devolved to local government and municipalities.

Where are 5 year-olds being educated?

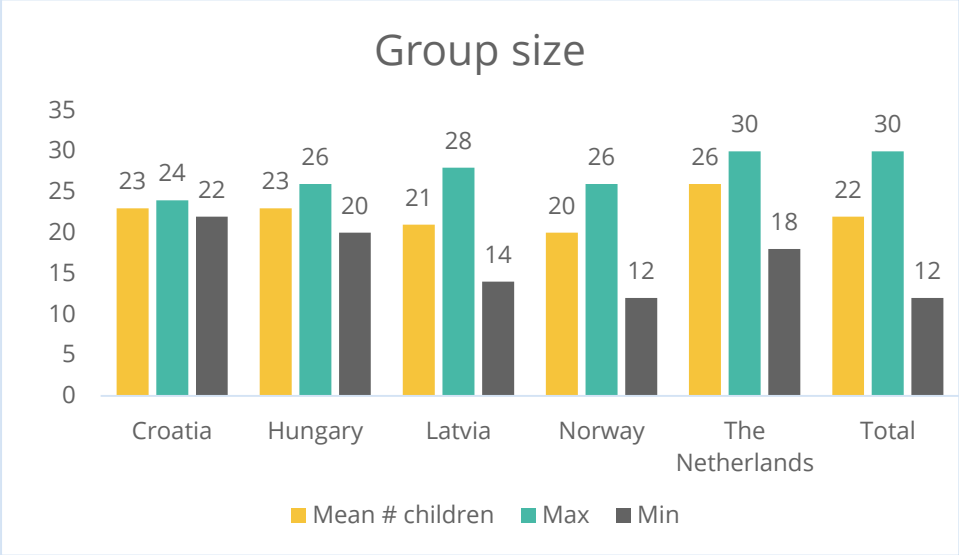
In four of the five countries 5-year-olds typically attend kindergartens. The exception is the Netherlands, where primary education begins at 4 years and most children attend from age 4. Almost all 5-year-olds in other countries attend kindergarten or pre-primary classes in primary schools. The exception is Croatia where just 59 percent of 3 – 6 year-olds are in Kindergarten.

Group size and adult: child ratio

In just two of the five countries Croatia and Hungary, there is a regulation governing maximum group size for kindergarten classes. In Croatia, this is 20 children, in Hungary 25 children. Although there is no specific regulation re: group size in the remaining three countries, previous research indicates that it is between 18 and 25 children per group in Norway and an average of 23 in the Netherlands.

The **average group size per country** in sampled settings in this study ranged from 20 children in Norway to 26 children in the Netherlands (see Figure 5). In three countries, Norway, Latvia and the Netherlands, group size vary significantly from setting to setting, whereas, in Croatia and Hungary group size is more stable across settings reflecting the fact that group size is regulated by government in those countries. The larger average group size in the Netherland is not surprising as in general, group sizes in primary schools tend to be larger than in ECEC settings.

Figure 5 - Group size, mean, maximum and minimum per country



Comparing data on adult-child ratio across countries is more difficult given the range of factors affecting adult-child ratios such as: all day versus short day programmes; same age or mixed aged groups and when and how teaching assistants are deployed in kindergartens. Therefore, caution is advised in interpreting adult-child ratio findings below.

According to the data provided by participating principals, the countries with the smallest adult-child ratio are Norway and Latvia, with a mean of 6 and 7 children per adult, respectively. The country that has the biggest adult-child ratio is the Netherlands with a mean of 24 children per adult. This is makes sense considering that the Netherlands has the biggest group size and it is not usual to have a teaching assistant in every classroom.

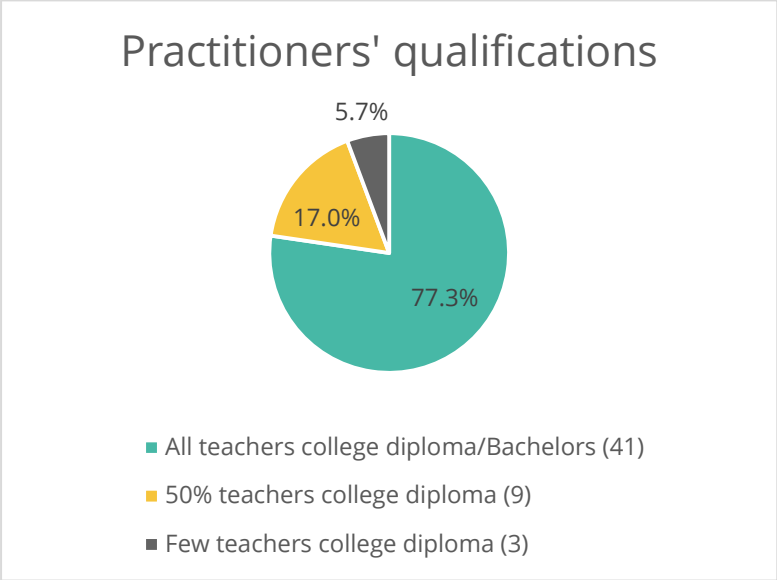
In Hungary, two adults are assigned to a group, although in some settings these work on a shift basis with one adult present in the morning and the other in the afternoon. The same applies in all day programmes in Croatia where there is an overlap of just 2 hours in the middle of the day when both practitioners are present. In the principal interviews in Norway, some principals provided the standard ratio (6:1), whereas some provided the actual numbers of staff involved with the children (for instance, including special needs practitioner, apprentice etc.).

Practitioners' qualifications

The level of qualification required for all practitioners (teachers) working in kindergartens, pre-primary classes and primary schools is a Bachelors degree or college diploma in all participating countries. In the case of Norway, at the time of data collection (2018), one third of practitioners were required to have a bachelors degree in early childhood education and care. A lesser qualification is required for teaching assistants in all participating countries.

