



Ensuring Warm and
Inclusive Transitions

MAY 2020: INTRANS GENERAL FRAMEWORK



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InTrans General Framework:

What are Warm and Inclusive Transitional
Inclusive Practices Across the Early Years



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1. Why this document?

The InTrans project aims at influencing the systemic conditions needed in order to disseminate and implement good transitional practices on a wider scale. The ultimate goal is to ensure that more children and families, especially the most vulnerable ones, can benefit from transitional warm and inclusive practices.

More specifically, this Erasmus+ project aims at disseminating at policy and training level the 'lesson learned' from other approaches/projects/researches developed by the partners.

For our consortium it is important that we keep on discussing what are aspects of good transitional practices in terms of being warm and inclusive for a diversity of children, families and local communities. For this purpose, we have started to develop an overall open framework that serves as a working document that all partners can change, add, work with throughout the project period. This overall framework is based on theoretical insights on transitions and on already developed existing (but rather ad hoc) practices in our countries that make a difference for children and families.

In this document we mainly refer to the START project¹ (in which VBJK, the University of Bologna and ERI were involved – besides the Penn Green Center in the UK), but also to the experiences/literature of the other partners of InTrans, and to international references/approaches related to transitions across the early years.

2. General Framework

Transitions across the home environment, early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings and compulsory school education (CSE) mark significant changes in the life of children and their families and communities (Balduzzi et al., 2019). Positive experiences of transition between educational levels can be a critical factor for children's wellbeing and for their future success and development, while negative experiences can have lasting challenges leading to poorer educational performance, especially for children with disadvantaged background (Dumcius et al., 2014). Adopting a more unified approach to caring and learning (educare) across educational settings in order to sustain continuity of children's experiences over time, can significantly improve children's educational achievement and socio-emotional development. In turn promoting inter-institutional professional learning communities of ECEC and primary school staff as well as involving parents in the transition process are considered to be key factors in ensuring successful transitions (Brooker, 2008).

Each educational system is characterised by institutional splits. When institutional splits occur, this can differ from country to country. Some countries have a unitary ECEC system in which integrated services exist from birth until CSE, while other countries have a split ECEC system in which there is an additional transition between childcare services for the youngest and preschool provision for the older children. All EU MS have an institutional split between ECEC and CSE/primary school education. In countries with an ECEC split system, preschools are often located on the same sites of primary

¹ For more information about the START project and its results, please check: <http://start.pei.si/results/>

schools. Whereas, in countries where ECEC is provided within a unitary ECEC system, services from birth to CSE tend to share the same ground and to be separate from primary schools².

In both cases, however, EU Member States share a common challenge which is linked to the institutionalised nature of transitions. In fact, discontinuity in the way structural organisation, pedagogical approaches and educational practices are displayed across childcare and preschool settings – as well as between ECEC and CSE settings – set up additional hurdles especially for children and families from disadvantaged background (Peters, 2010). For some children the experience of their transition can be critically important in terms of their future learning, education, and life chances due to them having a special educational need or/and disability or because they live in families characterised by complexity or who experience poverty, socio-cultural disadvantage and marginalisation. The START literature review identifies two different perspectives from which transitions are studied and that deeply affect how educational practices are implemented in ECEC and school. The first perspective focuses on transition in term of enhancing children's (pre)school readiness making, while the second one relates to supporting schools to be child ready in a diverse societal context:

