



LEARNING FROM THE ERASMUS+ KEEP EDUCATING YOURSELF (KEY) PROJECT: GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE ON QUALITY AND EVALUATION IN DEVELOPING PRESCHOOL TEACHER TRAINING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HUBS

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**GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE ON QUALITY AND
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HUBS**

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Introduction and Welcome to the Book

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Welcome to this edited book, which is the first of two focused on, ‘Learning from the Erasmus+ Keep Educating Yourself (KEY) Project’. The project which inspired these books was funded under the framework of the European Union Erasmus+ Joint Projects, as a form of capacity building in higher education and aimed to strengthen relations between Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and the wider economic and social environment. This volume, subtitled: ‘Good Practice Guidance on Quality and Evaluation in Developing Preschool Teacher Training Continuing Professional Development Hubs’, offers a series of informative chapters from the transnational project partners on elements of quality assurance, and embedding of monitoring and evaluation tools in the development of CPD.

The two linked end of project books represent the project partners collaborative journey and learning through the successful implementation of the project. KEY, its objectives and scope of aspiration and activities are explained fully in the next chapter, but it is sufficient to note here that this was an innovative project about creating higher education CPD hubs, or centres, in relation to Preschool Teacher Training across Serbia and Montenegro. The project was born of an identified urgent requirement for furtherance of graduate skills in this field, recognising the diverse needs of Preschool work contexts (nurseries and similar), the wider profession of Preschool teachers and representative bodies, education policy makers and general society stakeholders, including parents. Other main groups who were – and are - important in terms of their needs, careers and development are Preschool Teacher Training graduates and those currently studying towards graduation.

This chapter begins by providing a definition and brief discussion of what CPD is, it then moves onto providing an outline of the chapters of the book, which may serve as a guide or map to the reader in navigating the text.

What is CPD?

It is pertinent to start this introductory chapter by offering and exploring an understanding as to just what is meant by the term “CPD”. It is important when em-

barking on a mission to increase CPD capacity, that we have a true understanding of the potential of CPD provision, in order to get the best from it; Collin et al., (2012: 155) describe CPD as something that is easy to recognise, but ‘difficult to define’. The KEY Project has been an opportunity to engage in truly innovative practice within CPD, far beyond the simplistic ways in which is typically offered or in which it is understood.

CPD is commonly understood as a process of lifelong further training whilst in service/employment. Individuals will typically have already received and completed a training required to secure the role, but further development enables a continual upskilling and professional development in order to address unique characteristics of the role itself. CPD also enables the learner to better respond to changes in the professional field, operating styles of employers, labour market changes or wider societal expectations of the skills and competencies of a particular profession (Collin et al., 2012: 155).

CPD in Early Years Education

In 2007, European Commission policy documents noted that although CPD was seen as professional duty in about half of all European states, only a few considered it mandatory (Caena, 2011: 2). This has improved greatly as the importance of CPD in Teacher Training has becoming much more of a focal point internationally (Kennedy, 2005: 235; 2014: 4). Kennedy, (2014: 5) noted that an impetus for the increase in the perceived importance of CPD for teachers is that governments and policymakers, not just academics and teaching staff in practice, are starting to recognise that by improving the level of education for teachers, it positively affects the outcome for learners (Loomis, Rodriguez and Tillman, 2008; Caena, 2011:2). In essence, CPD has been identified as one of the means through which this can be achieved (OECD, 2005; Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber, 2010). It is being acknowledged that ‘best practice’ should be central to teaching, and that sharing this as far and wide as possible allows for impactful results for both teachers and learners (Teachers’ Professional Development Expert Group, 2016). As the Teachers’ Professional Development Expert Group state in their correspondence to the UK Minister of State for Schools in 2016, successful professional development can improve classroom practice and support the roles of teachers (ibid.).

CPD in schools can be a way of cascading recognised excellent practice from its point of origin to share it among wider institutions, normalising that element of practice. Consequently, this has an ameliorating effect on teaching as a process. Dadds (1997) goes further and argues that CPD should develop teachers’ under-

standing of learning itself, to cultivate their inner expertise as ‘a basis for teaching and for judging outsider initiatives’ (Dadds, 1997: 31). Put another way, effective CPD models should enhance not just the practice of teaching, but its pedagogical underpinnings; allowing teachers to link theory to practice and giving them the opportunity to understand ‘why’. This enhanced level of knowledge then prepares teachers for their own innovation, professional and personal development and striving towards continually improved ‘best practice’. Dadds mentions that teachers do not enter CPD as ‘empty vessels’ but bring experience and knowledge that can be drawn upon as valuable contributions to CPD development (Dadds, 1997: 32). This implies that an ascribed didactic model of CPD offer, which might be seen to be akin to a traditional lecture, cannot possibly hope to be as successful as a more interactive ‘workshop’ style learning environment or experience. In other words, CPD must be learner/student and teacher driven and experiential (with potential support and/or facilitation by external parties, where needed). Kennedy (2014: 6) notes that without a collaborative model of inclusive engagement within CPD, it risks becoming contrived and simply a tool to promote ‘externally imposed interests’.

Kennedy (2014) recognises that autonomy is key for successful CPD. Overly complex frameworks of CPD can invoke a ‘managerial’ view and implementation of teacher professionalism (Sachs, 2001). Such an approach promotes and rewards ‘uniformity and compliance by tying CPD provisions up in ‘bureaucratic knots’, unfortunately denying teachers the role afforded to them as agents of change (Kennedy, 2014: 5). Managerialism, as in other areas, has been promoted as a panacea, as Sachs (2001) writes:

‘[V]alues of managerialism have been promoted as being universal: management is inherently good, managers are the heroes, managers should be given the room and autonomy to manage, and other groups should accept their authority’
(Sachs, 2001: 151)

However, this creates a dichotomy between managerial professionalism and democratic professionalism. The former regards compliance to externally issued ideologies as the ideal, the latter, in comparison, allows teacher to be the aforementioned agents of change and seeks to:

‘...demystify professional work and build alliances between teachers and excluded constituencies of students, parts and members of the community on whose behalf decisions have traditionally been made either by professions or by the state’
(Sachs, 2001: 152)

It is a well-educated, passionate workforce that proves beneficial for fostering the best interests of learners. Good CPD must reflect the ever-changing needs of

teachers in an evolving professional world (Dadds, 1997: 31). Highly bureaucratic programmes of CPD risk being unable to fulfil that necessary function (Kennedy, 2015: 51). In the KEY Project, the goal has always been to increase CPD capacity for Preschool Teachers in Serbia and Montenegro, and avoidance of such traps has been crucial. The KEY Project has primarily achieved this by empowering each consortium partner, and individual participants within the project, to feel their contribution is of equal value to that of others.

Chapter-by-Chapter Introduction

To help ease navigation around the text and support the reader to get the most from it, this book is divided into three sections – Section One: *The KEY Project and HE Quality*, Section Two: *Quality and Development in Implementation* and Three: *Quality Structures in Methods and Examples*.

Section One: *The KEY Project and HE Quality*, begins with Chapter 1, *Introduction to the KEY Project, Its Aims, Scope and Work Packages*, in which Svetlana Lazić, Mirjana Matović, Otilia Velišek-Braško, and Jovanka Ulić outline what the KEY project was designed to achieve, the partner members' institutions and the activities of the various work packages. In Chapter 2, James Williams examines the importance of quality provision and trends across Europe, emphasising the relevance of this for the KEY project. These two chapters complete the first section.

In Section Two, the focus shifts to implementation matters, with Chapter three, by Kevin Hoffin, examining *Liberating Structures* as a set of working practices used to develop the KEY project CPD hubs. This way of working in the KEY project, enabled us to go beyond hierarchical structures and statuses in order to create a culture of innovation that included and valued all participants. In Chapter 4, Ivana Djordjev, Jelena Prtljaga and Tanja Nedimovic write about ensuring engagement within the KEY Project, which was achieved through taking advantage of the experience and expertise of diverse groups of stakeholders. Chapter 5 follows a similar theme, in which Kevin Hoffin explains how the Theory of Change model can be a useful tool in Quality Monitoring and Evaluation. He explains how to apply it to projects, whether they be new, or already existing and ongoing. Chapter 6 closes this section with Ivana Djordjev and Jelena Prtljaga taking the Theory of Change model, as described in the previous chapter, and demonstrating how this worked for them and their institution within the framework of the KEY project.

Section Three is the final section of the book and examines examples and methods that can be utilised to better ensure quality, evaluate and audit CPD. Jelena Nastić-Stojanović's writing in Chapter 7, explains managing quality assurance and audit in the context of international development projects. Chapter 8, by Elizabeth Yardley, guides the reader through effective ways of developing and evaluating CPD options through selecting and using diverse qualitative and quantitative methods. She argues that quality of CPD is, in part, created by selecting and using the correct research methods to enable thorough evaluation of initial design and development, implementation and audit of achievements of any new CPD programme. In the final chapter of this section, Chapter 9, Veselin Micanovic, Nataša Perić, Danka Novović and Rajka Mićanović offer a discussion of evaluation of implementation of the KEY Project and they do this through use of evidence gathering from Pre-school Teacher Training staff. Finally, a short prologue by Kevin Hoffin, concludes and draws the book to a close.

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Section 1: The KEY Project and HE Quality

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCING THE KEY PROJECT, ITS AIMS, SCOPE AND WORK PACKAGES.

Authors: Svetlana Lazić, Mirjana Matović, Otilia Velišek-Braško, Jovanka Ulić, Preschool Teachers Training College, Novi Sad, Serbia

Title of the Project: KEEP EDUCATING YOURSELF / KEY (598977-EPP-1-2018-1- RS-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

Project Duration: 2018-2022/2022. (The project was extended due to the COVID pandemic).

Project type: Erasmus+ Joint Projects - Strengthening of relations between HEIs and the wider economic and social environment.

Partner states: Hungary, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, United Kingdom.

The 17 partner institutions (the consortium) was comprised of: Preschool Teachers Training College Novi Sad (RS) – coordinator; Eotvos Jozsef Foiskola (HU); RIS Raziskovalno Izobrazevalno Sredisce Dvorec Rakican (SI); Universitatea de Vest Din Timisoara (RO); Birmingham City University (UK); Univerza v Mariboru (SI); Bureau for Education Services (ME); University of Montenegro (ME); JPU Ljubica Popović (ME); The Academy of Educational and Medical Professional Studies, Department in Krusevac (RS); Preschool Teacher Training College Vršac (RS); Union of Preschool Teacher Associations in Serbia (RS); Association of Teachers of Vojvodina (RS); Academy of Applied Technical and Preshool Studies Nis, Department in Pirot (RS); Preschool Teacher Training and Business Informatics College Sr. Mitrovica (RS); Western Balkans Institute (RS); Institute for Improvement of Education (RS)

The wider objective of the KEY project has been to strengthen the role of teacher training HEIs with a continuous preschool professional development system implemented across Serbia and Montenegro. It sets the ground for preschool teaching HEIs to create, develop and implement CPD for preschool teachers and professionals, vis-a-vis local communities, and to promote the benefits of these across diverse stakeholders. The project has successfully addressed the existing gaps between the ECEC related educational outcomes and actual labour market needs by developing innovative CPD centres or hubs. Concurrently, the project also aimed to increase the capacity of local governments to exercise their roles in ECEC education and approach EU funding opportunities.

The project has:

1. Established ECEC learning hubs within participating HEIs in Serbia and Montenegro

The project specific objective 1 sought to broaden and modernize the existing pre-school teachers training offer, making it more selective and better linked with the expected competences framework and professional/practitioners' requirements. It introduces the much-needed systemic approach to defining the needs and offer for preschool teachers CPD, with proactive engagement of all relevant stakeholders in the life-long process of learning.

2. Built the capacity across the HE Preschool Teacher Training sector for designing, monitoring, evaluating and quality assuring CPD

Specific objective 2 of the project contributes to identifying parameters for practical/applied use of knowledge gained through preschool teachers training programs. This benchmarking system further enables quality monitoring mechanisms and successful formative evaluation practices to be developed and implemented for measuring CPD effectiveness and impact. A new CPD model of standards for accreditation has been designed to streamline sustained efforts to upgrade ECEC teachers and professionals CPD practices and to build the confidence of main stakeholders in its quality. Concurrently, the KEY project was designed to motivate pre-school teachers and professionals to plan their own professional development and be self-sustaining lifelong learners.

WORK PACKAGE 1: INCEPTION

Coordinator: University of Montenegro (ME)

Tasks and activities: the WP started with a comparative transnational review of CPD systems in KEY Project participating countries (RS, ME, SI, UK, RO, HU), in order to identify similarities and differences in CPD design and delivery. Diverse EU partners in this project represented different models of CPD in Europe, which enabled a better understanding of different models in use across Europe, which then could inspire KEY project CPD development. The WP included the making of a Project Implementation Manual with practical guidelines for activity implementation, financial management and project quality instructions. In this WP, the consortium teams worked on position papers related to ECEC CPD, which emphasized the necessity for change through a CPD paradigm.

Description of activities: A comparative transnational CPD system book was researched, written and presented at the Introduction Conference in Podgorica (ME) (1.5). This activity was an introduction of the creation of the ECEC Learning Hubs (WP.2), creation of innovative CPD courses (WP.3), capacity building for quality assurance (QA) in CPD (WP.4) and creation of a model of CPD accreditation

standards (WP.4). Organizing the Project Advisory Board was the last preparatory activity in this WP, which establish milestones for increased impact and knowledge exchange effect/multiplication (1.4). Each partner in Serbia and Montenegro met with available local, regional, national stakeholders and negotiated their involvement in monitoring the project implementation.

WORK PACKAGE 2: ESTABLISHING OF ECEC LEARNING HUBS

Coordinator: Preschool teacher training college Mihailo Palov in Vršac (Republic of Serbia)

Task: The WP started with a seminar on strengthening of role of HEIs in ECEC CPD, with the aim of raising the awareness of academic staff about their role in provision of high quality CPD for preschool teachers. Each HEI created an internal team, consisting of teachers and administrative and technical staff, that worked on the development of concept of the ECEC Learning Hub. Two workshops were held in Vršac and Murska Sobota on these matters. Internal teams prepared founding documentation, which was approved by the governing bodies in each of the six HE preschool teachers training colleges/universities involved in the project (Vršac, Novi Sad, Kruševac, Sremska Mitrovica, Pirot, Podgorica).

Description of activities: This WP focused on the practicalities and logistics of finding the appropriate spaces for six ECEC Learning Hubs, appointing the person who would administrate the Hub, equipping all with necessary equipment (organising tendering procedures). Therefore, the WP was involved with identifying facility processes and implementation by the KEY partner organizations and, in doing so, improving and innovating partner institutions CPD strategies.

WORK PACKAGE 3: INTRODUCTION OF ECEC CPD COURSES IN MOODLE

Coordinator: The Academy of Educational and Medical Professional Studies, Dept. in Kruševac (RS)

Task: WP 3 started in the second project year (after establishing ECEC Learning Hubs) and ran right through until the project end. It kicked off activities with a training seminar of Moodle courses, which was led by University in Maribor, Slovenia. Twenty-four courses were created, supported by the KEY EU project partners.

Description: The course creation was followed by their accreditation with regular bodies of CPD in Montenegro and Serbia through normal processes required by these bodies. Courses were offered to local preschool teachers, associates and practitioners in Serbia and Montenegro through regional training sessions. HEI teaching staff from Serbia and Montenegro prepared and organized these courses.

WORK PACKAGE 4: QA CAPACITY BUILDING IN CPD

Coordinator: BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY (UK)

Task: WP4 was directed towards improvement of teaching staff skills and competences in provision of quality in CPD. This supported the consortium team in observing and evaluating the capability and capacity of teaching staff to teach adults and work in different social and working environments. BCU quality assurance experts prepared and delivered training of trainers sessions on monitoring and evaluation.