The data provided by the principals about the level of qualifications of practitioners working with 5-year-olds were in line with the national regulations in the participating countries. They reported all ECEC practitioners have a college diploma or a Bachelor level degree, with the exception of Norway, where the study findings indicate that 50 percent have a Bachelor degree (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6 – Practitioners' qualifications



In all countries practitioners (class teachers) work with the support of other professionals such as psychologists, speech and language therapists or pedagogical mentors either on site, or who are shared between a number of settings.

National curriculum for ECEC

In all countries, except the Netherlands there is a National Curriculum or Framework Guidelines for ECEC, which practitioners are expected to follow and/or translate into practice plans. In the Netherlands, the Ministry for Education have formulated Core Objectives for Primary Education, which all schools are expected to adhere to. The degree of freedom individual ECEC services, schools and practitioners have in interpreting national ECEC frameworks varies from country to country. For example in Croatia and Netherlands, there is some freedom to adapt national guidelines to particular pedagogical approaches such as Montessori or Waldorf should a setting wish to do so.

Psychosocial well-being in national ECEC curricula

Attention to psychosocial well-being, often referred to as social and emotional development and skills, is included in all the National Curricula and framework documents along with other aspects of learning and development. The emphases differs from country to country however. Some examples are the following: The National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education (2014) in Croatia highlights the integrated nature of learning and well-being including the personal, emotional, physical, educational and social. In Hungary, the National Core Programme of Kindergarten Education states that it is essential that the kindergarten is emotionally safe, and highlights the importance of positive adult-child and child-child relationships and the foundations of habits and norms. Social competencies in the monitoring system used by most schools in the Netherlands include: well-being, self-image, independence, regulation of emotions, cooperation, self-reliance, dealing with conflicts, involvement, self-management, dealing with differences, democratic behavior, social responsibility and being able to judge morally

It is noteworthy that the period of SEED project (2017-2019) has coincided with revisions of national curricula for ECEC in Norway and Latvia. In the case of Norway, the revised National Framework Plan (NMER, 2017) states that children should experience play, care and learning in a good physical and psychosocial environment. However, compared to the previous national ECEC plans, there is now also more an emphasis on 'school readiness'. According to the new Preschool Education Guidelines in Latvia, which are expected to come into force in 2019, one of the main pedagogical tasks of pre-primary education is to develop the child's social and emotional skills, which includes the identification of oneself, emotions, thoughts and behaviour, the ability to understand others and build positive relationships.

How national guidelines regarding psychosocial well-being are interpreted by the practitioners participating in the SEED research will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Psychosocial well-being of young children in ECEC settings

Introduction

The first part of this chapter presents the findings in relation to practitioners' understandings of the concept of psychosocial well-being their views about the factors in ECEC settings and the broader environment that promote and hinder psychosocial well-being. As well as better understanding practitioners' perspectives about psychosocial well-being, this analysis is also designed to identify cross-country similarities and differences of interpretation of the concept and in the psychosocial well-being of sampled children.

In the second part of the chapter we present the findings of the UPSI-5 tool, which generates the percentage of children in each country sample where there is reason for concern about the psychosocial well-being.

Practitioner's understandings of psychosocial well-being

Practitioners' responses were analyzed with reference to the working definition of psychosocial well-being for SEED project (see page 4). For the purpose of analysis, the definition was categorized into three sub domains or constructs: interpersonal; intrapersonal; and explore the environment and learning (see Table 1 below). Note: it is acknowledged that these sub-domains are overlapping.

> *We as a community [of practitioners] are models for children, their parents, their surroundings. All the events around them have an effect on their well-being".* Practitioner from Croatia

Table 1: Domains of psychosocial well-being of young children

Interpersonal (skills)	**Intrapersonal (skills)**	**Explore the environment and learning**
• Developing capacity to form close and secure adult and peer relationships • Empathy and compassion • Social skills • Prosocial behavior • Communication skills	• Experience, regulate and express emotions • Positive image of oneself • Visible happiness	• In context of educational setting, family, community, culture • Security of exploration

The aim was to identify which of the sub-constructs within the definition were represented in the practitioners' understandings and ways of thinking about children's psychosocial well-being, which sub-constructs (if any) dominated, and whether there were differences between countries. Sub-constructs were colour-coded in the interview transcripts. Frequency counts made it possible to identify patterns and trends. Illustrative direct quotations from practitioners are also presented.

The definitions and interpretations of the concept of psychosocial well-being are influenced by the culture and context of each country and what is prioritized and valued in ECEC for young children. Also, it is important to note the interviews about practitioners' understanding of psychosocial well-being took place after practitioners filled in UPSI-5 forms. It is possible their understanding was influenced and informed by the questions in the tool.

What did we find out?

The majority of practitioners interviewed were aware of the main aspects of psychosocial well-being. Some described in it great detail, recognizing its importance in children's lives and as the basis for all aspects of a person's functioning in society.

The interpersonal and the intrapersonal domains of psychosocial well-being were the ones described by the majority of practitioners in all countries (from half to two/third of sample). The interpretation of

> *"Social and emotional well-being is the number one in child development, the basis for everything else. This is how a child can be included in the society as a person.'* Practitioner from Croatia.

the interpersonal capacities varied from country to country although there were common understandings.

The **interpersonal components** highlighted by **practitioners in all countries** were the following: a child needs to be able to develop empathy, accept diversity, have good relationship, develop attachment with practitioners and parents, feel part of a group and be able to play with peers.

In some countries (Latvia and Hungary), practitioners put the emphasis more on the adult-child relationships describing this in terms of: family and home environment, trust and love for parents and practitioners, financial security. In the other countries practitioners gave equal importance to adult-child and peer relationships (child-child).

In Croatia, Norway and Latvia the majority of practitioners highlighted the following interpersonal skills as part of children's psychosocial well-being: their capacity to negotiate, to adapt to different situations, to communicate and to share, to respect rules, to ask for help and offer it to others.