- 1) Due to an increasing schoolification tendency, ECEC professionals and primary school teachers feel more top down pressure to prepare the children well for what comes next. This forces teachers to work with practice that is focused on making children school ready. In that perspective little, if any, attention is paid to the educational, caring and pedagogical needs of the child; the emphasis is firmly upon classroom management meaning the ability to control the children's behaviour and provide structured teacher-led sessions (Bennett, 2013). However, the idea that children need to be made school ready is jeopardising especially children and families with disadvantaged background. Findings from research carried out in the EU context seems to be in line with international research pointing out how implicit ideas and practices of readying children for (pre)schools is paradoxically contributing to marginalize and stigmatize children considered disadvantaged (Lehrer et al., 2017). Consequently (pre-)school readiness ideas are detrimental for the social inclusion of socially vulnerable children. Due to a lack of dialogue between ECEC centres (childcare and pre-school) and primary schools, transitional experiences of children and families are not in the spotlight and there is little sense of problem ownership on the problematic experiences of children and families during these institutional splits. Notwithstanding, the '*school readiness*' approach still has an influence on policy debates within EU Member States.
- 2) More recent thinking about transition to (pre-) school recognises that readiness does not reside solely in the child, but rather reflects the environments in which children find themselves (Dumcius, 2014). In this sense, the children-ready school approach has been increasingly gaining ground backed by research (Tarrant, Kagan, 2010). Within this view, the role of (pre)primary institutions in receiving the children coming from settings within to the earlier level of the education system is seen to be an important factor in ensuring children's positive experiences of transition. By stressing both the role of early childhood

² For Slovenia this is partly true: the system also foresees 'kindergartens connected to primary schools, where kindergarten and primary school operate under the same administration and often have a shared vision.

and primary school institutions during transition, more focus is given to the equal responsibility of both ECEC and CSE systems in enabling smooth pedagogical transition.

- By stressing both the role of early childhood and primary school institutions during transition, more focus is given to the equal responsibility of both ECEC and CSE systems in enabling smooth pedagogical transition. In this sense, the children-ready school approach emphasizes the necessity to empower all the actors involved. This means giving particular importance to negotiated values and pedagogical assumptions of families and professionals, to recognize and to enhance the children's agency, to overcome a top-down model of curriculum and to develop a co-constructed and shared one. The studies, in this perspective, underline the importance of the educational contexts valuing multiple ways of learning, not only teacher directed but indeed co-constructed by all actors involved, starting from the children's needs and interests. Another strength is related to a teacher's team work seen as extended collegiality, to enhance and support teachers' shared reflection on practice and educational approaches (Rantavuori, Kupila & Karila 2017).

In the children-ready schools' approach, different researches play particular attention to children and parents from marginalised groups. The key question is how pre-schools and primary schools can be supported to deal with a diversity of children, families and local communities while resisting the homogenization of the school population.

Through the START project, partners experienced that institutional splits are actually an opportunity to think outside the institutional and cultural box: by collaborative learning and confrontation of childcare workers, pre-school teachers, and primary school teachers, traditional child- and family images were deconstructed and pedagogical practices were reinvented in line with the needs of children, families and communities in diverse societies.

This shows how systematic change, even in an increasing international context of schoolification, is possible by taking small steps in which relationship, care, trust and community are considered key levers. This is possible by:

- constantly engaging with children and families to keep us focused on the issues that matter to them in transitions;
- constantly supporting and connecting practitioners from different settings and countries in dealing with the challenges that such a transformative process implies;
- investing in recursive interaction between research and experimentation, between theory, policy and practice.

3. Supporting social Inclusion through warm transitions

The idea that children need to be made school ready is especially jeopardising disadvantaged children and families, as demonstrated in the following examples:

- In ECEC split systems there is an extra institutional split between childcare/home environment and the preschools. Recurrent views of preschool teachers in these countries is that young children between two and a half and four years old are often not yet able to 'really learn' because of their physical and emotional caring needs (e.g. eating, sleeping,



going to the toilet, emotional comfort,...). Therefore, it is often believed that children need to be made preschool ready beforehand, in the home environment or in the childcare services. Yet, often in these systems childcare is not accessible enough for families living in poverty and children from migrant backgrounds. Different studies in these countries demonstrated how middleclass children tend to experience easier transitions compared to disadvantaged children and families as the implicit norm is that a child has already attended childcare.