Description of Activity. This focused on improvement of teaching staff skills and competences in the provision of CPD quality, through monitoring and evaluation, as well as enhancing the capacity and ability of staff teams to train adults and work in diverse societal and working environments. The WP started with the training of trainers on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) prepared and delivered by the BCU team and attended by Western Balkan HEI teaching staff from the KEY consortium. The first session was held in Novi Sad and the second in Podgorica and after these ToT sessions, twenty-four teachers from six partner HEIs from Serbia and Montenegro prepared and independently delivered training on M&E and QA in CPD. This was delivered to preschool practitioners and professional staff of CPD regulatory bodies in Serbia and Montenegro. Meanwhile, a team of teachers started the drafting of a CPD QA manual and Guidelines on QA and a Self-guide CPD toolkit for preschool teachers. This WP was completed with six subsequent ToT sessions, prepared and delivered by Western Balkan HEI partner staff to a minimum of twenty professional staff of regulatory bodies in Serbia and Montenegro, and a minimum one hundred and twenty preschool teachers and associates.

WORK PACKAGE 5: DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC) CPD MODEL OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Coordinator: Universitatea De Vest Din, Timisoara, Romania.

Task: This WP was designed to empower the capacity of five Preschool Teacher Training Colleges from Serbia and the University from Montenegro, one teacher association and one preschool institution in policy making and advocacy.

Description of Activities: the WP started with training on policy making and advocacy from EU partners universities. An intersectoral working group developed working models of CPD accreditation standards for ECEC. This activity ensured that accreditation bodies had vital advisory roles. The CPD model of accreditation standards also offered a blueprint for further work implementing the KEY project during the funding period. It also has ensured quality and standards beyond the project lifecycle, as the CPD hubs continue post-funding, and the accreditation standards remain to guide further CPD developments into the future.

WORK PACKAGE 6: QA AND MONITORING

Coordinators: The Western Balkans Institute, Belgrade, and Preschool Teacher Training and Business Informatics College (Republic of Serbia)

Task: WP 6 started by establishing the Quality Assurance and Monitoring Committee (QAMC), which was constituted from representatives of all KEY partner institutions.

Description: the QAMC held meetings six times across the project and made two annual progress reports related to project implementation and progress. WEBIN subcontracted an independent expert to undertake external evaluation of the project and the KEY lead partner subcontracted an auditor to monitor quality.

WORK PACKAGE 7: DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION

Coordinator: Association of Preschool Teachers of Vojvodina, the Union of Preschool Teacher Associations in Serbia (Republic of Serbia) and JPU “Ljubica Popović” (Me)

Task: Promotion, dissemination and exploitation of the project. WP 7 started with the visual arrangement and design of the KEY project, website and Facebook page. Each partner institution had internal dissemination activities to spread the ideas, significance and impacts of the project among colleagues and students.

Description of Activities: Creation of E-bulletins for visibility, which were sent to university and non-university institutions in all countries and project promotion in diverse media. The final conference with lead partners was held in Novi Sad and emphasized dissemination issues. Distribution of ECEC CPD models of accreditation standards to decision makers to increase impact and multiplication of results.

WORK PACKAGE 8: MANAGEMENT

Coordinator: Preschool Teachers Training College, Novi Sad (Republic of Serbia).

Task: WP 8 started with a kick-off meeting, addressing all related implementation and administrative issues and project teams within each KEY partner institution were established. The Steering Committee of the project was one of these and had six regular meetings during its duration.

Description of Activity: the WP covered project management, administration and reporting issues. Within this WP, a kick-off meeting was organized by the lead institution in Novi Sad to discuss the project details, develop implementation and administration procedures and template forms. At this meeting, various project teams were constituted (Project Steering Committee, QAMC, Finance Administration

Team, Equipment Procurement Team). The third day of the meeting was dedicated to training legal and finance department members, to strengthening partner technical capacities to efficiently follow program procedures and acquire best practices in project finance management. Partners contributed to preparation of project reports (narrative and financial) and from this point sent copies of (non) financial documentation to project coordinator quarterly.

Conclusion

This chapter has served to outline and explain the KEY project, its aim, focus, scope and activities. In the chapters that follow, design of CPD by the KEY collaborators and issues of quality will be focused upon. It is hoped that this book, which is one of a set of two, will demonstrate how Preschool Teacher Training CPD hubs were set up and that this will aid others to be inspired to set up their own CPD hubs or other educational innovations.

CHAPTER 2: WHY IS QUALITY IMPORTANT? EUROPEAN HE TRENDS IN QUALITY, CPD AND RELEVANCE TO THE KEY PROJECT.

Author: Dr James Williams, School of Social Sciences, Birmingham City University, Birmingham, UK.

Introduction

One of the fundamental challenges facing continuing professional development (CPD) in higher education is that of assuring its quality. This is particularly important in a context of the growing expectation – and often requirement – for professionals to engage in regular CPD. There is a growing body of scholarship on the different ways in which CPD can be quality assured, reflecting mounting concern with the challenge of providing worthwhile and effective CPD for professionals in diverse fields such as teaching and healthcare. In comparison, there is little or no scholarly work available on CPD and its quality assurance within higher education institutions. Scholarship on quality assurance in higher education has focused largely on learning and teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Debates on quality more generally have not given attention to CPD courses provided by higher education institutions to professionals in external organisations.

In part, the lack of research may be because there is little available documentation from higher education institutions indicating how CPD is viewed and quality assured. Whilst it might be difficult to gain access to such material because of institutional privacy, there is at least some evidence available on the internet that indicates that at least one UK university is undertaking quality assurance of CPD programmes and courses conducted by its staff and in its name. However, it is not clear how far this is common amongst higher education institutions. Higher education institutions, at least in the UK, are increasingly being encouraged by government to offer CPD to a range of different practitioners and a quick review of institutions offering CPD programmes indicates a wide range of universities are engaging in this activity (Baker, 2018). However, there are risks of quality variance within and between CPD courses in higher education institutions, with serious reputational issues in provision of low-quality courses.

Despite this gap in current debates and knowledge around CPD in HE, general discussions of quality assurance of CPD and quality in higher education can be a useful starting point. The debate on CPD quality is similar to that occurring in the early

discussions about general quality in higher education. Of particular importance, first, is the way quality is defined. Quality means different things to different people in different contexts, and this has influenced policy relating to quality assurance in recent decades. Second, the approaches taken by the sector to assure quality are instructional. The need for standardised approaches to quality management across Europe has developed in parallel with a collaborative and transparent approach to quality. Above all, institutions and sectors have learnt from each other through sharing practice.

Defining Quality in Higher Education

There are well-established debates about the meaning of quality and there have been shifts in emphasis of quality processes over the years. The philosophical origins of quality can be found in Plato's writings on the ideal type or archetype and in Buddhism, where it is part of the notion of transformation (Harvey and Green, 1993). The first well known discussion of quality in the context of higher education can be found in Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (Pirsig, 1974). *Pirsig famously noted: 'Quality is neither mind nor matter, but a third entity independent of the two even though Quality cannot be defined, you know what it is'*. However, in the UK in the 1980s and 1990s, successive governments sought to exert their authority over higher education institutions through neo-liberal notions/constructions of HE accountability and quality (Williams and Harvey, 2015; Mingle, 1989).

Definitions have been fought over, but most scholars refer to a 'foundational' definition provided by Harvey and Green (1993). In summary, Harvey and Green categorise quality into:

1. exception (being the best);
2. perfection (zero defects);
3. fitness-for-purpose (being right for the purpose designed for);
4. value-for-money (getting what you pay for); and
5. transformation (fundamental change in form).

Harvey (2018; 2006; 1996) has long argued for the supremacy of the last category, that is, transformative quality, in which quality is part of an ongoing transformation of the participant. However, definitions have tended to overlap and some take precedence at different periods for different reasons and in different contexts. However, three examples are particularly pertinent. The fitness-for-purpose definition has a practical value which has been comfortable for institutions. The value-for-money definition gained particular currency in the UK from 1998 when tuition fees were introduced, a point at which students began to be regarded, and referred to, as 'consumers' (Williams, 2012). However, current discourse on higher education, especially amongst the marketeers,

tends to favour the notion of transformation as student-centred learning has taken hold. There has also been something of a struggle between notions of accountability, transformation and improvement. Arguably, the dominance of an accountability agenda that pushed the development of quality assurance processes in the 1980s and this remains a strong factor in much of the discussion on quality in higher education (Williams and Harvey, 2015; Harvey, 2008). There continues to be a spectrum of relationships between quality assurance and enhancement, from being separate to being integral parts of the same process and these have important implications for how quality is viewed and how staff and students are treated (Williams, 2016).

Indeed, there is also a tendency to think of quality assurance as the whole quality story. After all, the principal body monitoring quality in higher education in the UK was, until recently, called the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)¹. However, this terminology is too limiting as it can subordinate quality enhancement (Williams, 2016). A better phrase may be ‘quality management’, a phrase which is a catch-all for all the processes relating to quality in higher education (Martin and Parikh, 2017). At the same time, quality is often associated with ranking and student satisfaction surveys, and these have been the focus of much debate. They are indeed associated with quality but can only be seen, at best, as sources of data on quality. Ranking systems are a proxy for quality and have been criticized for being arbitrary and useless as a means of judging or improving quality (Harvey, 2008). Student experience surveys are usually more useful as a quality management tool but can be used imperfectly by giving too much weight to student concerns, emphasizing students’ role as consumers or developing another set of rankings (Kane and Williams, 2021).

Quality in Higher Education Across Europe

There is continuing debate about the development and progress of quality in higher education across Europe. This largely focuses on the implementation of the Bologna Process from 1999 as an attempt to bring about standardisation across the systems and comparability between national degree qualifications. This and the Berlin Communique of 2003 have been key elements in the development of an EU-wide quality assurance process. Across Europe, quality assurance has become much more professionalised and transparent systems have been set up. Quality management processes seem to have developed significantly in a similar direction in recent years across Europe. According to the 2017 UNESCO survey of quality management (QM), responses from European respondents indicated that ‘a large percentage of institutions reported that they had a quality policy, and half had a

1 It is important to note, however, that the QAA has, since its creation in the 1990s, been a much more supportive and engaged organisation than the name implies.

QM handbook’ and that they had a dedicated quality management team, using tools such as student course evaluations and student experience surveys (Martin and Parikh, 2017, p. 81).

The use of student-derived data indicates that the focus of quality management processes, at least in principle, is now on the students’ experience of higher education. Martin and Parikh (2017, p. 81) report that European respondents felt that quality management was ‘centred on teaching and learning’ and that graduate employability was its principal aim. This reflects a general trend in European quality management to embrace the shift to learner-centred pedagogies, following commitments made by European education ministers at the successive conferences of Leuven, Bucharest and Yerevan between 2009 and 2015 (ESU, 2015). Notions of student-centred learning brings with it a change in focus for higher education institutions, and practical implications for quality management: the development of teacher training processes, more effective procedures and legal frameworks, flexible curricula and individual learning pathways, and student participation in decision-making (ESU, 2015).

Arguably, there has also been a growing community of practice amongst quality assurers in higher education: the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA). ENQA was instrumental in the establishment of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) in 2005 and its refinement more recently (2015) and these have been highly influential and a valuable reference point for countries across the European Union and beyond, especially in the Western Balkans (Zgaga et al., 2013), although, as Brajkovic (2016) argues, EU funding remains difficult to access. The ESG have been significant because they have emphasised the importance of institutions taking ownership of their own quality processes (Alzafari and Ursin, 2019).

The development of the ESG has been part of a wider project of ‘quality culture’ in which quality is viewed not as a set of processes and monitoring but as a way of thinking (European Universities Association, 2006). Defining quality culture is sometimes taken for granted but here it refers to an organisational culture in which quality is constantly improved, comprising a shared commitment to improvement and a set of robust processes to ensure that quality is improved (European Universities Association, 2006, p. 10). The notion of quality culture has been an important element in the development of quality management in higher education in the European Higher Education Area but how it is to be created and developed remains a contentious issue. However, underpinning the development of quality culture is ownership by the participants combined with a systemic approach to the management of quality (Legemaate et al., 2022).

Quality Assurance of CPD and its Relationship with Higher Education

In parallel to the debate on quality in higher education, there is a small, but growing body of scholarship on CPD quality assurance. The seminal study is by Perry et al. (2019), who brought together work on aspects of CPD from across different professions and internationally. These diverse professions included teaching, health care, accountancy and higher education, whilst international examples include the US, Singapore and Australia. Perry et al. (2019) identify different definitions of quality in the context of CPD and draw a set of models of quality assurance in CPD. However, the focus of scholarly work has largely been on CPD for teaching and health professionals (Perry, 2019; Baumgartner et al., 2020; Depaigne-Loth et al., 2022). Whilst this has been important for these disciplines, they are also governed by strong central professional bodies. In professions such as healthcare, quality assurance not only makes sure that CPD meets required standards, but also regulates who provides CPD and what they offer (Perry et al., 2019).

Some of this scholarship has emerged from an underlying concern that unregulated CPD can lead to the production of courses that are of little value. Indeed, some research has highlighted examples of low quality in CPD. Filges et al. (2019) have found that CPD for education and welfare professionals is of varying quality and in many cases is very poor, having little positive impact on the learning outcomes for the children concerned. This raises concerns about the effectiveness and quality of CPD more generally in an unregulated 'market'. Undoubtedly, if CPD has little effect on producing constructive outcomes for those with whom the professionals work, this needs to be an element in the quality standards for that CPD.

There are several examples of universities offering CPD in countries such as the UK. CPD is a core focus of importance as it is a current way for universities to raise revenue. Partly, this is a way of making money out of university activities for instance, such as applied research and knowledge exchange, in which projects develop modules of new learning for professionals in relevant fields. It can also be seen as a way of extending universities' experience for new target groups/communities, especially where full degree programmes might be too costly for these. There is, however, limited evidence of universities engaging with quality assurance of CPD. One example is available online². In this case, successful students of accredited CPD courses must be provided with a transcript and an award, whereas non-accredited CPD does not attract an award. Non-accredited CPD must, however, be approved by the relevant School. Approval of all CPD is required to consider any risk

2 Quality Audit of CPD, University of Manchester <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/quality/qa-of-cpd/> (Accessed 26/10/2022)

to the University's name and reputation. Quality assurance requirements include an obligation to undertake student experience surveys on each unit, five-year periodic review and the keeping of records of all attendees.

There is overall agreement amongst scholars that globally there is a lack of a consistent or widely used process to assure the quality of CPD (Perry et al., 2019). There is some evidence of quality assurance bodies for CPD, although nothing very substantial. Most recently, Baumgartner et al. (2020) have described the development and concerns of a global forum on CPD for pharmacists. Perry et al (2019) have highlighted several examples of bodies in the UK that accredit CPD in professions such as accountancy, health professions, teaching and in higher education. Accreditation for CPD in higher education for teaching has been undertaken in the UK by AdvanceHE (formerly the Higher Education Academy). In addition to the professional bodies, there seem to be two quality assurance bodies for CPD in the UK. One is the CPD Certification Service, which claims to have been, *'established in 1996 as the leading independent CPD accreditation institution operating across industry sectors to complement the Continuing Professional Development policies of professional institutes and academic bodies.'* *The CPD Certification Service states that it 'provides support, advice and recognised independent CPD accreditation compatible with global CPD principles.'*³ There is also the CPD Standards Office⁴ which claims to have been established to raise standards of CPD. On its website, the CPD claims to have been set up as a result of a Kingston University-based research project on CPD which found a very low level of satisfaction with the quality of CPD. Such claims suggest that it plays a role similar to the Quality Assurance Agency in the UK.

Currently, however, a focus on accreditation organisations and approaches to quality assurance is also accompanied by a growing concern to engage learners more directly. Kennedy (2005) highlighted the communities of practice model of teachers' CPD as part of a transformative approach to learning. Within this model CPD emerges from the ground up, from practitioners deciding together on learning needs and courses. However, there is a constant struggle between communities of practice and CPD being imposed from above (Perry, 2019). The idea of communities of practice as part of the debate in quality in higher education has had increasing currency since the early 2000s and it is implemented in some CPD models within universities. Indeed, Knight (2006) argued that quality assurance should be about continuing professional development for lecturers and that new inter-professional systems are needed in universities if teaching quality enhancement is to become an everyday practice.