It is interesting to note that Dutch practitioners were the only ones who mentioned self-care i.e. the child's ability to go independently to the toilet, to put the coat on and clean up after themselves as part of psychosocial well-being. This could be due to the explicit presence of core objective such as 'The pupils learn to care for their own physical and psychological health and that of others' and 'The pupils learn to behave in a self-sufficient manner', in relation to the rather high child-practitioner ratio (20-30: 1) in Dutch primary schools.

Practitioners in all countries also included aspects of the **'intrapersonal'** highlighting in particular children's self-esteem and capacity to recognise and express emotions.

> *'Psychosocial well-being is the feeling about yourself. Who you are, the one you think you are, the one you want to be, and the one others think you are. There is a conflict between them. A good feeling about yourself is like a vaccine. It is about being seen, heard and understood. A safe, stabile adult who supports you in your thoughts about yourself. That the ones in your surroundings meets who you are. It is the basic package. It is to understand yourself and understand others. To understand yourself, your feelings about yourself needs to be the same as other people see you.'* Practitioner from Norway

In Latvia and in Hungary, being able to sleep well and having a good health and nutrition were included as being part of psychosocial well-being.

The third sub-domain of psychosocial well-being in our analysis is children's capacity to explore and learn. In Croatia, Latvia and the Netherlands half of the practitioners mentioned this aspect of psychosocial well-being. In the case of Norway and Hungary this was one third or less.

> *'[Psychosocial well-being is] that you can be yourself. You feel comfortable. Dare to speak. Dare making mistakes'.* Practitioner from the Netherlands

The most common attributes and skills practitioners referred to which 'fit' in this sub-domain were: feeling of freedom and safety; possibility to speak out and make mistakes; open to challenges; mastering a skill; feeling of belonging; positive attitude towards kindergarten and its atmosphere.

Factors that promote and hinder children's psychosocial well-being

Practitioners were also asked about the factors that promote and hinder the children's psychosocial well-being in the ECEC settings where they work. Both practitioners and principals were also asked to comment on the backgrounds of the general child population in this school, including the common challenges that children may face.

The analysis is presented below.

Factors that promote children's psychosocial well-being

Six main factors were identified as the main supporting factors in ECEC settings for psychosocial well-being: **competences and attitude of practitioners**; **stimulating environments**; **quality of relationships**; **social and emotional education**; **inclusivity and diversity**; and, **child centered approaches**. Each are further elaborated below.

Competences and attitudes of practitioners

Interviewees in all countries believe that it is important to have highly competent practitioners who can encourage children's development. Accordingly, practitioners need to be well-balanced, well-prepared and have positive attitudes towards children. They also need to be able to support them when they are struggling and enhance their well-being by creating a safe environment. Practitioners also mentioned that it is necessary for practitioners to have good relationships with their colleagues in the ECEC setting and be able to work as a team for the children's benefit.

> *"The teacher's role is crucial, a lot depends on our attitude to the children. We should be accepting and loving, this is very important. We have to set an example. We should accept everybody the way they are."*
> Practitioner from Hungary

> *"The staff must be skilled and have knowledge about children and their well-being. And they must be interested and available to the children. We talk to the children about feelings and friendship; that is important."*
> Practitioner from Norway

Stimulating environments

A stimulating environment is composed by many features. Practitioners interviewed in all countries describe a stimulating environment as one that provides opportunities for children to play indoors and outdoors and have freedom while playing. They also stressed the importance for children to have access to green areas in the settings and nature in general. Additionally, practitioners acknowledge that a stimulating environment also needs to feel safe and welcoming in order to promote children's psychosocial well-being. Ideally, children should find such an environment both at school/ECEC setting and at home.

Every part of the environment affects them. We need to help them to have good relations in the kindergarten. To have friends is very important, to socialize. To make the children feel safe. It's difficult to make and to have good relations if you don't feel safe" Practitioner from Norway

"The physical play environment is important, it must be stimulating. And the children must have teachers that can guide them in their play." Practitioner from Norway

Quality of relationships

Practitioners in Croatia and Latvia considered the quality of relationships in ECEC settings to be a significant factor to promote the children's psychosocial well-being. They mentioned that children need to have positive relationships with their peers as well as with adults in their immediate environment. It is also important that the relationship between practitioners and parents gives children consistency between what is experienced at home and in the setting.

"We need a general positive microclimate in the preschool, with positive communication with parents, positive cooperation among staff, with children and among children themselves". Practitioner from Latvia

"It is important that we interact with all the children every day, it's about caring. It is important that all the children can feel that they can be themselves in the kindergarten. We work with the children so they will learn to express feelings, to recognize them, to show empathy. Play is very important for us." Practitioner from Norway

Social and emotional education

Actively promoting social and emotional education is also recognized as a key factor to promote children's well-being in ECEC settings. Practitioners in Croatia considered that working on recognition, naming and control of emotions is relevant to promote the psychosocial well-being of their children. In Norway, some practitioners also mentioned emotional education and having different methods and programs to promote emotional expression. In Latvia, practitioners emphasized that expressing emotions and resolving conflicts are positive factors. In Hungary, teachers believe in the importance of touch and affectionate treatment to promote emotional education in their students as is illustrated in the comments from practitioners from Hungary below.

> *"For us, the most important part is the harmonic development of the child emotionally, spiritually and physically. We put a great emphasis on emotional development, everyone pays a lot of attention and holds the children's interest in the first place."* Practitioner from Hungary

> *"We do our best to serve their social emotional well-being, we take in persona dolls when there are conflicts, we have a lot of talking circles."* Practitioner from Hungary

Inclusivity and diversity

Practitioners in all countries, with the exception of Croatia, identified an inclusive environment as an important factor contributing positively to psychosocial well-being. As teachers have many students with different backgrounds, they mentioned the importance of promoting acceptance between all children no matter their background or their abilities.