- In both the transition to preschool and primary school, teachers expressed concerns that children, especially from migrant backgrounds, may not be fluent in the language spoken in the host country. Indeed, a common teachers' bias is that children are language poor' or 'have a language delay' and as a consequence sometimes these children are perceived as not being able or motivated in early learning. Italy for example has introduced in 2012 SEN policies, to face the high number of migrant students in mainstream schools. With the introduction of the SEN category of children with linguistic, cultural, social and economic disadvantage, there has been a tendency to extensively use such label for migrant children then leading to what has been defined as the 'SENitization' of migrant children. This is a troubling tendency since teachers' deficit beliefs in the learning capabilities of children inform how they interact with these children, which in turn impacts negatively on their learning outcomes.
- Heterogeneity (in terms of abilities, language and socio-cultural background) of children's groups seems to become a problem following the increased focus on formalised learning that accompanies the transition from preschool to primary school. The clear shift from a focus on play and social development in ECEC – where children's different circumstances tend to be seen more as an asset than as a challenge – to an outcome-oriented view of learning in CSE – where children's performance becoming more of a focus – very often lead to stigmatisation of diversity and to the application of selective procedures. In particular, findings from recent studies carried out in Sweden and Germany indicate that children from socio-economically disadvantaged families tend to be subjected to selective mechanism leading to their retention in preschool or hindering their attendance of mainstream primary schools.

In this sense, findings from research carried out in the EU context seem to be in line with international research pointing out how implicit ideas and practices of readying children for (pre)schools is paradoxically contributing to marginalize and stigmatize children considered disadvantaged.

Consequently (Pre-)school readiness ideas are detrimental for the social inclusion of socially vulnerable children. Due to a lack of dialogue between ECEC centres (childcare and pre-school) and primary schools, transitional experiences of children and families are not in the spotlight and there is little sense of problem ownership on the problematic experiences of children and families during these institutional splits.

4. Working on transitions in a systemic way

Transitions are complex phenomena involving many interrelated spheres: from the political level to the pedagogical one, from the institutionalised practices to the working cultures of ECEC services and schools, from the possibility of children's agency to the acknowledgment of different families' cultures. In a well-balanced system, different educational phases share responsibility for smoothing and streamlining children's positive learning experiences during transition periods.



From the START project and from international literature (Dumcius et al., 2014), four processes are underlined as important for having all the elements from the above equation ready for smooth transition: *pedagogical continuity, continuity with the home environment and community, professional continuity and structural continuity.*

These four levels are also the focus of the InTrans project.

1. ***Pedagogical continuity***

Children's need as the starting point (not the institutional organisation) / educare / whole child approach/ participatory work with children

- Adopt an educare (caring is learning and learning is caring) approach that takes into account children's socio-emotional and physical care needs and values their capabilities along a continuum from home to ECEC and from ECEC to school.
- Analyse how existing transitional practices may include or exclude certain children as this can have a significant and lasting effects on their learning opportunities. Become aware that underlying notions of (pre-)school readiness unintentionally exclude the most vulnerable children.
- Rethink a school day of a child, starting from the child, not from the institutional logic. Ensure emotional safety and continuity during the day so children will feel confident enough to explore and become autonomous. Besides the vertical transitions (from one educational environment to the following one), horizontal transitions are also happening on a day to day basis in children's life (e.g. from home to the setting, from the class to the playground, from the class to after school care...
 - Implement a more flexible organisation of time and children's groupings in the daily schedule of (pre)-school work in order to allow children to gradually get acquainted with the new environment.
 - Invest in higher adult-child ratios for preschool/primary school in order to have better educare for a diversity of children during the whole day! (not just in the class)
 - Urge to have flexible policies to deploy teachers, childcare workers, pedagogues, social workers in a school day (e.g. shifts, cooperative time...)
- The necessary resources should be provided for school institutions that have unsuitable lay-outs to rebuild their infrastructure into age-appropriate educare facilities for young children.
- Rethink and rearrange the (pre)school infrastructure and lay-out spaces in order to improve the well-being of children (peaceful eating, toileting, sleeping and appropriate outdoor playing). In primary school institutions, the layout of first-grade classrooms could be rearranged in a more flexible way in order to allow morning circle conversations, individual and group work, children's self-directed activities and play during free-time.
- The pedagogies of preschool and primary school should support shared understanding about the children's individual differences and ways of learning in dialogue with their parents (Ahtola et al., 2011; Margetts, 2007). Besides, practices need to be congruent with respect to the evaluation and support of the children's development (Dockett & Perry, 2013; Rantavuori, Kupila & Karila, 2017).