3 The CPD Certification Service <https://cpduk.co.uk/> (Accessed 27/10/2022)

4 The CPD Standards Office <https://www.cpdstandards.com/> (Accessed 27/10/2022).

Conclusion

This discussion has highlighted that there is a need for further exploration of the higher education sector's approach to quality assuring CPD. CPD currently does not feature in discussions of quality management in higher education. It is possible that the patchiness of current practice in CPD, both within and external to universities, has produced this gap in the knowledge. This continuing gap in practice appears to have led, in many reported cases, to poor quality of provision that not only is unsatisfactory to those taking part, but also in improving outcomes for the patients, students or customers of those 'trained'. The debates about quality in higher education and CPD clearly overlap and address similar issues. There is a concern to define quality and to develop appropriate processes and oversight. At the same time, a review of the scholarship highlights concerns about developing communities of practice to ensure that quality is a transformative and useful experience for learners.

The European approach of the 'quality culture' may well be useful in this context. The quality 'story' since the opening of the Bologna project appears to have been generally positive, bringing together once very different higher education systems within a common framework of quality management and standards. It is a framework that has proved attractive to countries both inside and outside the European Union and has encouraged, not only standardisation at the bureaucratic level, but also a re-think in pedagogy amongst many institutions, and institutional autonomy. The lack of a common framework at European level for CPD is noticeable: in higher education, the common framework provided by the Bologna process has been a powerful tool in standardising systems and processes and simply bringing people together.

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Section 2: Quality in Development and Implementation

CHAPTER 3: LIBERATING CPD, USING LIBERATING STRUCTURES TO EMBED EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AS CORE VALUES IN THE KEY PROJECT.

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Introduction

In this chapter, the author will introduce the concept of Liberating Structures (Lipmanowicz and McCandless 2013), and then reflect on how ‘Liberating Structures’ has influenced the working interactions of the KEY Project.

The concept of ‘Liberating Structures’ (ibid.) is a very useful model that can help to facilitate inclusion in more equitable workplaces and, especially group activities. In meetings and vital decision-making processes, a small number of dominant voices can overshadow the rest of the group. This limits the potential for innovation and creativity; junior members of staff invariably give deference to senior partners and some quieter members are ignored entirely (Allen, 2018). Thus, the ‘marketplace of ideas’ that a group can draw from is restricted, with the consequence that the status quo is retained and nothing new or interesting can emerge. As this typically leads to the same approaches being repeated, it can hinder progress and growth within the organisation. This is the case with developing new innovations for CPD, as much as for any other group development process one might try to implement in organisations. Liberating Structures are a series of exercises, created by Lipmanowicz and McCandless (2013), designed to get the best results from group activity. The process of Liberating Structures values every group member’s view and contribution, with all regarded as equal, and everybody gets the chance to contribute in a meaningful way. This way of working was deployed in the KEY project and has been essential to its success.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Ensuring EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) in working and teaching practices is an important aspect of my approach to working in Higher Education. Through adopting exercises and the philosophy laid out in Lipmanowicz and McCandless's (2013) work, reluctant and gregarious group members can have their voices heard. Group members who are not as eager to speak in meetings, do so for various reasons: their junior status, gender, ethnicity, age, fear of looking stupid, etc. All these reasons can be enough for a person to not wish to make valuable contributions in group activities. It is unfortunate, and somewhat of a pattern, that the most reluctant members of the group will often also belong to a minority group of some description. This can mean that a group, even if it contains a plethora of people of diverse backgrounds, may still only produce white, middle class, male ideas. Becoming stuck in pre-existing systems can reinforce the power dynamics that ensure exclusion of certain voices (Allen, 2018). There is an untapped potential of new, innovative ideas inside every working group, but this river can easily be dammed if such members are not invited to share.

More than anything, Liberating Structures promotes a culture of innovation, where all can feel free to engage safely. The lived experiences of diverse group members can help to provide entirely new perspectives, which can lead to new solutions to problems. Liberating Structures can allow for hierarchical organisational structures that may or may not be consciously upheld as habitus develops (Bourdieu, 1984), to be moved aside for the betterment of a culture of innovation (Lipmanowicz and McCandless, 2014). Studies such as Allen (2018) find that these liberating structures methods can help to promote a shared leadership approach within a hierarchical organisation (Allen, 2018: 20).

What are Liberating Structures and how Do They Work?

Liberating Structures are a series of exercises that are all underpinned by a notion of active participation. The exercises themselves promote equal engagement across a whole group, they 'liberate' each group member from hierarchical 'structures' that diminish equality. By removing traditional microstructures and barriers that meetings and working groups operate around, such as excessively rigorous and tight lectures, presentations, reports (or the opposite- open discussion and brainstorm sessions), all members can engage creatively without fear of exclusion. The small changes in how participants interact and engage with each other's ideas provide new creative spaces, empowering people from all levels of an organisation to have an active role in shaping the future, enhancing experiences for everyone involved (Singhal, Perez, Stgevik, Monness, and Svenkerud: 2020). Singhal et al (2020)

found that using Liberating Structures was, *'easy to implement, help increase participation, have the potential to enhance learning and can represent an effective pedagogical alternative to traditional lecture[s]'* (Singhal et al., 2020: 1).

Through basic exercises that require no more in terms of resources than post-it notes and pre-arranged chairs, an effective small group dynamic can be easily introduced and maintained (Kawamura, 2022: 9). Liberating Structures does this by disregarding 'habits' that we develop in the workplace (ibid.: 8; Bourdieu, 1984). Lipmanowicz and McCandless state that Liberating Structures:

'Distribute power and influence more widely by engaging everyone, invite self-organization to flourish by letting go of over-control, expand and connect networks by breaking down silos, increase transparency and the rapid reciprocal flow of information, and build new sets of feedback loops via many new forms of interaction; and increase diversity by engaging more people and perspectives' (Lipmanowicz and McCandless, 2010: 10).

Such habits may not be entirely conscious, but still hinder the chances of innovation within groups. The small changes in how meetings are conducted through Liberating Structures can potentially open new corridors of communication and lead to major changes as these embedded 'habits' are intentionally rewritten.

Deploying Liberating Structures in the KEY Project

The Liberating Structures methods have allowed a group, made up of people from across Serbia and Montenegro; academics, practitioners/professionals, civil servants and policy makers to equally contribute to the decision-making process and feel valued for their participation. The openness and transparency that runs through Liberating Structures allowed group members to feel that they could participate actively and safely. Different processes and mechanisms began to emerge, as the group would communicate confidently, allowing ideas to flourish and be explored in greater detail. As different members represented slightly diverging interests (pre-school teachers, academics who taught pre-school HE courses, pedagogists, other stakeholders), it soon became clear that everyone had their own perspective, that was influenced by their working practices, their personal needs and the needs of those who they are responsible to/for. Once aired, all these perspectives could work together, bringing in diverse strands of expertise to influence the development of innovative CPD.

The use of this equalising program allowed for multiple benefits. For instance, pre-school teachers in service, who work directly with children were empowered to

channel their perceptions and experiences into the CPD developments of the KEY Project, these experiences being valued as much as those of wider national policy making stakeholders.

Evaluating Liberating Structures in the KEY Project

For many of the KEY project participants, Liberating Structures was an entirely new idea. This was not surprising as the creators, Lipmanowicz and McCandless, had formulated their program in the 2010s and it is only starting to gain momentum among organisations seeking to build change and innovation beyond the limitations of hierarchical structures. Many of the exercises follow a similar pattern, conversations begin in smaller sub-groups and then slowly grow and expand, until there is the semblance of consensus amongst the assembled participants. Through this method, everyone has a chance to get their voice heard.

Integrating Liberating Structures can be very simple due to the low level of resources it requires (Lipmanowicz and McCandless, 2013; Kawamura, 2022), so any and all activities can easily be engineered to include elements of these structures. For a group who had little previous experience of Liberating Structures, the KEY project team took up, participated in and implemented the new ideas very well. The group did several exercises, including creating ‘rubbish CPD,’ which was an activity co-designed by the author and Professor Lee-Treweek, based on her ‘failure models’ of learning to do better. In this 10-minute session, the group collectively designed a terrible CPD system, taking bad practice from all their worst experiences. The overarching idea was that in order to create an optimum CPD capacity, there must be an acute awareness of what to avoid, based on experiential knowledge. The surprising power of Liberating Structures were exemplified perfectly here, in that the exercise allowed everyone to get involved, it was engaging and provided a fun way for people to offer something truly innovative through the lens of their own experiences.

On reflection, Liberating Structures should have been implemented right from the beginning of the project, so that everyone was used to the changes away from hierarchical meetings. Initially, team members can sometimes revert to ‘habits’ of structure, and the changes can make people uncomfortable (Allen: 2018), but once Liberating Structures became embedded in working practices, the communication pathways opened fully, and people positively changed how they interacted with each other. In future projects, I would recommend that Liberating Structures is used right from the kick-off of a Project to ensure innovation and change from day one.



Figure 1: KEY Project Study Trip to BCU, 12th June 2022.

The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures by Lipmanowicz and McCandless is currently available at buy in black and white and colour formats under a creative commons licence. It is available free in its entirety from www.LiberatingStructures.com and there is an associated App available from various App Stores.

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CHAPTER 4: QUALITY THROUGH THE VOICES OF DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS, HOW DID THE KEY CONSORTIUM ENSURE ENGAGEMENT?

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Introduction

This chapter outlines how research and evidence was gathered and used to inform quality development of CPD for the KEY project. The work discusses specifically knowledge gained in the first year or so of the KEY project, through surveys and interviews with Preschool Teachers themselves as a central and vital stakeholder group. The chapter serves to demonstrate the importance of including diverse stakeholders, such as these and intelligence gathering through using robust research methods. We argue that without such methods to enable the inclusion of diverse voices in CPD development, the quality offer of CPD can be negatively affected. Moreover, such surveys must be regularly used to maintain/sustain the quality offer. Concurrently, findings from these methods can be offered to CPD learners to help them self-manage their CPD trajectory and decisions.

Professional Development from the Preschool Teachers' Perspective

The title of this book focuses on the quality and evaluation of CPD, which draws attention to consideration of how leading stakeholders' voices are to be integrated into innovation and development of new provision. It is vitally important that CPD design and development be embedded in evidence-based analysis of what Preschool Teachers and other stakeholder want to be involved in. Moreover, the *self-regulation of continuous professional development of preschool teachers*⁵ is also an important goal for KEY and this too demands examination of professional development from the point of view of teachers themselves. To this end, the aim of this chapter is to present to readers how opportunities for professional development, primarily professional development programs but also other forms of training, are experienced by teachers themselves. In the research discussed below, we highlight areas that today's teachers perceive *as necessary/extremely necessary* for further

5 In the text below we will use only the term teachers to denote this population.

professional development. We argue that in order to create CPD that works, is sustainable and is regarded as high quality by those who undertake it, stakeholder knowledge, ideas and views around CPD provision must be rigorously gathered. This chapter goes some way to demonstrating how we did this in the KEY project through survey work with Preschool Teachers.

Having in mind all of the above, this chapter provides an overview of the results of extensive research, conducted within the project activities of the international *Keep Educating Yourself* (KEY) project, within the Erasmus + program for capacity building in higher education.⁶ The research we outline here was conducted in 2019, within the activities of one of the collaborative partners of this project, the Faculty of Education, University of Maribor (Slovenia), under the coordination of Assistant Professor T. Bratina and associates. At the time when this book chapter was being written, the overall results of this research had not been published, and we have used the documentation available within the project to describe the results, with the consent of the lead researcher. Tables (in whole or in part), which are adopted in the chapter, are taken from the available project documentation, and, in the selected scope, they have been analyzed and discussed.

We believe that this review of the most significant results on professional development from the perspective of teachers has been important to the KEY project in serving primarily to inform the development of the CPD hubs, course content and individual professional development. It also enables further reflection on the topic of professional development of teachers and others engaged in the educational context.

1. Review of Research Results within the KEY Project (research conducted by Assistant Professor T. Bratina et al., UM PEF, 2019: Analysis of the SUV – KEY questionnaire, December 2019)

The research, selected results of which are presented here, aimed to examine the attitudes of teachers and professional associates in the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro on current opportunities for their professional development. Furthermore, it aimed to offer basic recommendations and a guide for future design of opportunities for constructive professional development, through focusing on the identification of fields/areas in which teachers and professional associates in preschool institutions,

6 The goal of this multi-year project (2018–2021), funded by the European Union, is to establish centers for lifelong learning in Serbia and Montenegro, as well as to offer modern courses for teachers' improvement. The project consortium consists of 17 partners from Serbia, Montenegro, Romania, Hungary, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, and among the project partners is the Preschool Teacher Training College "Mihailo Palov" in Vrsac.

need additional support. The findings of the research fully confirmed the initial hypothesis – that teachers and professional associates in the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro assessed the current opportunities for professional development as satisfactory, but that there is a clear need for their innovation and improvement.

A total of 1466 respondents (47.7% from the Republic of Serbia and 52.3% from Montenegro) participated in the research (Bratina et al., 2019) – Tables 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d. A specially designed questionnaire was mostly filled in by teachers (87.4%), but among the respondents there were, as already pointed out, professional associates in preschool institutions (speech therapists, pedagogues, psychologists and so forth) – 5.4%, and nurse-educators (5.7%). It is, therefore, a deliberate sample. One third of the respondents had six to fifteen years of work experience (37.3%), or sixteen to twenty-five years of work experience (27.4%), 19.2% were individuals at the beginning of their career (0–5 years), and the smallest number of (16.2%) teachers and other education professionals were those with twenty-six or more years of work experience in preschool institutions. For the sake of economics of presentation in the continuation of the chapter we present only selected results, without explicating all of the elements of the methodological framework and the research proceedings.⁷

Country	f	%
Republic of Serbia	700	47,7
Montenegro	766	52,3
In total	1466	100,0

Table 1a. Sample description (territorial distribution)

Profession	f	%
Preschool Teacher	1281	87,4
Nurse-educator	83	5,7
Associate	79	5,4
Something else	23	1,6
In total	1466	100,0

Table 1b. Description of the sample according to the profession

7 We believe that the overall results, as well as the description of the research in the near future will be presented to the general public in the form of a research paper, or an appropriate separate.

Associate	f	%*
Speech therapist	7	8,9
Pedagogue	36	45,6
Psychologist	21	26,6
Other	15	19,0
In total*	79	100,0

* Only valid answers

Table 1c. Sample description (surveyed associates)

Work experience	f	%
0–5 years	281	19,2
6–15 years	547	37,3
16–25 years	401	27,4
26 and more	237	16,2
In total	1466	100,0

Table 1d. Sample description (work experience)

From the files available in the project documentation (see Bratina et al., 2019), we singled out the responses of teachers and other education professionals to those issues relevant to core aspects of Preschool teacher training CPD.

Thus, for example, within question number 7 (7.7), Table 2a, respondents were asked to single out the conceptual settings of the *Basics of preschool education program* (Serb.: *Osnove programa predškolskog vaspitanja i obrazovanja*), for which they believe they need additional support. Almost half – 42.2% of the respondents (as many as 72.8% from the Republic of Serbia) said that they need help in developing strategies for the innovative programme for Preschool - New Foundations, *The Years of Ascent* (Serb.: *Godine uzleta*) program. In second place in terms of the survey responses is the context of the real program (37.7% of all respondents, while this was mostly highlighted by respondents from Montenegro, 52.9%, Table 2b), and in third place is the support of *well-being through relationships and action* (17, 8%)⁸. The last-mentioned type of support was singled out as important by 22.4% of respondents from Montenegro, and by 10.6% of respondents from the Republic of Serbia.

8 Considering that we are only dealing with a review, individual opinions and answers classified in the determinant Other, which exist in the original documentation (see KEY – project documentation, 2018–2021), have not been used here.