> *"Everyone is accepted as they are. This is what we stand for as a school. New children are immediately included. We take care of children when they show emotional needs. We teach children to play together nicely and to talk to each other about difficulties."* Practitioner from the Netherlands

It will be recalled that practitioners in Dutch schools monitor children's attitudes

and skills to be able to function successfully in diverse situations, including dealing with differences, democratic behavior and having social responsibility (see Chapter 3). The comment in the box reflects this emphasis.

Child centered approaches

A child centered approach was mentioned as a factor to promote the psychosocial well-being by the practitioners in all countries. Some interviewees mentioned the need to focus on the individual child: it is important to see the child as a person, not only as a pupil and show interest in them. Practitioners felt the need to adapt activities according to each child's level and individual capacities. Practitioners expressed the view that it is necessary to see each child's needs and that children require individual attention, even though sometimes they cannot give it to the children because of the size of the group or they do not have enough practitioners in their schools (see section below on within ECEC settiing factors that hinder children's psychosocial well-being) .

"Above all, here really the child comes first. To get here a hug or encouragement is an everyday event. Punishment, as such, does not exist." Practitioner from Hungary

"Attention is drawn to the fact that every child is important, that everyone gets a hug, can say what he or she feels or wants; we try to solve problems by talking. Children address the teacher when a problem arises. The verbalization of emotions is encouraged." Practitioner from Croatia

Factors that hinder children's psychosocial well-being

Many factors can hinder a child's psychosocial well-being. These include a child's inherited capacities and temperament as well as their immediate social and physical environment at home, in the ECEC setting and in the community. The interaction of all of these factors also plays a role.

ECEC setting factors

The most common **ECEC setting factors** that practitioners mentioned as hindering young children's psychosocial well-being concerned structural quality features. Firstly, practitioners in all countries complained about the **large group size** in their settings and how this negatively influenced their practice and prevented them giving individual attention to each and every child and respond to their needs. Average group size across Average group size across the countries ranged from 20 in Norway to 26 in the Netherlands. Another common concern was the **lack of staff** and the **high turnover**. This was reported by some practitioners in Norway, Latvia and Hungary.

Practitioners in Croatia, Latvia and Hungary also identified the **lack of cooperation with parents** as an important challenge in their settings.

> *"If we do not know their personalities and do not use methods that fit them individually. One size fits all approach does not work. It is necessary to know where they come from that they. Therefore it is very important to cooperate with the families and know if there is a crisis. If the parents are not open to cooperation than the child's emotional security is at risk."* Practitioner from Hungary.

Another factor referred to as being a challenge and negatively impacting on children's psychosocial well-being was the **cultural and ethnic diversity in the group settings**. This was highlighted by practitioners in the Netherlands (40%), Hungary (29%). In Norway, 31 % (10 out of 32) practitioners mentioned language and/or cultural differences as a common challenge, but only two of the practitioners expressed that this can have a negative effect on children's psychosocial well-being. According to some of the respondents from the whole sample of practitioners, the presence of children with a different cultural background (migrants, refugees and Roma) seems to generate conflicts, produce a situation of discrimination and exclusion and requires practitioners to spend

more energy in order to foster integration and social inclusion among children as well as families. Diversity in the groups also means that practitioners often deal with children with a different language than the official national language, and this is perceived as a challenge to cohesion and group work.

Broader social environment issues such as lack of social cohesion in the neighbourhood, absence of grandparents in children's lives, situations where children are being socialised not to play with certain groups of children are also viewed as impacting on the emotional climate of the setting, as illustrated in the comments from practitioners below:

> *"Everyone comes from different areas, there isn't a safe base, many cultures, neighbors do not know each other, grandfathers and grandparents are absent".* Practitioner from the Netherlands

> *"Factors such as conflicts among children or discrimination can influence their well-being in general (for example, a child is being raised at home not to play with or be around Roma children). There is discrimination against Roma among non-Roma parents."* Practitioner from Croatia

Diversity in the ECEC setting was not mentioned as an asset or positively contributing to psychosocial well-being by practitioners. This does not mean that it cannot be viewed positively. For instance, two of the principals in Norway emphasized the multi-cultural and multi-language environment in their setting as an exciting factor.

In all countries except for Latvia, practitioners report the lack of space and/or time for playing indoors and outdoors as factors that hinder children's psychosocial well-being in their settings.

> *"Lacking time for each child individually, everyone feels under pressure, both us teachers as well as the children. Children need more contact with nature, working in fresh air, jumping and exploring. Strong adherence to rules, staying in a closed room, closeness for new things don `t promote their well-being."* Practitioner from Croatia.

Family background and social and environmental factors

The most common family background challenges impacting on young children in their setting that practitioners and principals in all countries mentioned were **poverty, divorce**, **substance abuse/alcohol addiction** and **violence.** However, it is important to note that these were mentioned in a minority of settings. Each is elaborated below.

Poverty

Practitioners in Croatia, Latvia and the Netherlands, described poverty as the main factor that hinder the psychosocial well-being of the children in their settings. In Croatia, 13/37 practitioners mention that poverty affects a small number of children in their classroom (under 10% in most cases) and in the Netherlands, 7/10 principals considered this a main challenge. In Latvia, poverty was highlighted by 9/23 practitioners and by all 10 principals. Eight out of the 35 practitioners in Hungary talked about poverty as a factor hindering psychosocial well-being.

Amongst the practitioners in Hungary and Latvia there was a tendency to blame family background for problems experienced in the setting.

In Norway, 6/12 principals consider low income one of the challenges for children and their families. The use of the term 'low income' is related to the right that families have to reduced payment in kindergartens if they have a low income. The notion 'poor' is not common used in daily speech when practitioners talk about their children and families in Norway.