2. ***Continuity with the home environment and community***



Families' need as the starting point (not the institutional organisation)/co-education/participatory work with families and communities

- Prioritise warm welcome policies for newcomer children and parents in (pre-) school instead of lowering children's age for compulsory education in order to increase attendance rates of vulnerable children.
- Develop sustainable familiarisation policies/practices in both ECEC and primary school.
- Create opportunities for daily exchanges and dialogue between teachers and parents in order to facilitate the establishment of reciprocal relationship of trust between families and professionals.
- Introduce activities for involving families on a more flexible basis (drop-in sessions before and after school, informal parent and toddler sessions, workshop in Roma settlements) with the intention of reducing non-attendance of the most vulnerable children.
- Create a community-based network for reaching out to children and families who were not attending ECEC and organise activities (e.g. meeting spaces, playgroups..) for them to get acquainted with the preschool environment
- Implement outreaching activities in communities who are exposed to extreme societal marginalisation such as Roma or Traveller communities, refugee families in closed centres' with the aim of building trust between children, families and educational institution.
- Ensure that the parents and extended family get the advocacy and support they need in an ECEC environment, developing their capacity to cope with the more rigid schools processes such as choice of schools and the application process including appeals.
- Offer a flexible transition program, allowing for all parents, i.e., those who are working, those who have younger children, those with access issues etc. to be able to participate fully in the process.
- Rethink and rearrange the (pre)school infrastructure and lay-out spaces in order to ensure that parents can meet professionals. Creating a welcoming environment for parents will automatically evoke more opportunities to share the educational responsibilities of children.

3. Professional continuity

Inter-institutional professional learning communities and shared critical reflection/future and current staff feels supported and there is an increased shared responsibility and relational expertise of professionals from different institutions to do 'boundary work' together

- As part of in-service training of professionals, ensure that inter-institutional professional learning communities (of childcare, preschool teachers and primary school teachers) can be established.
 - Invest in pedagogical support of the professional learning communities in order to initiate and accompany the reflection. This can be an external or internal person who takes responsibility for the overall process and can enhance the relational competences of staff to work together and to critically reflect on practices.
 - Support ECEC and schools how they can become better at listening to and translating the voices of children and families in educational practices.
 - Develop a shared vision among ECEC and CSE professionals by challenging the taken for granted assumptions underlying institutional practices (image of the child, image of parents, understanding of learning)



- Elaborate a joint action-plan for addressing the needs emerged in each context by taking into account the concerns of all actors involved, including plans for outreach work to those children and families who are less present in formal settings
- Jointly implement transition projects by involving ECEC and CSE professionals on an equal basis (reciprocal observations, job shadowing, inter-vision, collective reflection on documentation)
- Evaluate the sustainability of innovative practices developed within the transition projects at each location over the long term – min. two years is required to have sustainable change in vision and organisation that ultimately will make the difference for children and families!
- Develop a deontological framework on information exchange between professionals of different institutions in respect with the privacy law and in respect with the fact that parents are in control and need to give their permission in any case of personal information exchange.
- Invest in good working conditions facilitating INTER-institutional professional collaboration and learning within and across ECEC and CSE institution – such as entitlement to CPD and child-free working hours for collective reflection – even in the context of ECEC split systems.
- In-service training institutions invest in the development of collaborative in-service training for professionals from ECEC and primary schools.
- Revise the pre-service curricula of ECEC professionals and primary school students whether attention is paid to the importance of vertical and horizontal transitions.
- Initiate the debate on curricula alignment of different professional student profiles in relation to transition, image of the child and image of the parent, resisting the top down schoolification pressure and school-readiness thinking.

4. ***Structural continuity***

A forth consideration is also crucial to support these good practices to work on a broader scale. In order to have warm and inclusive transitions additional work on a structural, more systemic level needs to be done. This is called the importance of *structural continuity* and it concerns the level of governance in order to stimulate pedagogical continuity, continuity with the home and community and professional continuity. Structural measurements and policy visions needs to be developed in order to have systemic change in EU member states.