Conceptual settings	f	%
Supporting well-being through relationships and experiences	142	17,8
Preschool institution – the context of the real program	301	37,7
Strategies for developing the New basics: The Years of Ascent program (Serb. Godine uzleta)	337	42,2
Other	18	2,3
In total*	798	100,0

* Only valid answers

Table 2a. Which conceptual settings of the Basics of preschool education program (Serb.: Osnove programa predškolskog vaspitanja i obrazovanja) do you think you need support for? (analysis of all answers)

Conceptual settings	Republic of Serbia		Montenegro		In total*	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Supporting well-being through relationships and action	33	10,6%	109	22,4%	142	17,8%
Preschool institution – the context of a real program	44	14,1%	257	52,9%	301	37,7%
Strategies for developing the New basics: The Years of Ascent program (Serb. Godine uzleta)	227	72,8%	110	22,6%	337	42,2%
Other	8	2,6%	10	2,1%	18	2,3%
In total*	312	100,0%	486	100,05	798	100%

* Only valid answers

Table 2b. Which conceptual settings of the Basics of preschool education program (Serb.: Osnove programa predškolskog vaspitanja i obrazovanja) do you think you need support for? (analysis of responses by country)

Such findings point to the conclusion that in the future reflections of opportunities and offers for professional development of teachers, special attention should be paid to improving the competencies of teachers in the field of developing and implementing the New Fundamentals: *The Years of Ascent program* (Serb. *Godine uzleta*). After considering the percentage of answers that testify to the need for such training, especially in the Republic of Serbia, we have no doubt that *the development and implementation of The Years of Ascent program* will be on the list of priorities when teachers create personal plans for their professional development

As part of the same 7th question in the research (Bratina et al., 2019), respondents were asked to rank, in accordance with their interests and needs, in which of the offered areas (*Direct work with children; Development of cooperation and learning community; Development of professional practice*) they need support when it comes to developing their personal and professional competencies, choosing between statements on a five-point Likert scale: *I don't need it at all / I don't need it / I'm indecisive / I need it – necessary / I really need it – extremely necessary*).

When it comes to *Direct work with children*, from the available tables (see *KEY - project documentation, 2018–2021*), we excerpt only the dominant results⁹:

- 48.9% of all respondents singled out as *necessary* the recognition of disease symptoms in children and adequate response in acute conditions;
- 45.7% of the surveyed teachers and professional associates perceive the support for the development of proper posture and correction of initial deformities in children as *necessary*;
- 45.2% singled out as *necessary* support in the domain of digital competencies in educational work (Prtljaga and Đorđev, 2020: 336–339, 342–345);
- 45% feel that they *need support* (circled *necessary*) in stimulating motor programs (in nature, workshops, dancing, creative use of props);
- 44.6% believe that they *need support* (*necessary*) in the development of personal and professional competencies in the field of observation, monitoring and documenting children's interests and progress.

The selected results can offer some clear points of development for the creation of professional development programs, but also other forms of training in the field of developing the professional practice of teachers and professional associates in pre-school institutions. They can also be a starting point for teachers to think about their individual professional development. One of the stages in professional development

9 Considering that the intention of the chapter is to present a review of the mentioned research, the excerpt of complete tables concerning the area of Direct work with children; Developing cooperation and learning community; Development of professional practice was absent due to the economy in the presentation. Certainly, they require, due to their complexity, a more detailed analysis within a particular scientific work.

planning is the analysis of development needs and ensuring that quality CPD provision has integrated, as far as practicable, the voices, views and requirements of potential learners. Such research is not an ‘added extra’ to this process, but core to ensuring that what is designed and developed is in alignment with the needs of the target learner groups (in this case, Preschool Teachers in practice).

From the comparative review of these results (complete tables are available in the project documentation and due to the economics of presentation are not listed here), we have singled out only the dominant results and those related to areas where there is a statistically significant difference between the surveyed countries. It is noted that the development of environmental awareness among children was singled out as *extremely necessary* by only 4.9% of respondents from the Republic of Serbia, as opposed to respondents from Montenegro who expressed a greater need for support in direct work with children in this area (15.9%). A similar tendency can be noted in the review of support needed in the development of personal and professional competencies when it comes to the implementation of joint physical activities of children and adults. This was marked as *extremely necessary* by only 4% of respondents from Serbia, while the percentage of the same type of answers was three times higher: 12.5% in respondents from Montenegro.

One question that arises from these data, is what contributed to the differences in the answers of the respondents? It is clear that planning quality CPD must take note of learners perceived development needs and interests. Self-regulating learners in using CPD may state they do not require development in particular areas but one of the dilemmas for those developing CPD programmes is to ensure that they prompt reflective self-assessment in this area, encouraging CPD learners to look at the gaps in their competencies. Therefore, whilst research on CPD learner views and needs provides insights, there is also a job of work to be done in challenging learners to interrogate and challenge themselves as to why they prioritise some areas for development and reject others. Ultimately, empowering learners to ponder, self-challenge and examine such questions as,

“Do I need support in developing personal and professional competence in the area of developing environmental awareness in children, and in the implementation of joint physical activities with children?”

Is vital in facilitating the self-regulation of professional development of educators and in mapping the terrain of future work on individual professional development.

When it comes to the area of development of cooperation and learning community, from the available tables (see KEY – project documentation, 2018–2021), we have singled out only the dominant results:

- 43.6% of all respondents marked the self-evaluation and development planning of the institution as *necessary*;
- 41% singled out as *necessary* the development of cooperation with the local community;
- 37.6% emphasize as *necessary* the development of cooperation with the family.

Comparing the answers of the respondents from the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro, it can be noticed that a statistically significant difference was apparent in the area of *Self-evaluation and development planning of the work of the institution*. This was noted as extremely necessary by 12% of educators and professional associates from Serbia, slightly fewer – 9.9% of respondents from Montenegro.

The attitudes of the respondents were especially interesting, expressing the need for support when it comes to developing personal and professional competencies by *Developing professional practice*. We have selected the following dominant results to focus upon:

- 44.6% of respondents singled out writing projects and project management as *necessary*;
- 43.6% consider the development of interpersonal (communication, conflict resolution, assertiveness) skills *necessary*;
- 43.3% of respondents singled out writing and presentation of professional papers as well as public speaking skills as areas in which support is needed (they answered by choosing the expression *necessary*);
- 42.6% of all respondents singled out burnout syndrome at work and stress management as areas where additional support is needed (the same).

Most of the frequent answers concerned the development of transversal skills (Đorđev, Prtljaga, P., Prtljaga, J., Nedimović, and Stojanović, 2016).

A total of 55.5% of respondents from the Republic of Serbia believe that they need support in writing and project management (an area where a statistically significant difference was observed). In Montenegro this percentage is slightly lower – 38.6%. 18.2% of respondents from Serbia and 17.2% of respondents from Montenegro emphasized the exceptional need for this item (they answered by choosing the expression extremely necessary).

All presented results, which reflect the attitudes/opinions of today's teachers and professional associates in preschool institutions, can be used to conceptualize the content of future, and innovate current, professional development programs for teachers and professional associates, as well as other forms of training. The contents of the offered program should: be harmonized with clearly defined goals and tasks set by the program itself; contain elements that are interconnected and harmonized; be based on the integration of theory and practice; it is especially important that they – should be a response to objectively determined needs in practice; be based on modern profes-

sional and scientific knowledge in the field of preschool education; be aligned with the prescribed standards (see *Standards of competencies for the profession of educator and his/her professional development*, etc.). The above mentioned can serve as one of the guidelines for choosing a program or other forms of training that the teacher or professional associate will choose to attend, as part of individual professional development.

One of the challenges that inevitably arise in planning professional development in the current context of fast and rich production of information, offers and training opportunities, is certainly the choice of training that will best suits the needs of individual development of each teacher / professional associate.

From the results obtained in the research that we refer to (Bratina et al., 2019), we single out the question under no. 11 (Table 3a, 3b) (see *KEY – project documentation*, 2018–2021) where respondents were asked to identify which forms of professional development that they would like to participate in. Most respondents, in addition to accredited professional development programs, opted for training for the development of certain personal or professional skills (462 respondents, 19.3% of answers). This choice was followed in popularity by a study visit to another preschool institution in the country (18.9% of responses), as well as mobility abroad (15.7%). The least attractive was an expert conference (8.5%), as well as the forum / discussion / round table (8.1%). A comparative examination of the results within this question (Table 3b) reveals that respondents from Montenegro are somewhat more interested in participating in training for the development of certain personal or professional skills (Montenegro – 19.8% : RS – 18.4%); the same applies to study visits within the country (Montenegro –19.6% : RS – 17.9%), and abroad (Montenegro –16.6% : RS: 14.1%).

Training for the development of certain personal or professional skills	462	19,3%
Study visits to another preschool institution in the country	454	18,9%
Study visit, mobility abroad	376	15,7%
Exchange of opinions with professionals of the same or related profiles in electronic form (blog, chat, different platforms, cooperation through e-twinning)	250	10,4%
Participation in a national or international project	238	9,9%

Individual personal, written or electronic consultations with competent lecturers or a team (in connection to a particular question that interests you)	219	9,1%
Professional conference	205	8,5%
Tribune / discussion / round table	194	8,1%

Table 3a. Analysis of all answers to question no. 11: In addition to accredited professional development programs (seminars conducted directly or online), you would like to participate in some of the following forms of training:

	Republic of Serbia		Montenegro		In total
Training for the development of certain personal or professional skills	166	18,4%	296	19,8%	462
Study visits to another preschool institution in the country	161	17,9%	293	19,6%	454
Study visit, mobility abroad	127	14,1%	249	16,6%	376
Exchange of opinions with professionals of the same or related profiles in electronic form (blog, chat, different platforms, cooperation through e-twinning)	94	10,4%	156	10,4%	250
Participation in a national or international project	97	10,8%	141	9,4%	238
Individual personal, written or electronic consultations with competent lecturers or a team (in connection to a particular question that interests you)	83	9,2%	136	9,1%	219
Professional conference	86	9,5%	119	7,9%	205
Tribune / discussion / round table	87	9,7%	107	7,1%	194

Table 3b. Analysis of all answers to question no. 11 by country: In addition to accredited professional development programs (seminars conducted directly or online), survey participants were asked if they would like to participate in some of the following forms of training:

These tables (Table 3a and Table 3b) provide an insight into the importance of surveying potential CPD learners, to ensure that CPD development is guided by a robust evidence-base about what learners would prefer to undertake or study as CPD. Such findings can provide a draft map or guide for CPD developers to ensure that group and individual needs stay at centre of the planning and development of any new provision. At the same time, these results can also be used with potential CPD learner groups to get them to self-reflect and examine what they would like to do as CPD, in order that they can meaningfully plan their individual professional development.

The take-away message from using research in this way to ensure quality in CPD is that when designing any forms of professional development, one should first assess whether it meets the individual needs of teachers as the main target-audience. As demonstrated here, survey research can provide a mechanism that enables continuous data collection on changing CPD learner interests, needs and requirements.

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CHAPTER 5: USING THEORY OF CHANGE PROCESSES TO EMBED QUALITY INTO CREATION OF THE CPD HUBS IN KEY.

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Introduction

For the purpose of monitoring and evaluating CPD provision, there are certain elements that need to be taken into consideration in order to achieve the desired short, medium and long-term goals. The Theory of Change model is the best way to approach this process, due to its flexibility and its analytical nature. Additionally, it also presents and allows the user to negotiate the inter-connectedness of each individual stage of the constructing, performance and maintenance of Continuing Professional Development provision. This chapter justifies the use of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) models in CPD and then moves on to introduce and explain the seemingly complex Theory of Change model in a format that can be readily adopted by professionals in education for monitoring and evaluation of their CPD developments.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a vital ongoing experience in the careers of educators and other professionals. Codes of ‘Best Practice’ are always in flux and pedagogy innovations seemingly endlessly. What is recognised as, ‘in the learner’s best interests’ is dynamic. This insight has especially been pivotal during the heights of the COVID-19 pandemic, where a lot of contact time with HE students has become trauma-informed, and a focus on the pastoral nature teaching roles has become recognised as at the forefront of good teaching (Taylor, 2021). Concurrently, new technologies entering the classroom environment have revolutionised practice at an incredible rate (Savage and Barnett, 2017). Amongst other things, these examples, as one would expect, lead to often radical changes in the needs of teaching professionals’ CPD requirements. So, while the changing of face of CPD, hopefully begins to become aligned with the needs and aspirations of the staff undertaking it, there emerges the essential task of making sure that the CPD is, not only sustainable, but has necessary space to improve and evolve. Consequently, Monitoring and Evaluation is an important tool for educators wishing to ensure CPD is sufficiently addressing teachers’ needs.

Why do we Monitor and Evaluate?

CPD is supposed to enhance the careers of its participants and future-proof their skills and competencies. The primary goal is to cement best practice methods of working, to introduce new, revolutionary ideas or provide new skills and competencies in a lifelong learning format. In conversations about what constitutes poor CPD, a common factor raised was that it can feel irrelevant to staff undertaking it. If CPD does not adhere to the needs of staff, it can no longer be said to be career-enhancing; instead it becomes a box-ticking exercise where the only goal is to be able to prove that some level of CPD has taken place, whether it was ultimately useful or not.

M&E models allow for the continuous review and analysis of CPD provision, giving evaluators an opportunity to constantly screen elements of CPD so that it is in order and working at an optimum level.

Quality Assurance (QA) or Quality Control (QC) are terms referring to the systematic efforts undertaken to ensure that a product or service is completed and delivered to the end user in a state capable of achieving a previously agreed upon standard of excellence. QA can be utilised at every step of production, to eliminate any issues and problems that may hinder the most efficient service. Proper QA gives the end user the satisfaction that their product/service reaches a certain standard. Quality Control must therefore be rigorous, in order to prevent oversight, and above all it must be trustworthy to the consumer. This part of QA may take time to build, particularly if it is based around a whole new system. However, it is vital that Quality Assurance is an effective measure that assures quality.

Effective QA/QC is built around a system that espouses two goals: that the service be ‘fit for purpose’ (performs the intended task) and that it is ‘right first time’ (removes chance of mistakes). Importantly though, it involves the analysis of every stage of production/implementation to achieve these twin goals. This includes the critical analysis of the quality of all materials and inputs, and review of how successful each stage is and how it contributes to the experience of the end user’s engagement. Data collected during QA both divides the project up into smaller pieces and considers the whole, at the same time.

Introducing The Theory of Change Model

A proven effective model of QA is the ‘Theory of Change’; a ‘rigorous yet participatory process’ where stakeholders are invited to create a plan to achieve long-term goals by identifying the conditions required to advance towards set objectives (Taplin

and Clark, 2012: 1). It ‘explains how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts’ (Rogers, 2014: 1). Furthermore, it can be used by any level of organisation for a wide variety of tasks, from community groups to charities, with equal success (Noble, 2019: 4). What is unique about this model is the flexibility and ability to analyse each step of development, in which one can hypothesise as to what (and how) changes can be made at stage A, B or C, for example, that will contribute towards the optimum performance of the project’s end goal. A Theory of Change diagram is optional, but helpful if utilised (Noble, 2019: 8). It allows for more complexity than a simple flow chart, enabling users to independently review each section of the process. Importantly, in terms of M&E, a Theory of Change is a transparent system; everyone who is subject to it, if the process is adhered to correctly, knows exactly what is happening and why (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 1). Theory of Change can be utilised for planning, identifying issues and monitoring and evaluation process (Noble, 2019: 5), making it a useful tool. Moreover, it provides added benefits if users begin to engage with as early as possible in a project’s lifecycle. As the project moves forwards, data can be collected and analysed in relation to key indicators, thus monitoring the progress of the Theory of Change (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 1). The results of this data analysis become instrumental in understanding what works and what needs to be revised. When using ToC as an evaluation tool, it identifies the specific goals of the program and locates those goals within the parameters of certain intervention activities (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 1).

Explaining Theory of Change

A theory of change model appears as a logic framework or ‘logframe’ that allows intermediary interventions (Noble, 2019: 5). These interventions become stages, which will help the user map out their initiative by showing in a clear, accessible way:

- Identifying the long-term goals of a project, and what assumptions need to be made in order to facilitate them;
- When reading in reverse from the long-term goal, necessary preconditions can be found and explained as to their presence and importance to the success of the project overall;
- A chance to be reflective of what does and doesn’t work, and to shift each stage of the operation around, making changes until it does;
- Developing indicative ways to measure progress towards the long-term objectives;
- Seeing the beginning to end of a project in a digestible, narrative format (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 1).

Theory of Change uses ‘rationales’ and ‘assumptions’ in order to function, leading the users from beginning to end (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 5). A rationale explains how different outcomes are connected, and the order in which they must be

achieved in order to meet end targets. For instance, if A is achieved only then can B be achieved, then C, etc.

An assumption explains the ideas that underpin the theory itself. These two elements are used in tandem and very often are supported by relevant research, thus giving weight to the feasibility of the model. The theory of change can then be presented in a graphical format accompanied by a written narrative that encompasses the logical process of the entire framework (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 5).