> *"We have many underprivileged children, they bring a lot of aggression from home, they are not well looked after. It is really difficult with them. It is a lot more difficult to socialize and influence them so that both they and the others benefit from it. They have walls we bounce back from."*
> Practitioner from Hungary

Divorce

Divorce is reported as having a negative impact on children's psychosocial well-being both in Hungary (10/35 practitioners), in the Netherlands (6/10 principals) and in Latvia (4/10 principals). In the other two countries involved in this study, less than 20 per cent of interviewed practitioners referred to divorce as a challenge for the children in their settings.

A few practitioners commented on what they perceived as the negative impact of divorce on children:

> *"We have children from divorced families. These children are less emotionally balanced; they would need love from both parents".* Practitioner from Latvia

> *"There are many divorced parents and single parent families. We have one child who is looked after by his grandparents, because mom lives abroad. Divorce causes a lot of tension in kids."* Practitioner from Hungary

Substance abuse/alcohol addiction

One third of practitioners in Latvia reported substance and alcohol abuse as a challenge for the children in their settings. Although in smaller numbers, practitioners in Croatia (13%) and Norway (8%) also mentioned substance and alcohol abuse. In particular, in Croatia, this challenge was highlighted in settings with a higher presence of ethnic minorities and higher incidence of social exclusion.

Violence

Violence is reported as a challenge in three countries, Latvia, Hungary and Croatia. In Latvia, 35% of interviewed practitioners mentioned physical, emotional and witnessed violence as a key challenge for the children in their settings. In Hungary, 20% of practitioners mentioned it and in Croatia only 8%. In Croatia, physical and verbal abuse seems to be more of a problem in settings with a larger ethnic minority population, just as substance abuse.

Summary of positive and negative factors

In summary, practitioners identified the following ECEC factors as key in supporting children's psychosocial well-being:

- competences and attitude of practitioners
- stimulating environments
- quality of relationships
- social and emotional education
- inclusivity and diversity

- child centered approaches.

The most common ECEC setting factors that practitioners reported to hindering young children's psychosocial well-being were:

- large group size
- the lack of staff
- the high staff turnover.

Practitioners in Croatia, Latvia and Hungary also identified the lack of cooperation with parents as having a negative effect on children's psychosocial well-being. Another ECEC setting factor identified as negatively impacting on children's psychosocial well-being was the cultural and ethnic diversity in the settings.

Family background factors and broader community factors mentioned, but by fewer practitioners, included:

- poverty
- divorce
- substance abuse/alcohol addiction
- violence
- lack of social cohesion in the community
- absence of grandparents in children's lives.

Interestingly, no practitioners explicitly mentioned the role of other professionals they work with such as psychologists or speech and language therapists in support of their work on psychosocial well-being, although in some settings they are present.

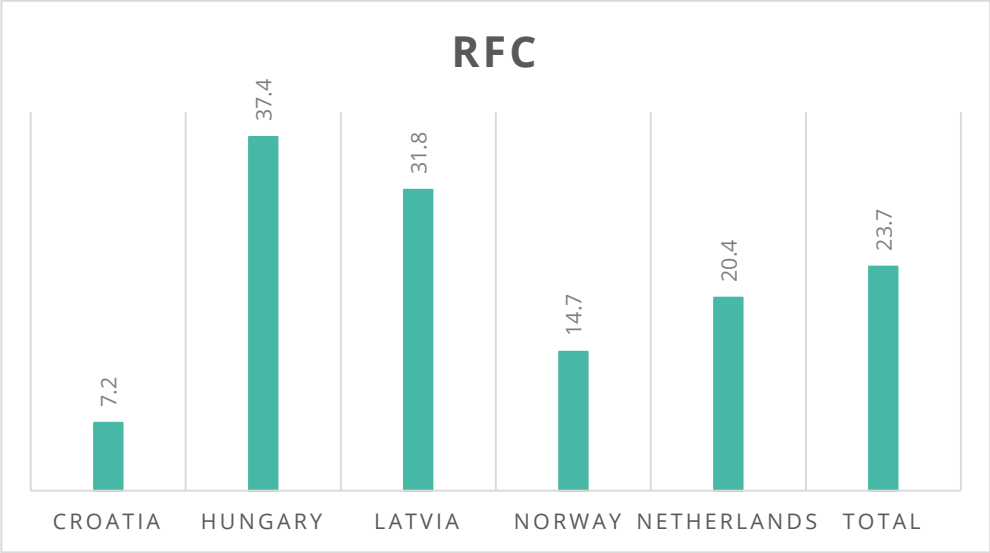
In the following section, we report on the findings of the UPSI-5 interview.

The UPSI-5 findings

Psychosocial well-being of children per country

The average percentage of children where there was reason for concern about psychosocial well-being per country ranged from 7% of sampled children in Croatia to 37% of sampled children in Hungary. Additional statistical tests confirm a moderate relationship between Reason for Concern and country.

Figure 7 - Reason for concern per country



The findings also show a large variability within each country. Not surprisingly, additional statistical analysis indicate a strong relationship between the attended setting and reason for concern percentage. Factors accounting for both the large variability both between countries and within countries are complex. The particularly low percentage reason for concern for Croatia in comparison to other countries is unexpected, though may in part be explained that many 5-year-old children are not attending ECEC services in Croatia (see Chapter 3)

Below are some tentative explanations from the national research teams regarding variation within countries.

The variation **in Croatia ranged from 0 to 46 %.** Factors accounting for this is the fact that in some settings, there were very few 5-year-olds assessed, because many settings in Croatia have mixed age ranges. Also **in Hungary**, there was a large variation in reason for concern between settings, ranging from **17% to 73%.** One of the factors explaining this

large variation may lie in the socio-economic contexts where the ECEC settings are located. The kindergarten that has 73% of the children in the "reason for concern" category is specifically for disadvantaged children, and parents have many housing problems.

The findings from Latvia also point to a large variation in reason for concern between ECEC settings. In **Latvia,** the lowest percentage reason for concern was **13% and the highest 69%.** There is one school in particular that many children with special needs are included because it has smaller classes/groups than average. Often parents choose this institution if their children have behaviour problems.

The range between settings in **the Netherlands** was from **0 to 31 %** with one outlier with **73 % reason for concern**. In the Netherlands, children typically visit a school close to their home. Differences between districts are thus reflected in the findings per setting. One setting was located in a district with low average SES, relatively high crime rate and many families with a different home language than Dutch. Practitioners are well aware of these differences. The findings from part 1 of this chapter indicate that practitioners highlight cultural and ethnic diversity as well as poverty, lack of social cohesion as having a negative impact on children's psychosocial well-being.

Compared to the other countries the variability between settings in **Norway had the smallest range, from 5 to 33 %**. Three out of 12 settings had more than 20 %. One of the settings with highest reason for concern had a high percentage of migrant children with a mix of challenges related to language, culture, low income and the fact that the families have war and refugee experiences. One of the other ECEC settings with a higher percentage reason for concern in Norway had a high percentage of divorced families and some challenges related to drug abuse and other family issues.

See **Appendix IV** for the detailed tables for each country.

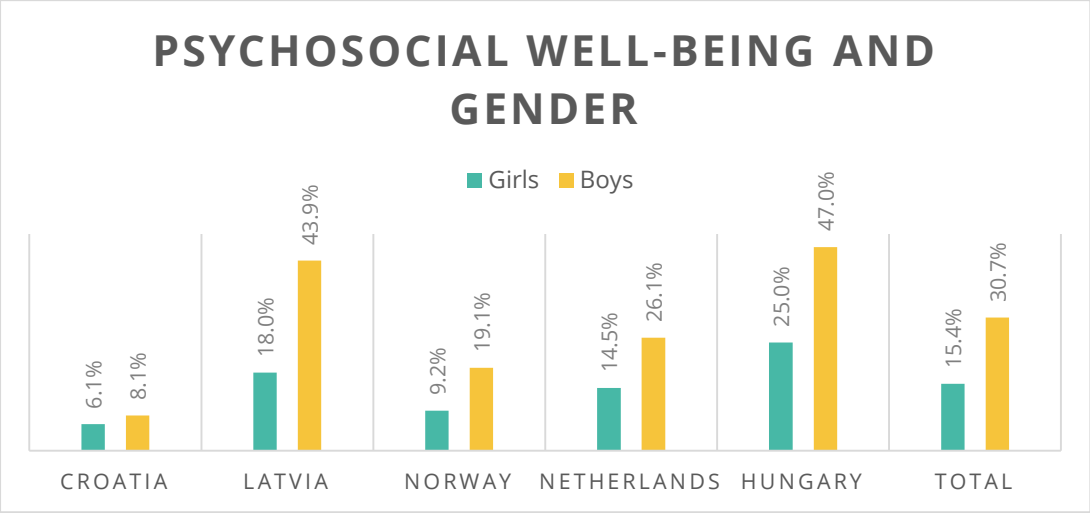
The sample in the study included settings in both rural and urban areas. However, the rural or urban location of a setting does not seem to have an impact on the psychosocial well-being of the children attending it.

Psychosocial well-being of boys compared to girls

In all countries, the percentage of children with reasons for concern was higher for boys, (from 8% in Croatia to 47% in Hungary) than for girls (from 6% in Croatia to 25% in Hungary). In Latvia, the percentage of children with reasons for concern about psychosocial well-being was more than double for boys (44 %) than for girls (18%).

Additional statistical tests showed a moderate relationship between gender and reason for concern in the case of Hungary and Latvia.

Figure 8 - Psychosocial well-being and gender



It is important to note the dominance of female practitioners who participated in this study, with the exception of Norway where 36 % of participating practitioners were male. This could have resulted in possible bias regarding what is considered problematic behavior, particularly in relation to play. The literature shows that female practitioners are more likely to label behavior of boys as problematic, as they are more physical, loud and noisy in their play[36].

Many of the statements in UPSI-5 are related to externalizing behavior, and studies show that this behavior is more characteristic for boys compared to girls. We can also assume that the practitioners have answered the UPSI-5 objectively in a way that does not capture if they think this behavior is normal for children or not. Their opinion on this might also be culturally dependent. Therefore, further research should be conducted to explore if and how this bias could have influenced this particular study.

[36] See for example Sandra Bosacki, Heather Woods & Robert Coplan (2015) Canadian female and male early childhood educators' perceptions of child aggression and rough-and-tumble play, Early Child Development and Care, 185:7, 1134-1147, DOI: 10.1080/03004430.2014.980408 and Rune Storli & Ellen Beate Hansen Sandseter (2017) Gender matters: male and female ECEC practitioners' perceptions and practices regarding children's rough-andtumble play (R&T), European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 25:6, 838-853, DOI:

Chapter 9: Discussion and conclusions

The overall aim of this research study was to assess the psychosocial well-being of 5-year-old children in ECEC settings in five countries: Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands and Norway, and to identify the factors in ECEC settings that promote and hinder children's psychosocial well-being.

In total, **140 practitioners were interviewed** in relation to **psychosocial well-being of 1195 five-year-old children** using the UPSI-5 tool. Practitioners and principals were also interviewed about their understanding of psychosocial well-being, as well as the ECEC setting factors and the broader family background and social environment factors that promote or hinder children's psychosocial well-being.

According to the data obtained via the UPSI-5, **76% of 5-year-old children overall are doing well** in terms of psychosocial well-being. However, there is **reason for concern for a cross-country average of 24 % of 5-year-old children.** There are two responses to this finding. On the one hand we, as European countries, should celebrate the fact that a large majority of our young children seem to be doing well. On the other hand, we should pay serious attention to the still rather high percentage of them that are not.