Outcomes are the skeleton of a theory of change and an outcome is an intermediary between the current position and the end goal. For your end goal to be achievable, your outcomes must be met. Your final objective or goal can be called your 'long-term outcome' (LTO) (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 2).

It may be that your group's theory of change needs the involvement of third parties to reach certain goals that are not within the power you have access to. In that case, this is represented by an 'accountability ceiling', which you can present on your graphic as a dotted line to represent that to fully achieve such a goal, at least one element is outside of your control (Taplin and Clark: 2012: 2).

Applying Theory of Change

Problem Statements and Long-Term Objectives

The most important element of creating a theory of change is to fully realise the long-term objective (LTO). Your LTO has to not only be suited to the project itself, but feasible within the confines of the project. Each integer outcome must make progress towards the LTO. This will help to focus all those involved and keep members and stakeholders motivated. Coming up with a LTO may take longer than you expect. Ideally you should set time aside in right at the start of the project to get a consensus on what the LTO should be, taking into account the democratic decision of the group, situational analysis, where the group can step back and consider the problem, how to address it and what resources are at hand is a good place to start (Noble, 2019: 9).

Upon beginning a new project, it is a good idea to draw the group together to isolate the problem that the project team intends to solve. Clarifying the problem among the group will help to focus everyone on looking towards the process of arriving at a solution. In the case of Monitoring and Evaluation of CPD in Preschool Teaching and Early Years Care, the problem statement could begin as: 'ineffective/unsatisfactory CPD provision'; then discussion of this topic could yield a successful LTO

(Noble, 2019: 2). From this, groups can then start to look at outcome statements. It is important that all statements of outcomes should be positive, and questions should be asked as to how each outcome addresses the problem. This stage should be recorded as a reference point for the future, so that all members of the group can consistently engage with the original aims of the project.

Pathways and Clusters

The process that links your problem statement through the outcome statements is the ‘pathway’ (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 1). These pathways are best represented by vertical chains with arrows leading towards the outputs on your graphic. Pathways represent a logical progression, for example, ‘if A occurs, then B must ...’. Several outcomes can be joined together in an order which moves ever closer to the LTO. Theory of Change is best operated when read backwards. From the LTO, through the lesser outcomes and back towards the initial problem statement. This allows for a chronological plan to be made about which output changes need to be made first, before others can happen. Therefore, instead of passively seeking out the pre-requisite conditions that lead to the intended outcomes, the group can actively look for what can be done to achieve said goals. For instance, ‘if we perform x, then we can do y, and then on to develop z’. It is entirely possible that multiple pathways can exist simultaneously, as different routes will all converged at an LTO. Different interest groups can be assigned each pathway and independently bring about their aim, without having to concern themselves with the entirety of the ToC.

When outcomes intersect and mesh together, we can call them a ‘cluster’ (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 2) and by presenting them this way, the ToC indicates that these are a join precondition that feeds into later outcomes. Diagrammatising outcomes as a cluster shows their interdependence. This saves the diagram from having to fall into the minutiae of just how the internal relationships between the cluster function (although it is a good idea to have this interdependence described elsewhere).

Assumptions and Rationales

In a ToC, if there are conditions that are already available for your use and/or can be introduced to the process very easily, these are called ‘assumptions’ (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 5). Within your group, it is very important to dedicate discussion to assumptions, if not, assumptions that are made incorrectly can cause disruptive problems for the ToC. For example, if the group agree that external funding was a condition, but it was then reduced or worse, stopped entirely, the whole ToC is at risk of failure until alternatives methods are sought. Consequently, assumptions should be rigorously

tested as to their sustainability, feasibility and reliability. Assumptions which pass such tests should ensure that they are constantly clear and transparent for all involved.

Each step from outcome to outcome can be known as a ‘rationale’, as it is there to explain the logic behind the causal relationships between stages (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 5). These should be recorded as they are formulated and may, in many cases, seem obvious. However, complications can arise if rationales cannot properly be used to link preconditions/conditions. It is at this stage where the veracity of preconditions/conditions can be addressed. If a rationale cannot be found between two conditions, it is possible that something is wrong. This logical causal relationship must carry from the initial problem statement to the LTO without faltering. Consider the ToC as a story that maintains a narrative thread from beginning to end.

Interventions

‘Interventions’ are the actual activities that are implemented to bring about outcomes (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 6). A series of activities that must be performed in a certain sequence in order to achieve outcomes is a ‘strategy’ (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 6). These activities describe any approach that group members must take to move forward in the ToC and are often depicted in a diagram by an arrowed line with a symbolic or acronymic icons with a visible key. For instance, activity A1, A2, A3, where A represents the group/member tasked with the activity, and the number representing the order of events. How this appears should be discussed extensively with the group to maintain clarity. Interventions or strategies can link singular or multiple outcomes together, if the arrow points towards the intended outcome(s) and the line begins at the statement(s) that it the activity seeks to resolve. Interventions should come later in the process. There should be discussion on just what needs to be done in order to address the problem statement, and what outcomes need to be achieved (Noble, 2019: 5). Assessing each potential intervention is a good way to ensure that only the most efficient activities/strategies become part of the ToC. The group should all be aware how each intervention contributes to the whole. Only then should activities be mapped on to the Theory of Change, with care being taken to ensure that interventions are correctly placed and ordered in the most effective way.

Indicators

For any Theory of Change, there needs to be visible, measurable evidence that goals are being met (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 7) and this can be in the form of quan-

titative or qualitative data. The group must decide on what indicators to use and how to collect them in order to succeed with ToC. Indicators must be feasible and practical, in accordance with the outcome that is being measured. The vision for change must be combined with realistic expectations. There should be four focal points when deciding on indicators.

1. How many of the population does the group wish to see embrace the change?

Create a solid definition of the potential reach of the ToC, consider how wide the target group is as a representative sample of the population.

2. How many or how much change does the group foresee as a success? Does the ToC require 100% success, or if a lower figure is acceptable. This should be discussed amongst the group members, as expectations must be standardised for everyone.

3. Who or what needs to change? Who/What should be subject to your proposed changes? Groups should be very particular about just who/what falls within their target group.

4. Should there be a deadline of when such change is achieved by? A realistic timeline will enhance the potential success for your Theory of Change, Rome wasn't built in a day. An overall deadline put in place for the LTO can also be helpful in determining when lesser outcomes need to be achieved by. Once again, this needs to be feasible (Taplin and Clark 2012: 7).

Resources can be limited for monitoring and evaluation, therefore strict adherence to capacity by the group is vital. Factors to be considered include: the availability of data, what is easily accessible and what counts as conclusive evidence that goals are indeed being reached. Once all this has been accounted for, the group possesses a Theory of Change. This ToC can now begin to be implemented, and as data can be collected at certain points, the ToC can be consistently reviewed as to its effectiveness.

Quality Review

Once that the indicators have been received, then they must be analysed for QA/QC. Quality Review can be achieved through asking a number of questions about the indicators.

- **Are the pathways plausible?** There must be an unbreakable logical connection between all of the above stages. They must be in the correct order to function. The group must ensure there are no gaps in logic that could disrupt the process.
- **How feasible is your Theory of Change?** The group must be aware that the ToC must be realistic. Time and resources must be available (or obtainable) in the quantity required to successfully fulfil the initiative. Any changes to the ToC based on realism must be communicated to the group and any external partners.

- **Are your indicators adequately testable?** The chosen indicators effective (solid, measurable, timely) in proffering the data that a group requires in order to assess the success of the ToC. The indicators must be sufficient to introduce any changes to the process if the LTO cannot be met. Groups must also be cognisant that data gathered should be of a nature that investors and stakeholders can understand and be convinced to continue their support (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 8).

Scope

Another consideration in terms of QA/QC is that of the ‘scope’ of the project (ActKnowledge, 2003: 1). The scope is defined as how far the Theory of Change goes towards explaining the changes that need to take place in order to successfully complete the project. In many cases the scope will be affected by whether the ToC is prospective, and therefore a brand-new project, or retrospective, thus a previously existing project that is being placed under review for improvement (ActKnowledge, 2003: 1). The former offers more freedom for the group, as they are creating the project from the ground-up, whereas retrospective ToCs revisit an existing program and will be looking to filling in gaps and reviewing the processes. Scopes will further vary as to the nature of the initiative, a framework that contains a number of specifics in the framework will need less assumptions and preconditions than a ToC that exists for a broader, less specific goal.

Narrative

The final part in the construction of a sustainable Theory of Change is to commit to a narrative (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 8). Consider this as the ‘story’ of your ToC and its functions is to document your assumptions, rationales and interventions in a way that stakeholders can clearly benefit from (Noble, 2019: 24). It is key to helping others understand just what the initiative hopes to change, and importantly, how. It is a good idea to include extra information such as the overall vision beyond the project, its history and community context (Taplin and Clark, 2012: 8). The narrative serves twin purposes. It conveys the important details of the Theory of Change in a digestible manner and helps the group better understand how the elements ‘fit’ together. Have a single member of the group draft an executive summary of the ToC, without terminology, that makes suitable clear what the Theory of Change is about. Review this document as to its accuracy. Test it to see if it makes a convincing case for accessing and maintaining support without excessive details.

Conclusion

The group is now in possession of a functioning Theory of Change and, if the process has been done properly, then it should help lead towards the successful completion of a project. A Theory of Change can be self-sustaining in that indicators will allow for consistent review and improvement at regular intervals. If something is found to be lacking in some way, changes can be made but must be altered at every concerned stage through consultation with the group. Above all the ToC should remain, clear, transparent and appropriate.

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APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 5: EXAMPLE OF A THEORY OF CHANGE DIAGRAM

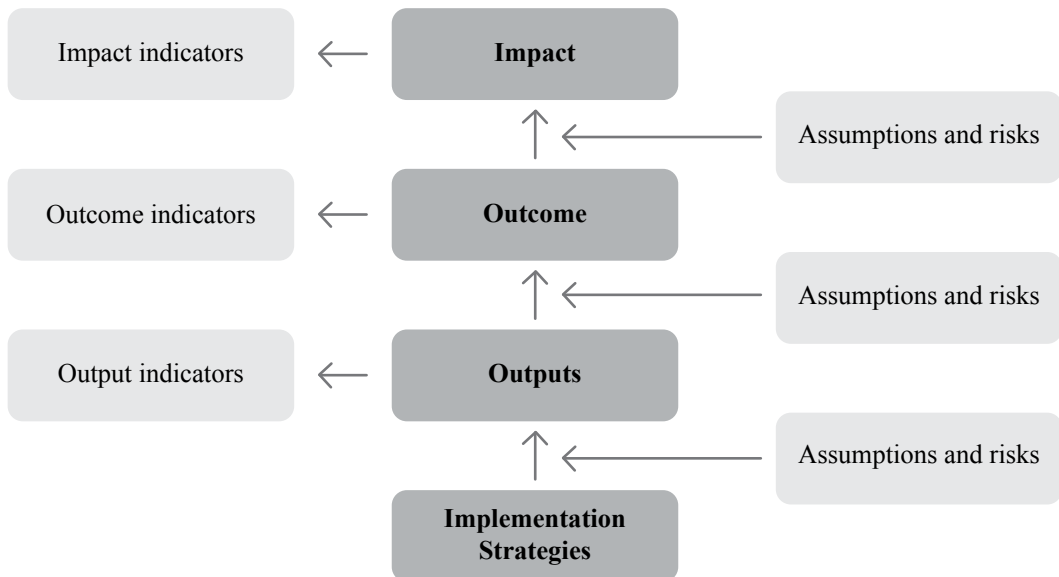


Figure 1. Example diagram of a Theory of Change. Source: United Nations Children's Fund, Supplementary Programme Note on the Theory of Change, Peer Review Group meeting, 11 March 2014, UNICEF, New York, 2014, p. 4. See www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/PRG-overview_10Mar2014.pdf.

CHAPTER 6: USING THEORY OF CHANGE PROCESSES TO EMBED QUALITY INTO CREATION OF THE CPD HUBS IN THE KEY PROJECT: AN EXEMPLAR.

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In this chapter, colleagues from Preschool Teacher Training College ‘Mihailo Palov,’ Vrsac, Serbia reflect on their experience of using Theory of Change, after participating in a number of workshops on the subject.

Introduction

At the beginning of December 2021, two online workshops focusing on continuous professional development were successfully held via the Microsoft Teams platform. These workshops were conceived and run by Kevin Hoffin, from Birmingham City University, BCU being the KEY Project’s UK partner. The second workshop *Monitoring and Evaluation: Theory of Change and What to Measure* gave theoretical impulses for the application of the Theories of change (for planning, participation and evaluation), a series of questions for (self) reflection when it comes to one’s own professional development, as well as the conception of offers for professional development. In June 2022, the participants of the KEY project had the opportunity to learn more about the Theory of Change model through Kevin Hoffin’s workshops at the University of Birmingham (Hoffin, 2022). The Theory of Change was discussed in the context of the preparation and evaluation of activities aimed at professional development.

Application in Practice

Theory of Change (ToC) is a multi-purpose tool that can be applied for planning, managing, monitoring, and evaluating. We used the Theory of Change to plan a professional development course about transferable skills. The course *Transferable (transversal) skills in education – a step ahead*, was implemented on May 14th and 21st, and on September 8th, 2022. Some of the ‘golden keys’ of our course were: 1: design the courses according to the real needs of practice; 2: create the courses by open learning teams; 3: precisely create a development plan (with the Theory of Change). We applied all ‘golden keys’ for the preparation and implementation of this continuous professional development course. We will add two more golden keys: to enjoy the process, learning from and about

each other, and to learn a little more about Theory of Change.

1. First we defined the general purpose, the overarching goal to which our professional development course should contribute to (but is not fully responsible for). That goal was: the development and improvement of transferable skills of employees in educational institutions, as well as competence for the application of transferable skills in daily educational work.

2. Next we identified the main activities, and the actors that would be involved. We especially considered the activities of course providers and course participants. In our example, they were employed preschool teachers from the territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Serbia.

3. We also identified the outcomes (e.g., knowledge, skills and value attitudes) that were intended to be the result of attending the course. We considered outcomes at different stages of the process, i.e., short-term outcomes, end outcomes, long-term outcomes. For example, upon completion of our course, participants were expected to be able to: recognize situations and activities in which there is a possibility of applying and developing transferable skills in an educational context; integrate work methods and techniques that imply the development of transferable skills in educational work; work effectively in a team; design and implement activities that favour the transfer, adoption and improvement of transferable skills (end outcomes); successful transferable (communication, organizational and personal) skills in a professional and personal environment of the participants (long-term outcomes).

4. We also identified the impacts (tangible) that the results of the course will have. In our case: development and application of transferable skills in different educational situations.

5. We analysed the basic assumptions about the main causal relationships “if we do X, Y happens because we believe Z” (Claus, and Belcher, 2020). In designing the course, this practically meant, for example: if we also introduce the topic of developing analytical skills into the course, it will result in a longer duration of the course than prescribed because we believe that we need a lot of time to properly process this topic.

6. We revised and refined our course design, ensuring that the main activities and actors adequately contribute to the main outcomes.

We have identified indicators of success for key steps in the course (for example: respect for time, involvement of participants, products of the participants’ work, observations of the performers themselves; respecting the topic, but also the previous knowledge and needs of the participants). We also defined the evidence needed to confirm or deny the realization of the outcome, questionnaires during the realization

of the course, work on a flip chart etc.; we have identified the data and data sources that are needed (comments of participants, solutions to tasks that were set during the course and so forth). In the end, we collected evidence of the achievement of the outcomes. For example, participants were expected to perform at least one activity with preschool teachers and/or parents focused on the application and development of transferable - communication/organizational/personal - skills, to fill out an electronic questionnaire created by the author of the course and to submit it to the performers. The questionnaire was designed to require, among other things, evaluation results and self-evaluation of course participants on the improvement of transferable skills and their application in practice, as well as a proposal for further interventions.

Work results regarding the mentioned stages are written below. It often resembled a mind map. Since Theory of Change implies the involvement of all actors, the course authors, implementers and participants were involved in the design. During the performance of the program, it changed according to the interests of the participants themselves. Later our mind map took the form of a tabular presentation, which we called course design. It became the basis that changed through further realizations of the course, in which changing even the smallest part caused the others to change, according to the law of causality, and that is the beauty of working on professional development courses.