The findings also point **to large variability in average reason for concern between countries** ranging from 7% of sampled children in Croatia, to 37% of sampled children in Hungary. Within countries there were also large variations between sampled settings regarding percentage of children where there were reasons for concern. Reasons explaining the large variation between settings are complex. Tentative explanations relate to large percentage of children from low income families attending a particular setting, housing problems of families, higher than average number of children with behaviour problems and a large percentage of families not speaking official or dominant language at home. As noted in the literature, the cumulation of such challenges are likely to be unfavourable to children's well-being.

Overall, the results of this study all point to the importance of highly competent practitioners who are skilled in promoting all aspects of children's development.

The majority of practitioners interviewed were aware of the **main aspects of psychosocial well-being.** Some described it in great detail, recognizing its importance in children's lives and as the basis for all aspects of a person's functioning in society. It is noteworthy that many of the factors **that hinder psychosocial well-being** that were identified by practitioners, are 'out of their control'. These include group size and level of

diversity amongst children they are working with and lack of social cohesion in the community. On the other hand, **many factors that promote psychosocial well-being are 'in the control' of the practitioners.** These factors, all of which relate to process quality in ECEC include: respectful relationships, working with parents and provision of indoor and outdoor play opportunities. In other words, things that practitioners do on a daily basis (pedagogy), can make a difference to children's psychosocial well-being.

The findings also suggest a tendency of practitioners in some countries to blame parents when children are not doing well in ECEC settings. Clearly more attention in pre-service and **continuing professional development of ECEC practitioners** is needed in building positive and supportive relationships with parents and families and considering families as co-educators. Particular attention also needs to be paid to **diversity and inclusion.** The research shows, that on the one hand practitioners interviewed valued respect for diversity as an important value and attitude. However, on the other hand, diversity in children's backgrounds and languages spoken at home was identified as one of the main challenges hindering psychosocial well-being.

This kind of contradiction is a key challenge in ECEC services currently. Practitioners are dealing with diversity daily, and it is understandable that they **'theoretically' know this should be valued** (and they actually also say clearly that it is important also for children to learn to negotiate etc.), **but in practice they find it not always easy**.

This is exactly why the group reflection method of continuing professional development (WANDA), which practitioners will be participating in the second phase of the SEED project (October 2018 to June 2019) is important. The WANDA approach provides strong support for practitioners in dealing with diversity because cases connected with diversity can be discussed and negotiated; and the method itself requires practitioners to negotiate, to see things from different perspectives and to dialogue with the colleagues in a democratic way. How practitioners in the participating countries develop their practice in relation to supporting psychosocial well-being of young children from diverse backgrounds in ECEC settings will be further explored and elaborated in Phase 2 of the SEED project.

In conclusion, **psychosocial well-being** is a complex concept **necessitating a holistic approach in ECEC settings**, within an overall competent ECEC system. The findings of this research demonstrate that we need an ecological approach involving children, family members of all ages, communities as well as ECEC practitioners and local and national policy makers to ensure that ALL children thrive in ECEC and school as well as in their lives in general.

Appendices

Appendix I: The UPSI-5

International Child Development Initiatives

UPSI-5

UNIVERSAL PSYCHOSOCIAL INDICATOR FOR 5-YEAR OLDS

SCORING FORM

Child ID	Gender		Month/Year of Birth	SES		School ID	School location		Name of data collector
	Boy	Girl		Low			Urban	Rural	
				Middle					
				High					

Instructions: *Please read each question carefully and tick the box whether you agree or not agree with the statement. Only fill out this form when you think you know the child well. Please do not skip any questions.*

Item/statement		Agree	Disagree
1.	S/he hurts other children more than most children do		
2.	S/he is often aggressive for no apparent reason		
3.	S/he is often stubborn		
4.	S/he is easily upset or made angry		
5.	S/he is a danger to others		
6.	S/he is able to share and take turns		
7.	S/he often destroys things		
8.	S/he often teases other children		
9.	She gets along well with other children		
10.	S/he often seems to be in a power struggle with adults		
11.	S/he has many mood swings		
12.	S/he can make her/himself understood		
13.	S/he can express her/his feelings		
14.	S/he is invited by other children to play with them		
15.	S/he adequately makes use of nonverbal communication		
16.	S/he reacts responsively to instructions and directions		
17.	S/he can understand feelings of others		
18.	S/he is generally slower to understand things than other children are		
19.	S/he knows when s/he has done something wrong		
20.	S/he plays like a regular 5-year old		
21.	S/he is interested in learning new skills		
22.	S/he wants to be on her/his own most of the time		
23.	S/he regularly plays with other children		
24.	S/he is under active, slow moving and seems to lack energy		
25.	S/he isolates her/himself from other children		
26.	S/he has difficulty establishing contact and relating to other children		
27.	S/he invites other children to play with her/him		
28.	S/he seeks contact with other people		
29.	S/he generally seems to enjoy her/himself		

Appendix II: Practitioners' Interview

INTERVIEW WITH CLASS TEACHERS

SCHOOL UPSI-5 ID: _____ NAME OF DATA COLLECTOR: _____

SCHOOL LOCATION (Tick one): Rural ___Urban ___

DATE INTERVIEW: _____

<u>After</u> completing the UPSI-5 scoring sheets ask teachers the following question:

1. We'd like to give you the opportunity to reflect on the UPSI-5 questionnaire you just completed. What do you understand by psychosocial (OR social & emotional) well-being?

INTERVIEWER NOTES KEY POINTS HERE:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What do you think are the factors **in this setting** which **promote** psychosocial well-being of your students?

_____
_____

3. What do you think are the factors **in this setting** which **hinder** psychosocial well-being of your students?

_____
_____

CHILDREN BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

4. Can you comment on the **backgrounds** of the general child population in this school, including the common **challenges** that they may face (such as poverty, child abuse, drug or alcohol addiction of a parent, discrimination based on ethnicity, culture, home language, religion etc.).

a. _____
_____
_____

b. For each challenge you mention, can you **estimate the percentages of children** in your school dealing with the challenge?