Conclusion

Applying the Theory of Change in the planning of the professional development course, we learned that the professional development program is, above all, a living process. To put it poetically, thanks to the creativity (creativity implies change) which we pour into our courses, we do not see only one world. As many creators, participants and performers there are, so many worlds are at our disposal (Marcel Proust, modelled). We will continue to do our best on this complex, but exciting, adventurous path, which we constantly look forward to in our pursue of future-proof CPD skills and competencies.

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Section 3: Quality Structures, Methods and Examples

CHAPTER 7: PROJECT QUALITY MANAGEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – THE CASE OF CAPACITY BUILDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Introduction

Even though (internal) monitoring and evaluation activities are at the core of international project management and control processes, their role may in fact often be neglected by both project implementing partners and the donors. Implementing partners may be overburdened with workloads focused on producing the core results (intellectual outputs) as per the work plan and in accordance with their best knowledge and practice, therefore leaving little or no time to monitor and evaluate the performance. Whereas donors typically do not pay particular attention in valuing the process of achieving the promised goals. As a result, a number of international project stakeholders may fail to create learning logs and obtain institutional know-how on the processes that took place and have been managed in positive or negative ways. Furthermore, the projects may fail to reach a culture of quality that is beneficial for all entailing academic excellence - if/when applicable, accountability, transparency, professionalism and sustainability, integrity and inclusion aspects.

Monitoring and Evaluation on Development Projects: main considerations and steps to follow

The importance of internal monitoring and evaluation is two-fold. First, it may directly be assisting the project teams in collecting and analyzing data to be included in progress and final reporting. Second, it should be used to understand the way the internal stakeholders feel, think and act upon their doing, how they interact and what they produce on the project in order to obtain institutional knowledge necessary for further work and/or share the lessons learnt with outside counterparts. Monitoring and evaluation on development projects may increase the skills of involved individu-

als, improved working relationships, identifications of further needs and securing of future funding. Hence, both impact and sustainability of the project are most directly dependent on applied monitoring and evaluation methods and activities.

Typically, the internal monitoring and evaluation mechanism is defined at a project's Kick-off meeting and against the adopted work plan (LFM). Nevertheless, it is strongly advised that a brief baseline study is always conducted to address possible changes to be introduced in the project LFM, prior to the implementation start.

Internal monitoring and evaluation should be performed (and is often promised to be performed in bids), with regard to project core results, this includes intellectual outputs where applicable, of a tangible and intangible nature. The project results/ outputs development cycle should thus be presented to include 4 action phases:

1. planning (of output creation);
2. developing (the work on creating the draft output);
3. checking (for feedback on the created draft output);
4. upgrading/correcting (of the created draft output in line with the obtained feedback).

Under phase 1, planning activities and methods of monitoring and evaluation are being designed; monitoring is performed under phase 2 – developing; while evaluation is done under phases 3 – checking; and in stage 4, there is upgrading. In terms of monitoring methods these may often relate to data comparison within LFM and/or baseline analysis. Performing evaluation more generally across the project may involve in-depth interviews, surveys, focus group discussions and/or pre-post testing with experts or stakeholders in the field of interest in different countries, to provide the optimal assessment tool/set of tools.

Internal monitoring and evaluation, which would normally be performed by the project steering body -PMU-project management unit, should always be designed against the project LFM and/or baseline study. These are core performance assessment tools for external evaluation that are normally performed by the subcontracting expert in the domain of intervention. Regardless of whether the evaluation is internal or external, it is strongly advised that it is of formative character, enabling on the spot intervention and prompt introduction of corrective measures even if this is coming from externally engaged evaluator.

Looking at the monitoring component alone, which is the process related component of M&E, we would normally be answering the questions related to the project inputs. These would include: accessibility; adequacy; cost effective activities (do they need to be modified in any way, do they vary across sites); outputs and outcomes, for instance, number of persons attending activities; feedback obtained; links between outputs and

outcomes, are there any unintended outcomes; beneficiaries - have we reached the targeted population, are there any negative aspects towards them /harm done?

In conducting evaluation, as an assessment of project performance, the assessors are normally seeking to answer the core questions related to outcomes, what they were and if there were any unintended ones; quality of produced results (are they credible and verified; is there any negative impact of their production); impact (what change took place and for whom); sustainability (was the project feasible, acceptable, affordable, can it be scaled to increase reach and/or scope).

In a number of international development projects including Capacity Building for Higher Education (CBHE) projects, consortium partners are requested, normally in the scope of their Final report, to address, i.e. assess and measure, the impact of their project performance upon:

1. target groups (where applicable direct and indirect),
2. institutions involved in the consortium,
3. local level/communities involved,
4. national level/countries involved,
5. regional/European level constituencies (where relevant).

In order to be able to assess/measure the impact obtained, comparison between the targeted values and baseline values should be performed or a quantitative impact assessment. However, as some project intervention measures are not easy to measure, and qualitative impact evaluation should be considered. This will usually be in the form of a Qualitative Impact Assessment Protocol, which is used to demonstrate the social impact of projects through enabling beneficiaries to share and give feedback on their experiences, including commenting on the changes and factors contributing to these in the given time period. The narrative data is collected and triangulated with other data, for instance, complementing quantitative evidence on changes.

Project performance of team/s members is somewhat underused in the project evaluation process and could be given further consideration. Namely, providing individual feedback/assessment of a team member performance could be relevant in one's professional career development and strengthening of project skills portfolio. Here the measuring of individual performance in their project role could be examined with achievement assessment, analysis of skills obtained and identification of the areas of further improvement needed.

In order to perform monitoring and evaluation on a project, a ME framework should be set up in the project inception phase. The monitoring and evaluation framework represents a core part of the ME plan. While it may be relatively easily set up – as

per the table below, the implementation of the framework could be more challenging as it should involve diverse stakeholders, including those outside consortium institutions and individuals.

ME framework	Indicator	Definition How is it calculated?	Baseline What is the current value	Target What is the target value	Method How will it be measured?	Frequency How often is it measured?	Responsibility Who will measure it?	Data source Where will it be reported?
IMPACT	% of population living in poverty	Proportion of people living on less than EUR 2 a day	2019 45%	2022 35%	One on one interviews with target population using questionnaire	Quarterly Annually	ME officers Project Coordinator	Quarterly progress reports Interim report
Outcome	amount of income earned in EUR	Earning in a given year	\$250	\$ 500	One on one interviews with target populations, using questionnaires	Quarterly Annually	ME officers	Quarterly progress reports Interim report
Output

Apart from the ME framework, ME plan components would normally include: ME activities (data collection, analysis and reporting), data flows, indicator reference list, available resources (human, financial and time). Under ME plan, all indicators should be listed, apart from impact, output and outcomes indicators, the list should contain process indicators to capture all aspects of project implementation quality.

Project Quality Management and Guiding Standards for Capacity Building in Higher Education Project Implementation

As per the PMBoK (Project Management Institute, 2022) quality on the project and its management comes most closely to the beneficiaries’ views on fulfillment of their needs, i.e. if the project deliverables (goods or services) are not able to meet the stated or implied needs of the beneficiaries, then the project did not meet its quality goal. Hence, quality management is done in several steps:

1. Planning of project quality management on the basis of beneficiaries’/target groups needs analysis.
2. Defining project quality (assurance) plan in line with the project scope, time and

the budget – preparing viable indicators, i.e., quantitative and qualitative metrics for their acceptance by the target groups/beneficiaries.

3. Implementation and control of the project quality plan, ensuring that the project is implemented in line with the set standards, monitoring the application of the plan and providing inputs for defining corrective measures.

It goes without saying that measuring success in quality assurance and control on a project implemented in often complex, and at times even volatile, international settings could be a challenging and subjective process, both internally by the project engaged staff and externally by the target groups and donors themselves.

Nevertheless, CBHE projects demand certain quality standards to be addressed in the proposal and implementation phases, while grant agreements include articles related to these expectations and penalties if these are assessed as not fully met (The European Commission, 2019).

Some of the *golden standards* to be adhered to in CBHE project implementation include:

- Giving enough space during the Kickoff meeting preparation and delivery to project quality management, including human capacity development to adhere to the expectations and obligations stemming from the Grant agreements. Training sessions organized on quality management for QA team and financial officers should be a norm;
- Giving enough space to debate and prepare a stakeholders' analysis for the Kickoff meeting, reflecting on the possibilities for direct inclusion of target groups in the implementation process and their balanced approach in terms of expectations and needs, on one hand, and project scope on the other.
- Project communication plan and/or visibility strategy are important aspects of a Kick off meeting in a complex CBHE framework and attention should be devoted to common understandings of these requirements, which may in fact profoundly influence the quality of the action in donors final assessment;
- Purchasing plan for goods and services in the first six months of project implementation (including audit/expenditure verification, external evaluation, and equipment purchasing);
- Equipment purchasing and installing in the first eighteen months of project implementation and operational, project – related use of the equipment from months eighteen to thirty-six of the project implementation period;
- Lessons learned (on the processes implemented) should be prepared and discussed at project management bodies as often as needs be, and corrective measures employed and justified.
- Quality management aspects should be addressed per target groups, per institution participating on the project, per beneficiary, local community and country.

- Separate, internal M&E unit of experts should be formed for continuous tracking of quality issues and project progress in the inception phase.

Given the uniqueness of capacity building focused projects (e.g., CBHE), Project Quality Management on these projects should ideally relate to capturing successful provision of the following aspects:

- Deliverables (production of particular goods and services) and Work packages;
- Communication and dissemination processes (including events management);
- Human resources related processes;
- Other (added value) elements, including reflecting on project contribution to twin transition (addressing aspects of greening spaces and human capacities in the domain and reflection on project adherence to digital standards); and inclusion (measuring if and how the intervention could be of use to different members of societies, including the most vulnerable groups in the given contexts).

In the KEY project effort to capture as many quality management aspects as possible, a Project Quality Architecture (PQA) document (QA plan with instruments) was prepared and employed with instructions for beneficiaries' (KEY, 2019). PQA was built to provide quality assessment based on the following pillars:

- Main evaluator
- Quality of Management
- Quality of Work packages
- Quality of results
- Quality of events
- Quality of communication and dissemination
- Progress evaluations
- Final internal evaluation
- Verification of costs

In addition, the KEY project reflected on the Boards (KEY Project, 2020), which may represent good practice in contributing to the project quality management aspects.

Measuring impact of CBHE actions in particular areas/within particular target groups is somewhat neglected by the donors and implementers/beneficiaries' alike, while learning component of M&E (including process-related lessons) should be further examined and spurred across the sectors, institutions and countries of interest in an appealing format (e.g., sessions virtually organized for exchange of good practices). As CBHE traditionally includes several different institutions in the consortiums, intersectoral aspects of collaboration should be further promoted and understood as a unique added-value of the project.

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CHAPTER 8: EVALUATING QUALITY - CHOOSING AMONGST RESEARCH METHODS.

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Introduction

If you have been tasked with developing CPD for your organisation, you might already have some ideas about what to do. You work with preschool teachers every day. You speak with them, have lunch with them, line manage them, collaborate on teaching and projects with them. As such, topics, plans and outlines may be starting to take shape within your mind. However, hold those thoughts for now. One of the most significant errors people make when developing CPD is they assume they know everything about the learners and what they require to develop professionally. They approach CPD planning from their own perspective, drawing upon their career and experiences, and try to build CPD for others based on this. CPD developed in this way may indeed be of some benefit but if you want to take CPD to the next level, understanding what preschool teachers need and how you can best support them to grow, you need to do one key thing - ask them (Levesque, 2015). This will enable you to develop effective, enjoyable, beneficial CPD that will enable them to thrive. If you continue to ask them about their experiences, during and after the training, you will create a responsive and relevant CPD culture within your organisation. Within this chapter, I will walk you through the process of developing this form of CPD.

Identify your learners

Before you can begin developing responsive and relevant CPD, you need to establish who the CPD is responsive to and relevant for. The answer to this is obvious, surely? The CPD is for preschool teachers. However, are all preschool teachers the same? Of course not. There will be some preschool teachers with 20 years' experience and others with 6 months' experience. Some will work in urban inner cities; others will work in rural towns and villages. Some work with more diverse groups of children than others in relation to ethnicity, religion, social class and disability. Whilst you may have a broad topic that the CPD needs to focus upon, which may have been decided by management or policy, being conscious of learner diversity from the outset will always be helpful to you in considering the relevance of the CPD to different groups of preschool teachers and the specific contextual factors that the CPD will need to respond to.

Spend 15 minutes thinking about this question: Who is this CPD relevant for? What specific contextual factors, strengths and needs must the CPD respond to?

Know how to reach your learners

When you are clear about who your CPD is relevant for and responsive to, you need to identify a channel of communication through which you can engage with them. This is important as you will use this method or these methods to invite them to participate in the development of the CPD and provide feedback on it once it is completed. Is there a mailing list or an online group through a medium like Facebook or LinkedIn, that you can use to reach everyone? Does your communication method need to be different for the different groups you have identified above? What generally works well in terms of engaging with preschool teachers?

Spend 15 minutes thinking about these questions: How can I most effectively engage with these preschool teachers? What has worked well before? Do I need to develop different channels of communication for different groups?

Develop your survey

A survey is an effective way of establishing learner's current levels of development, what their needs are, what support they require to progress further and where they want their development to be once they have completed the CPD.

Within a survey, you can ask different types of question (Clark, Foster, Sloan and Bryman, 2021; Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2007). You can ask closed questions, where the answer is restricted to particular responses. For example, you might ask the question, "Have you ever used colouring worksheets with your class?", and provide the answer options of, "Yes" or "No". You can ask questions that enable you to position learners on a scale. For example, in response to the question, "How confident do you feel when delivering sessions on mathematics?", you can provide the options of "Completely confident", "Fairly confident", "Somewhat confident", "Slightly confident", or "Not confident at all". Surveys also enable you to ask *open ended questions*, in which you invite the learner to share their experiences or concerns with you. For example, "What worries you the most in terms of teaching science?", or, "What do you find most enjoyable about teaching English?". In order to develop the most effective CPD, which responds to the strengths and needs of learners, a combination of closed and open questions is required.

The closed questions can be quantified and are useful for giving a sense of scale across the cohort. To use the first example questions, “Have you ever used colouring worksheets with your class?”, “Yes” or “No”, you will know whether this is a teaching technique that your learners have experience of. It might be that 72% of learners have, and 28% of learners have not. To use the second example question, “How confident do you feel when delivering sessions on mathematics?”, “Completely confident”, “Fairly confident”, “Somewhat confident”, “Slightly confident”, or “Not confident at all”, you may learn that 56% of your cohort are “Not confident at all”. Both answers provide you with valuable information in terms of your learners’ strengths and needs, which in turn, will help you pitch the material at the appropriate level. You may even take the view that you need to develop two strands for the CPD, one for learners who are intermediate, and another for those who are advanced.

The open-ended questions cannot be quantified in the same way, but they will provide you with insights into their lived experiences of preschool teaching, which in turn will further help you develop relevant and responsive CPD. For example, you might ask your learners, “What do you find the most difficult in planning art sessions for your pupils?”. Some learners might respond that they struggle to source appropriate materials, which in turn will alert you to issues with budgets or suppliers. Others might say that there are varying levels of ability among their pupils in terms of practical art skills – for example, the ability to hold a paintbrush – which might highlight underlying developmental differences in some of your learner’s classes. All these insights will be vital in developing CPD that the learner feels speaks directly to them. When it comes to CPD, one size fits nobody. The more you can understand about the learners’ experiences, and formulate highly empathic CPD as a result, the greater the benefit will be for the learners and in turn, their pupils.

It is important to give your learners the opportunity to share their strengths, needs and wants with you through your survey. However, there is a fine balance to strike between obtaining sufficient information to shape your CPD offer and fatiguing your learners by asking them too many questions! Your learners are likely incredibly busy in their day-to-day jobs, therefore, you will need to ensure that the survey will take them no longer than around 15 minutes to complete.

Please see the Survey Builder Tool below to begin constructing your questions. There should be three clear sections – one collating information about your learners, one including closed questions and one including open-ended questions. The Survey Builder Tool includes examples and question prompts to get you thinking about what to include in your survey.

Learner information questions	Closed questions Choose between three and five questions and insert the topics you are interested in into the blanks.	Open questions Choose two or three questions and insert the topics you are interested in into the blanks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your job role? • How long have you been a preschool teacher? • Etc – other relevant questions you can ask to identify different groups of learner 	<p>How confident do you feel about _____?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely confident • Fairly confident • Somewhat confident • Slightly confident • Not at all confident <p>How worried / anxious are you about _____?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very anxious • Fairly anxious • Somewhat anxious • Slightly anxious • Not at all anxious <p>How would you rate your skills in _____?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Far below standards • Below standards • Meeting the standards • Above standards • Far above standards <p>How experienced would you consider yourself to be in _____?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very experienced • Fairly experienced • Somewhat experienced • Slightly experienced • Not at all experienced <p>How often do you use / do _____?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always • Often • Sometimes • Rarely • Never 	<p>What is your biggest challenge when it comes to _____?</p> <p>Or</p> <p>“The biggest challenge / difficulty I face in _____ is”</p> <p>“When it comes to _____, frustrates me the most.”</p> <p>Or</p> <p>What do you find most frustrating about _____?</p> <p>“In relation to _____, I am struggling with”</p> <p>Or</p> <p>What are you struggling with the most when it comes to _____?</p> <p>“What I have found most enjoyable about _____, is”</p> <p>Or</p> <p>What do you find most enjoyable about _____?</p>

	<p>How familiar are you with _____?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely familiar • Very familiar • Moderately familiar • Slightly familiar • Not at all familiar <p>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement, " _____ "?</p> <p>In order of importance, how would you rank _____, _____, and _____?</p>	
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Survey Builder Tool

Pilot and distribute your survey

Your survey is nearly ready to send out to your learners now, but before this, there is one more thing to do, a pilot test. This involves sending your survey to a small number of people who will be able to test it, identify any issues and resolve any problems. This will help you to ensure that your learners will understand the questions.

This might seem unnecessary, especially if you have used the Survey Builder and have a compact, easy-to-complete survey. However, it could be that you are using terminology that your learners may not be familiar with, and you will need to change the wording. It might also be that whilst your learners understand the questions, they might not think the questions you have asked are the most important questions when it comes to their CPD. In terms of *who* to send the survey to during the pilot phase, it is best to try and get some of the learners themselves to do it, rather than sending it to their line managers, or someone who used to be a pre-school teacher in the past. This will ensure that your survey will be effective with your target group and tailored to strengths, needs and wants among this group, rather than what they used to be, or what others think they are.

Furthermore, the pilot test is an effective way of finding out whether your distribution method is going to work or not. Earlier, in the section, *'Know how to reach your learners'*, I advised you to identify the best way of getting in touch with your learners. You might have decided that using an existing email list would work best. However, the pilot test might reveal that response rates are low and response time is slow. Perhaps your learners are overwhelmed with urgent emails, and your email about the survey is not high on their priority list. In this case, you might want to explore alternative options, for example taking hard copies of the survey to a reg-

ular meeting or event where preschool teachers gather and asking for 15-minutes within the schedule for learners to complete the survey.

The pilot test is essentially a sense-check and will save you time in the long run, so do not miss out this important stage! Once you have carried out the pilot test and made the necessary alterations to the survey, it's time to send it out to all your learners. Ensure that you provide a deadline for the completion of the survey, clear details about its purpose and how learner's data will be used (Israel and Hay, 2006), and contact details for any questions or queries. It is also a good idea to schedule reminders when the deadline date is approaching to alert learners, so they have sufficient time to complete the survey.

Analysing Your Survey

As soon as your survey responses start coming in, you need to be ready to collate them. You will need to take different approaches when analysing the findings from the closed questions and open questions. Let's take a look at each of them now.

A basic spreadsheet is a useful way of analysing responses to the closed questions if you have a small number (less than 50) survey responses and / or have distributed your surveys in hard copy. If you have an electronic survey and / or a greater number of responses, you should consider using an electronic survey analysis. Most academic and commercial survey providers include an analysis package within their survey platforms, which allow you to explore responses collectively and produce charts and graphs. If you want to go into further depth, analysing more than one thing at a time – for example, investigating whether there is an association between how confident your learners feel with maths and how often they use a particular teaching tool – you will need to use a data analysis package like SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM Corp, 2021).

If you are developing your own spreadsheet for a smaller number of surveys, you need to give each survey its own reference number and enter the data from that survey into its own row in the spreadsheet. This is to ensure that you can trace each answer back to individual surveys. You should then look down the columns and count the number of responses underneath each option within each question. Please see the example spreadsheet below.

You can begin to make sense of the data by looking at the totals and asking questions like, “Why is this answer more frequent than this other answer?”. What do the numbers tell you? What is their significance? What patterns are there, if there are multiple choice questions, what areas have the most positive and most negative responses?

What does this suggest in relation to your CPD offer? What do people feel most confident with? What do they feel least confident with? What do they have experience of? This will help you to pitch your CPD at an appropriate level, as noted earlier. For example, if you discover that most respondents feel ‘somewhat confident’ with teaching maths, whilst a minority feel ‘not at all confident’, you know that there is room for boosting confidence across the board. Some people will need more support than others, so you might arrange people into groups and ensure that each group contains someone who feels more confident than others to act as a guide or mentor. You might then produce some charts or graphs to represent the findings for each question.

Survey reference number	Question 1 How long have you been a preschool teacher?			Question 2 How experienced would you consider yourself to be in teaching physical education to preschool children?					Question 3 How confident would you feel about teaching children's yoga to your class?				
	Less than 1 year	1-3 years	More than 3 years	Very	Fairly	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all	Completely	Fairly	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all
001	X					X							X
002		X			X							X	
003		X				X						X	
004	X						X						X
005		X		X					X				
006			X		X					X			
007			X	X						X			
008	X						X					X	
Totals	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	0	1	2	0	3	2

Example Spreadsheet

When it comes to the open questions, there are several ways to analyse the textual data obtained. For example, word frequency involves identifying words and terms that are commonly used by learners, suggesting that those words and terms are important for them and should be considered in the development of the CPD. Say, for instance, that out of 25 responses to the open-ended question, “What are you most worried about when it comes to teaching yoga to preschool children?”, 17 learners used the term “injury”. This would alert you to the fact that injury is an important consideration for most your learners. You would need to look more closely at the responses to ascertain exactly what was worrying them. Injury to themselves? Injury to the children? Both? Was this informed by a particular view of what yoga is? Is this based in reality or is it a perception or fear? Are your learners worried about aggravating an old injury of their own through doing yoga with the children? Are your learners worried about children with physical disabilities in terms of their susceptibility to injury?

Going through the responses in detail like this is known as *thematic analysis* (Braun and Clarke, 2013). You are looking for recurring issues and topics that emerge within the textual data. You could create a table or grid grouping similar comments together or using a highlighter pen or virtual highlighter, using different colours for different themes. Once you have completed this for all your responses, it is worth asking a colleague to give you a second opinion – would they also have created the themes that you have done from the text you analysed? You can use some of the things people have said as illustrative quotes for the CPD training itself – just ensure that you have learner’s permission to use their comments in the training through providing clear details about the purpose of the survey and how learner’s data would be used. Also ensure that the learner cannot be identified through an illustrative quote, so you may have to take out any identifying details or anonymise their contributions.

Delving further into the detail that learners provide to open-ended questions gives you insights into the nuances that are difficult to access via closed-questions, so take the time to go through them in detail. This type of analysis is known as *thematic analysis*, whereby you look across the responses to identify common themes that emerge from the responses of different learners.

Design Your CPD Curriculum

By now, you will have some valuable insights into your learners’ strengths, needs and wants and you can start to draft an outline curriculum for your CPD based on this. The content of the CPD will be dependent on the topic you have been asked to provide training on, but there are some general features that all CPD should include. There should be a clear *transformation statement*, which sets out the intention of the CPD in terms of who it is designed to help, where they are at now, where they will be at the end of the training, and what this will enable them to do. For example:

This CPD will help preschool teachers go from being anxious about teaching yoga because of concerns about injury in themselves and children, to foundational instructors with knowledge of key poses who feel confident in their practice and knowledge of physiology so that they can broaden their physical education skillset and portfolio, giving their classes fun and unique experiences of physical education.

Spend 15 minutes writing out a transformation statement for your learners, filling in the blanks in the following passage:

This CPD will help _____ go from _____ to _____ so that they can _____.

There should also be a clear outcomes framework for the CPD, identifying what changes or benefits you anticipate, and the inputs, activities and outputs that will be needed to achieve the outcomes. See the example below.

Outcomes	Inputs	Activities	Outputs
Benefits or changes for learners that result from the CPD	Resources allocated to the CPD	What the CPD provides learners to achieve its outcomes	Quantifiable, tangible things that will be produced as a result of the CPD
<p>Knowledge of five basic yoga poses</p> <p>Knowledge of how to teach yoga poses to preschool children</p> <p>All learners feeling at least 'slightly confident' in teaching yoga to preschool children</p>	<p>Fee for children's yoga instructor – one day</p> <p>Starter yoga pack for each learner – mat and blocks x 8</p> <p>Hire of gymnasium for one day</p> <p>Yoga posters for classrooms x 8</p> <p>Lunch and refreshments</p>	<p>Beginner yoga class for all learners 0930 – 1030</p> <p>Reflections group activity following beginner yoga class</p> <p>Lecture on children's physiology as relevant to yoga</p> <p>Groupwork – in pairs, design a 5-minute yoga class for preschool children</p> <p>Demonstration of 5-minute yoga classes x 4 plus feedback</p> <p>Yoga lesson planning – 1 hour</p>	<p>Four lesson plans for preschool yoga that all learners can use</p> <p>Summary sheets with key points for each learner</p>

Develop and Distribute Evaluation Surveys

Once you have delivered the CPD, you should set aside time after the session or programme to encourage learners to fill in a short survey about their experiences of the CPD. Here you will be evaluating the CPD – forming a judgement about the value of the training for your learners (Green and South, 2006). You may want to administer these surveys straight after the CPD before the learners leave, or you may want to do this a few days or a week after the CPD. The benefits of administering the surveys straight away include a higher response rate. The benefits of leaving it a few days or a week include the fact that learners will have had the time to reflect upon their experiences and identify benefits that might not have been immediately

obvious to them on the day of the CPD (Ellis, 2005). Use your own judgement to decide when would be the most appropriate time to administer the surveys. In terms of what questions to ask your learners, these should be directly related to the outcomes the CPD intended to achieve. In relation to the above example, you might develop the evaluation questionnaire below. By asking about people’s feelings before and after the training, this type of survey helps you to capture distance travelled in terms of the value that the CPD has added (Friedman, 2006), as well as feedback for future iterations of the CPD. This can also be helpful for your own monitoring and performance requirements, for example, “I developed a CPD in yoga teaching for preschool teachers, which saw 85% of learners go from not at all confident to very confident in teaching yoga”. Use the responses to these questionnaires to produce a short report about the CPD and to identify aspects of the training that could be enhanced for future learners.

1) How familiar were you with the following five yoga poses before the training?					
	Very familiar	Fairly familiar	Somewhat familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar
Downward dog			x		
Cobra					x
Child’s Pose				x	
Mountain Pose					x
Cat Cow				x	

2) How familiar are you with the following five yoga poses now, after the training?					
	Very familiar	Fairly familiar	Somewhat familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar
Downward dog	x				
Cobra			x		
Child’s Pose		x			
Mountain Pose		x			
Cat Cow		x			

2) How confident did you feel before the training in terms of teaching yoga to preschool children?				
Very confident	Fairly confident	Somewhat confident	Slightly confident	Not at all confident
				x

3) How confident do you feel now in terms of teaching yoga to preschool children?				
Very confident	Fairly confident	Somewhat confident	Slightly confident	Not at all confident
	x			

4) What did you find most helpful in the training?
<i>The lesson on physiology reassured me as I was worried about the children getting injured</i>

5) In what way could the training have been better?
<i>We needed more time to design our 5-minute yoga classes, an hour would have been good.</i>

6) Do you have any other comments or observations about the training?
<i>It would be great as a piece of online learning.</i>

Conclusion

I hope you have finished this chapter excited to engage with your learners in building a CPD offer that's tailored to their strengths, needs and wants. The approach to CPD we have explored is a strategy you can apply to any kind of CPD you develop, with any group of learners. The core element of this strategy is about asking. Keep asking people what they want. Keep asking people how they feel. Keep asking people what is worrying them. Keep asking people how you can help them. Then listen carefully to the answers that people provide. Ensure that your learners feel heard and valued. This is the key to developing responsive, relevant CPD that is an investment in those learners, rather than something they feel they 'just have to get done'. In turn, this builds a unique, learner-led culture of CPD within your organisation and a community of people with a commitment to keep educating themselves.

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CHAPTER 9: EVALUATING THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING KEY AT CONSORTIUM PARTNERS USING QUALITATIVE METHODS.

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Introduction

This Chapter provides an example of a staff experience-centric evaluation of the development of the Teacher Training Centre at the Faculty of Philosophy, the University of Montenegro. The chapter is designed to inspire others to use diverse research methods to gather staff views and evaluate their own CPD initiatives. The chapter is designed to enable others HEIs to be able to follow the best practice and learning generated from our work with the KEY consortium. We have opted for a case study approach to do this and collected data through surveys and in-depth interviews with professors at the University of Montenegro and below this data gained from colleagues at the University involved with the KEY project, is presented and discussed. To provide background and context, the Teacher Training Centre was established at the Faculty of Philosophy in 2021. Concurrently, cooperation was established with the Bureau for Education Services, which was aimed at implementing teacher training programmes accredited by the Montenegrin National Education Council. Through the inter-institutional and transnational cooperation of partner institutions on the KEY project, teachers from the Faculty of Philosophy created new training programmes for preschool and primary school teachers.

Examination of the HEI global landscape in relation to Preschool teacher training demonstrates that many countries have already established CPD teacher training centres at higher education institutions. In doing so, they have ensured the quality and continuity of professional development (CPD) of teachers who were initially educated as undergraduates at those institutions and have graduated into professional practice. The creation of the Teacher Training Centre at the Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić was based on the recommendations of the project partner institutions from Slovenia, Romania, Hungary and United Kingdom (Mićanović, 2019) When designing the training programmes, the authors were guided by the principle of the teachers needs and the criteria for satisfying Bloom’s Taxonomy in the learning process (Afflerbach, Cho, Kim, Crassas and Doyle, 2013; Jukić, 1997; Kadum,

2005; Lee, Kim, and Yoon, 2015; McTigue and Flowers, 2011; Näsström, 2009).

The data presented here were gathered through surveys to staff and qualitative individual interviews/group interviews and other informal methods used to garner experiences, views and understandings about the CPD Centre, its work and achievements so far.

Responses From KEY Stakeholders: general knowledge and awareness of the KEY Project

We asked UoM Faculty professors, “what do you know about the KEY project that has been implemented at the Faculty of Philosophy since 2019,” and received a range of answers that are offered in precis below:

“A comprehensive approach was used in project conception. It is particularly significant for the development of the Study Programme for Preschool Education, which has been improved in terms of content and format and for the profile of enrolled students, as well as of the high school students interested in the preschool programme. New knowledge and new content in initial and in-service training are extremely important for the improvement of the disciplines and study fields of early childhood education and care”.

“The project strongly contributed to infrastructural functionalization of the environment at the Faculty, especially for students at the Preschool Department, who, in addition to the most modern computer equipment, have the opportunity to use original Montessori didactic materials. For the first time, we offered training opportunities to staff employed in educational institutions, which bridged the gap between of initial education and continuous in-service training”.

“I understand that the goals of the KEY project concern the improvement of the continuous professional development of preschool teachers. In this regard, and in cooperation at the level of a consortium consisting of a large number of faculties and colleges for preschool teacher education, new seminars/training programmes for preschool teachers were developed and accredited. In addition, the Teacher Training Centre was established at the Faculty of Philosophy, but it will have a somewhat broader purpose, so it does not only concern in-service training of preschool teachers, but of all teachers. For that purpose, a classroom has been equipped with high-quality computer equipment and some basic sensorimotor Montessori material, as well as other didactic materials”.

“The KEY project is related to the improvement of the preschool systems ... in the institutions participating in the project. The Teacher Training Centre was opened at the Faculty of Philosophy, and the training programmes were adopted”.

What can be seen in the responses above is an understanding of how the new Centre ‘bridged a gap’ and enabled new possibilities for development for those in-service.