Challenge	Percentage (%)

5. Any other comments/questions?

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. As you know, we will be offering to a selection of teachers who participate in the UPSI-5 research, the chance to participate in a continued professional development pathway. The aim of this is to stimulate teachers to reflect on how they promote psychosocial well-being of children in their class and improve their practice. (SEE EXTRA INFORMATION SHEET ABOUT WANDA) Unfortunately, we have limited number of places to offer. Would you be interested in taking part in this?

_____
_____

If yes, can you complete this Expression of Interest Form.

Thank you so much for your participation, we really appreciate it!

Appendix III: Principals' Interview

SCHOOL BACKGROUND INTERVIEW WITH PRINCIPALS

SCHOOL UPSI-5 ID: _____ NAME OF DATA COLLECTOR: _____

SCHOOL LOCATION (Tick one): Rural ___Urban ___

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

SCHOOL INFORMATION

1. What is the level of the setting? (tick one answer)
   - ☐ kindergarten only
   - ☐ primary school
   - ☐ other, please explain

   _____

   _____
2. What is the total number of children enrolled in this setting? ____

   No. boys_____ No. girls_____
3. What is the average group (class) size where 5-year-olds are? _____
4. What is the average child: adult ratio in groups (classes) where 5-year-olds are (e.g. 20:1)? _____
5. How would you describe the level of teaching qualifications of the teachers working with 5-year-olds in this setting?
   Tick one answer:

   - ☐ All/most of the teachers have a college teaching diploma (i.e. Bachelor's degree)
   - ☐ 50% of the teachers have a college teaching diploma
   - ☐ Few of the teachers have a college teaching diploma – but have some basic training
   - ☐ Few of teachers have a certificate level (one year training) teaching qualification
   - ☐ Most of the teachers have no teaching qualifications
   - ☐ Other, please describe_____

Additional comments:

_____

_____

6. In addition to class teachers, what additional support services are available to the teachers and children attending this setting? Tick all that apply

☐ Special needs teacher

☐ School psychologist

☐ Speech and language support/therapist

☐ Medical services (school nurse/doctor)

☐ Nutritional support at school (school meals)

☐ Guidance and Counselling centre

☐ Other (specify)

_____

_____

CHILDREN BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

7. Can you comment on the **backgrounds** of the general child population in this school, including the common **challenges** that they may face (such as poverty, child abuse, drug or alcohol addiction of a parent, discrimination based on ethnicity, culture, home language, religion etc.).
   a. _____
   _____
   _____

   b. For each challenge you mention, can you **estimate the percentages of children** in your school dealing with the challenge?

Challenge	Percentage (%)

8. Any other comments/questions?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you so much for your participation, we really appreciate it!

Appendix IV: Reason for concern about psychosocial well-being of 5-year-old children in all settings per Country

Croatia

Setting	RfC
CR1	0
CR2	14.3
CR3	0
CR4	0
CR5	46.2
CR6	5.3
CR7	5.1
CR8	0
CR9	10
CR10	42.9
Average RfC:	**7.2**

Hungary

Setting	RfC
HU1	44,4
HU2	52,4
HU3	47,8
HU4	50,0
HU5	72,7
HU6	17,2
HU7	35,0
HU8	29,0
HU9	30,0
HU10	35,3
HU11	35,0
Average RfC:	**37.4**

Latvia

Setting	RfC
LV1	21,9
LV2	47,1
LV3	20,0
LV4	13,7
LV5	39,5
LV6	20,8
LV7	69,2
LV8	48,6
LV9	43,8
LV10	12,5
Average RfC:	**31.8**

Netherlands

Setting	RfC
NL131	0
NL132	73.3
NL134	0
NL135	16
NL136	22
NL141	14.7
NL151	30.8
NL152	12.5
NL161	20
Average RfC:	**20.4**

Norway

Setting	RfC
NO1	18,2

NO2	5,3
NO3	8,3
NO4	5,0
NO5	28,6
NO6	12,5
NO7	14,3
NO8	6,3
NO9	22,2
NO10	13,8
NO11	13,3
NO12	33,3
Average RfC:	**14.7**

Appendix V: SEED Data Collectors

Name data collector	Organisation	Country
Etelka Lakatos	Partners Hungary Foundation (PH)	Hungary
Julia Vida	Partners Hungary Foundation (PH)	Hungary
Monica Seland	Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (QMUC)	Norway
Anne Holla Sivertsen	Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (QMUC)	Norway
Johanne Rimul	Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (QMUC)	Norway
Mariska Venema	Windesheim Hogeschool	Netherlands
Jeanet van de Korput	Windesheim Hogeschool	Netherlands
Sanne van Grieken	Windesheim Hogeschool	Netherlands
Rachelle Vleemink	Windesheim Hogeschool	Netherlands
Ariana Woudstra	Windesheim Hogeschool	Netherlands
Mathieu Westerink	Windesheim Hogeschool	Netherlands
Daiga Zake	Center for Education Initiatives (CEI)	Latvia
Kristine Liepina	Center for Education Initiatives (CEI)	Latvia
Sandra Kraukle	Center for Education Initiatives (CEI)	Latvia
Ilona Saraka	Center for Education Initiatives (CEI)	Latvia
Zorica Topalović	Open Academy Step by Step	Croatia
Gordana Patarčec	Open Academy Step by Step	Croatia

SEED

Social and Emotional Education and Development

Children's long-term success at school is influenced as much by social, emotional and self-regulation skills as by academic skills and knowledge. Social and emotional development is a main contributor to successful school transitions and a significant preventative factor of disruptive behaviour, and mental health difficulties. Not paying attention to social and emotional development is harmful to young children's capacity to learn and to thrive. Research points to a lack of training and continuous professional development on this topic, and the need to design effective methods to provide Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) educators with skills and competences to promote children's socio-emotional development in ECEC. Further, there are few reliable and easy to use indicators for psychosocial development of young children, which link socio-emotional development to children's capacity to learn.

For more information click here