What Innovations did Implementing the KEY CPD Centre/ Hub Bring?

Respondents were next asked: “How did the KEY project contribute to the institution, what innovations did this project bring, especially in relation to the development of the Faculty?”:

“The Faculty has benefited from the procurement of equipment, the establishment of the Centre for the training of teaching staff, the inclusion of teachers from partner educational institutions in the implementation of training programmes (programmes accredited in the Catalogue of Teacher Training Programmes) designed by the professors from the Faculty of Philosophy”.

“In addition to strengthening teamwork among engaged professors from the Faculty of Philosophy, and cooperation with other project participants, the KEY project updated the topic of CPD and contributed to a better and more comprehensive understanding of it. Several new trainings for preschool teachers were developed during the project. The value of the equipment and didactic materials obtained through the project is not negligible, because the environment itself has a stimulating effect on students and teachers and enables more interesting, interactive and modern lectures and exercises”.

“A core benefit of involvement in KEY, for students and teachers, is the establishment of the Teacher Training Centre, which is equipped with all the necessary didactic and manipulative materials required. Also, the laboratory/classroom, equipped with functional equipment, including musical instruments, was intensively used during the pandemic of COVID 19, as it is possible to organize various forms of interactive work within its space. [After the amphitheatre, the Centre is the largest classroom at the Faculty].

“Multidimensional benefits are reflected in connecting practitioners at the local and regional level, creating and offering professional development programmes in the areas of preschool education that were in deficit, supporting professors to create professional development programmes themselves and identifying the Fac-

ulty as a place for continuous professional development”.

To summarise the findings above, we can see the new Centre was noted to address deficits in existing systems; a place that offers the chance to upskill staff beyond initial training and to respond to emerging skills and competencies requirements as the profession changes.

In the course of “discussing the current study programme and its contribution to the development of the Teacher Training Centre”, the respondents described “their experiences in establishing this Centre”.

“The professional judgement of the Faculty teaching staff provided a basis for the creation of the Teacher Training Centre, whilst adhering to the key professional standards for preschool teachers. The latest pedagogical knowledge in the field of early development, childhood theories, curriculum models, but also the contextual needs of our practitioners directed our team to design the aforementioned Centre as a focal point of infrastructural (spatial and personnel) and programme ideas with a very clear vision. The centre became a meeting place for students, Faculty professors and preschool teachers who work in preschool institutions. At the same time, this is a pioneering model of establishing a new “tangible” continuity between faculties, schools and policymakers, primarily the Bureau for Education Services, which was also our partner in the KEY project”.

“The constitution of the Centre required the overcoming of many administrative barriers (in the sense that state Faculties in Montenegro do not have the right to form centres/institutes as legal entities), and it was done through a series of meetings with the management of the Faculty and the Rectorate. As for the trainings at the Centre, all the professors engaged in the KEY project were responsible for their implementation. In addition, teaching assistants participated in the preparation of the synopsis, activity plan, etc., so that the trainings were a great opportunity for everyone to improve their professional capacities - students, assistants, and trainers. The evaluation of the training by all groups of participants showed that it was an extremely successful education regarding contents, methods and forms of work”.

“The Teacher Training Centre was formed according to the standard procedures provided for the establishment of such organizational units. The project team lead, Prof. Mićanović, wrote a detailed and precisely explained proposal for the establishment of the Centre and sent it to the Faculty Council for consideration. Council members, after a constructive discussion, accepted the proposal for the establishment of the Centre. In the further steps that took place at the University and in the communication with the Bureau for Education Services, a successful model was found according to which the work of the Centre did not interfere with the work of the Bureau”.

“The sets of founding documents, including a decision and Rule book regulating the work of the Centres along with the provision of adequate space, inventory and administrative staff were created and formally adopted by the Faculty Council.”

It can be seen that inclusion of a range of stakeholders and staff, was vital to the setting up of the Centre. This allowed different voices to be heard in the process and led to a much richer development of the KEY project initiative. At the same time, creating a rule book and the rubric for the Centre, enabled all to be aware of its purpose, how to get involved and what was expected of them.

Examining attitudes, “regarding the development of the Teacher Training Centre at the Faculty, and its effectiveness as a tool for linking with teachers from practice”, we received the following answers from colleagues:

“Yes, we expect a lot from cooperation with kindergartens, schools, and finally, I think that through this immediate exchange, we can get a new quality of training within the CPD”.

“The establishment of the Teacher Training Centre within the Faculty of Philosophy is one of the powerful levers for the development of the offered professional development programmes for preschool/teachers”.

“I believe that the Teacher Training Centre can have a double cohesive role and better connect not only preschool teachers, but also other teachers with the faculty they graduated from. Besides, it can positively influence greater synergy between the Faculty and the Bureau for Education Services. The current situation of insufficient inter-institutional connections certainly has negative consequences for the entire education system, so I believe that places like the Centre can bring together practitioners and theorists in education”.

“This is a great and innovative practice. Everything in one place that is needed for quality training, and the Faculty of Philosophy eventually becomes a place of lifelong learning, which was not the practice until now”.

It can be seen above that there was excitement in the comments of respondents, a recognition of the potential and future opportunities. The idea of creating one point – a hub – of activity for lifelong learning was seen as of great benefit.

Skills and Knowledge

We received interesting answers to the question, “What skills and knowledge help you in creating a professional development programme, and what knowledge and skills teachers in practice should improve?”

“Teachers from the Study Program for Preschool Education designed a set of CPD programmes, which were accredited by the National Education Council (through the procedures of the Bureau for Education Services) and included in the Catalogue of Teacher Training Programmes. These are diverse programmes that should contribute to the improvement of the quality of preschool practice, so there are training models in the field of methodological skills and strategies for working with children, cooperation with the family and the local community, but also very important methodological and research guidelines that should help practitioners implement activities, evaluate the achievements and adapt educational process, making it more child-centred.”

“I have acquire knowledge over many decades in the fields of teaching methods, pedagogy, sociology and educational management that have contributed to the development of my training skills, of which I would particularly like to emphasize: communication skills, methodical competence in creating activities and content, balancing content in relation to theoretical and the practical part, knowledge of a wide range of forms and methods of work, knowledge of andragogic approaches in work, initiation of critical thinking during work, etc. Preschool/teachers must be provided with professional support in their work. It is necessary to encourage them to get introduced to contemporary methodical approaches and skill development, but also to the practice of self-monitoring and self-reflection”.

“I have chosen the areas that are methodical in nature, and the entire methodical system of knowledge deals with answering the question: How? Therefore, according to the field of teaching and research, I am completely focused on the processes of teaching, learning, training, etc. When it comes to teachers in practice, I think that two topics or two groups of skills that should be developed are of particular priority. The first concerns all that is necessary for the postulation of the teacher as a reflective practitioner, who continuously critically reflects on her/his practice, changes, corrects, improves it...according to objectively observed factors. The second refers to the development of a teacher as a researcher - too many decisions in education are made without valid empirical data and based on personal impressions. Therefore, I believe that it is particularly important to create better conditions for education research, which - among other things - implies more active researchers”.

“It is an excellent solution to have a person/people at the Centre who can provide support in development of teacher training programmes, in terms of the methodolo-

gy that will be used. Namely, many practitioners do not know how to transfer their experience through the creation and implementation of training programmes, so the support of the expert team, experienced practitioners, is welcome”.

In developing the new Centre the initiative built on existing skills to broaden knowledge about the need to be evidenced-based and reflective. Provision of dedicated staff, focused on knowledge transfer and how to develop the CPD, also build capacity and skills in the wider staff group.

Scope of Implementation

In order to examine the effects of teacher training on teaching practice, we asked the respondents about their “experience and professional judgements on the scope of implementation of the newly acquired skills and knowledge in practice”.

“Based on the training evaluation, and “homework” teachers sent after the workshops, we can see certain developments and insights of the participants about their own practice, which are starting points for modification in teaching practice, as well as the initiation of small research for the purpose of more dedicated work in improvement of the educational process.”

“During the trainings, the teachers show a high degree of enthusiasm for the application of the newly learned strategies in the classroom/workroom, and I believe the quality of the application of the learned in the real - working environment is good in most cases.”

“I don’t think that innovations and changes reach practice quickly and easily. On the contrary, sometimes it takes a long time for even the smallest change to take root in practice ... in classrooms. Of course, teachers learn continuously - maybe not as much as we plan and want - but they certainly learn. The fact is that their learning differed from the teacher students learning, so, among other things, they learn faster and more efficiently the procedures that facilitate their tasks and solve problems. Their learning focus is not theory, but almost exclusively practice, and therefore - according to my experience - interactive training suits them exclusively, while the teaching part of the work should be reduced to a minimum.”

“Although there is always a small number of those who are not interested, I think that many teachers attended the trainings at the Centre because of the new programmes offer”.

The development of the Centre was reported to be motivating to many staff and to learners, giving them a chance to undertake trainings that brought experiential and self-reflective development opportunities. A focus on applied, real world learning was particularly beneficial for CPD with graduates already in practice.

Meeting Learning Needs Effectively

Examining the quality of the offered training programmes, we asked respondents “To what extent the professional development programmes you organize meet the teachers’ needs?” Responses included:

“The results of the needs assessments were in line with the contextual requirements, but we can talk about real advances in quality improvements after some time and upon methodologically organized and conducted research reviews.

Judging from the evaluation results after the trainings, teachers were extremely satisfied with the provided training programmes.”

“I exclusively choose topics for seminars according to their relevance for the current developments in the educational system, directly related to the needs of teachers, because I think that otherwise no one would be interested in attending seminars. In this sense, I believe that the seminars we organize meet the teacher’s needs”.

“The needs of the practitioners were fully met. We used the necessary didactic materials, which made the training more engaging and more interactive”.

Comparing Previous Practice, Pre-KEY

We have also examined the previous practice in terms of the faculty’s provision of support to teachers who have completed their studies and are working, asking respondents: “whether, to what extent and in what way your institution has so far helped teachers in improving the quality of their work?”

“The Faculty of Philosophy, within its nine study programmes, directs students to teaching practice, nurturing at the same time the scientific and research dimension. Consequently, we try to refine the existing study programmes and adapt them to teaching practice, modern scientific achievements, the current global, but also traditional and cultural context. Through continuous cooperation with all educational institutions and strengthening the practical dimension of the program (25% practice), we tried to

contribute to improving the quality of teachers' work in all fields - methodical, methodological, research”.

“Since 2006, with the establishment of the system of CPD of teachers at national level, every teacher has had the opportunity to design the training programme and apply for the competition for Catalogue of teacher training programmes. Where they met the criteria specified in the competition, the offered programmes were supported by the meritorious body – the Bureau for Education Services. The opening of the Center made it possible for training to take place in the Faculty building, which provided excellent working conditions for all teachers and trainers, but above all I would like to highlight its importance in enabling teachers at the Faculty to work on programmes for further education of preschool/teachers in a systematic and organized manner. Thus, one academic institution actively participates in the development and implementation of lifelong learning for all teachers in the educational system of Montenegro”.

“Before the establishment of the Teacher Training Centre, the Faculty did not provide support to teachers from practice in terms of upgrading their competencies”.

Comparing pre and post-KEY activity, the Faculty has become a centre point for practice development, offering ongoing, lifelong learning opportunities, based on professional and learner needs.

Staff Sense of Contribution to the Centre and Self-Efficacy in the New CPD Focus
Investigating the individual contribution to the creation of trainings for teachers, we asked the following: “In what way can you contribute to the development of the Centre, have you created any training programme for teachers and how much do you take into account the needs of teachers when creating a training programme?”

“I shared all my knowledge, and especially my training skills, to develop and provide permanent education programmes, based on the research of teachers' needs, but also by offering some additional ones such as: against prejudices and stereotypes, reading and writing for critical thinking and media literacy in kindergarten/school, etc”.

“I contributed to the work of the Centre by creating two professional training programmes related to Montessori pedagogy in preschool education, both programmes will be implemented. In addition to those programmes, I am the co-author of several other training programmes, that will be implemented through the Teacher Training Centre”.

“I participated in the creation of the programmes, and I could provide support in writing the programmes in future”.

It is clear that individual staff, and the staff group as a whole, felt positive that they had gained skills and increased their CPD course design and development capacity through involvement in the KEY project opportunities.

A Critical Review of the Implementation of the KEY Project

At the very end of the research about staff views of the KEY project and its process, we asked a generic question about reviewing, critically, its implementation.

“The Covid crisis caused certain difficulties in the implementation of the KEY project in various fields, such as the implementation of seminars, study visits, visits to preschool institutions. The project coordinator for Montenegro, prof. Mićanović was extremely dedicated, often taking on numerous and demanding activities. The Bureau for Education Services For the first time in this project format (Erasmus+), the partner was, which was a very useful experience. Since we had experience with this type of projects, it the inclusion of representatives of the Bureau for Education Services turned out to be a far more functional and efficient. Finally, I can freely point out that I have very positive impressions about the project”.

“Just as the whole world was affected by the pandemic, so the KEY project could not avoid certain shifts and the delay in implementation of some of the activities. On the other hand, we have had several online meetings and exchange of experiences, and the colleagues from Slovenia were the strongest initiators of these online events. The study visit to GB was the most complicated (due to the rigorous and complicated procedures for obtaining a GB visa) and with the greatest degree of uncertainty. This especially applies to finances, because the available budget in the project intended for this activity was not sufficient. In the context of the above, the study visit to the Birmingham City University was burdened with evident inflation, and the delay in receiving GB visas”.

“I don’t have anything specific that I could point out as a criticism, because it is necessary to take into account all the circumstances surrounding the project during its execution, the pandemic of the COVID-19 in particular. Despite such factors, the project was successfully implemented”.

“Everything was excellent, and my impressions are positive”.

There were mixed views on the implementation as a project as a whole. There was a general agreement that KEY was successful in positively achieving setting up the CPD hub in Montenegro, in the form of the Centre. However, along the

way Covid-19, travel and funding problems made things difficult at times. Overall though, respondents felt that much good had come from the initiative.

Conclusions

Based on the recommendations from current early years and Preschool Teacher Training practice, which were gathered by the partner institutions from Slovenia, Hungary, Romania and United Kingdom, the Teacher Training Centre was created at the Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić, Montenegro. The contribution of the KEY project to preschool teachers' continuous professional development through the training events at the Teacher Training Centre, is multidimensional. As shown above, staff reported that they were pleased with the results of the KEY project and its impact in creating a base for the continuous professional development of preschool teachers at the Faculty: the initiation of new activities; the development of the Center for the improvement and revitalization of the professional competencies of preschool teachers; the creation of new training programmes; the intensification of cooperation with the Bureau for Education Services all had positively influenced the promotion of the preschool teacher profession in society. Evaluating the initiative overall, using survey and interview data, it can be seen that a new, applied, CPD learner-focused Center has been realised, which will ensure more positive developments in professional learning in future.

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Epilogue

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This book that you have just read, and hopefully enjoyed, could not have been made without the international partnerships that have been forged over the last few years across the KEY Project. In an increasingly globalised world, it becomes clear that it is our duty as global educational professionals and policy stakeholders that if we can help each other to grow, then we should. The project came together with an objective of improving the capacity for CPD for Early Years Educators across Serbia and Montenegro through the setting-up of innovative CPD hubs, with colleagues from the Pre-School Teacher Training College in Novi Sad, leading at the helm. Each group has made vital contributions towards the KEY Project, and the text you hold in your hands is just a part of the results of four years of tireless, dedicated, research and knowledge exchange. It would have been three, save for the massive disruption of the COVID-19 Pandemic, which simultaneously limiting travel options and increased the workloads of educators everywhere. The KEY Project, however, prevailed, which if you consider that for a moment, it is a positive comment on what people can do when brought together with a unified goal, even when huge obstacles are placed in their way.

The second book, which we urge you to read, offers reflective accounts from many of the consortium partners of KEY. By studying both texts, we hope to deliver a holistic picture of the ways in which CPD capacities can be uplifted in Preschool teacher training contexts and beyond. We hope you have seen how our processes around quality and evaluation can be replicated for your CPD initiatives and new projects. The KEY consortium team hope that this inspires you towards the design, development and implementation of your own initiatives, whilst our project provides guidelines and lessons learned to ensure your success.

NOTES

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