This systemic approach is also underlined as crucial in the European Quality Framework on ECEC (European Commission, Thematic Group on ECEC quality, 2014; European Commission, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). Besides endorsing a participatory quality inclusive approach of working with a diversity of children and families, the EQF also encompasses a systemic view on professional competence, in which different stakeholders all together are responsible for enabling ECEC professionals to provide good quality ECEC services³. There is however still one structural problem in many EU MS. Many institutional splits exist in the educational services for young children and their families. If we would like to have high quality provision that is available to all families and that strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity, the institutional transition phases need to receive sufficient attention as often both policy makers as practitioners do not experience problem

³ Statement 9: *Stakeholders in the ECEC system have a clear and shared understanding of their role and responsibilities, and know that they are expected to collaborate with partner organizations* 9

ownership on the transitional experiences of children and families. The policy recommendations of the START project suggest that:

- At the European level the current EQF ECEC working group proactively tackles the negative effects of institutional transitions across the home environment, ECEC and CSE in the further implementation and operationalisation of the European Quality Framework.
- In line with statement 6, indicator 15 of the EQF ECEC, structural collaboration needs to be established with the CSE sector to ensure that more primary schools are required to use a curriculum that is built upon children's experiences of learning in ECEC.⁴
- Investment keeps being done in order to provide EU MS with opportunities to exchange transitional innovative practices and policies, as this cross-country confrontation helps educational stakeholders and professionals to think out of the (institutional) box.
- At the level of the EU MS, governments of different fields (eg. childcare, welfare, education) and governments of different levels (local, regional, national) collaborate more intensively to:
 - Deal proactively with the artificial institutional split to avoid having detrimental effects on the social inclusion of children and families living in poverty.
 - I. By aligning further the work of different ECEC and primary school policy domains, pre-service training institutions, in-service training institutions and foremost the work of childcare centres, preschools and primary schools → *conceptual integration of caring and learning into EDUCARE in childcare, preschool and primary school*
 - II. By enabling childcare centres, preschools and primary schools to collaborate and work in a more integrated way → *structural and conceptual integration of caring and learning into EDUCARE*
 - Create a common vision on the importance of warm and inclusive transitions in the educational system for the diversity of children and families.
 - Enable an equal partnership between ECEC and CSE in which complementary and continuity in child curricula are central (in contrast to curricula built solely upon a vertical hierarchy of learning outcomes for what comes next)
 - Explore new sustainable funding models that allow different institutions and teams to collaborate in a more integrated way.

The goal towards the ECEC and primary school staff is that they can connect better and develop their relational expertise in doing this kind of 'boundary work' (see Edwards 2017; Rantavuori, Karila & Kupila 2019). By installing a professional collaboration across institutional and professional boundaries, they will feel better supported to ensure warm and inclusive transitions for a diversity of children and families. By collaborative learning problem ownership on transitions can increase and child and families can become the starting point of the educational mission. In order to create smooth transitions for children, the professionals have to develop their relational expertise.

5. Expected positive impact on children, families, staff

⁴ 'promoting further integration of early childhood education and care in the education continuum and in supporting collaboration of ECEC and primary school staff for sustaining smooth transition for children to primary school' / Statement 6 - a curriculum which requires staff to collaborate with children, colleagues and parents and to reflect on their own practice. Indicator 15 - The percentage of primary schools which are required to use a curriculum which builds on children's experiences of learning in ECEC.



Positive impact on ECEC and primary school staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the positive and negative emotions children and parents can experience in transition • Sees the child and families as they are, have real encounters with them based on genuine interest • Starts from the image of a rich, competent child • Has positive views on multiple identities and multi-lingualism of children and families • Feel sure enough to deal with diversity • Sees the children and parent as indispensable partner • Sets the conditions so children and parents feel comfortable to talk and speak up • Is able to regularly dialogue with parents on learning and caring needs • Has a shared responsibility on transition with other professionals • Is able to do external work and develop relational expertise to work with other professionals • Questions institutional logic and engrained practices • Understands the importance of reflection and research as part of practice
Positive impact on children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel welcomed in the new environment • Increased well-being and learning opportunities • Less emotional stress in transition • Positive new social experiences • Recognised in their holistic development, caring and learning needs: • Feel safe, cared for in order to explore autonomously • Feel positively supported to develop and grow • Are more at ease as there is continuity between school and home – parents and teachers know each other and trust each other • Feel that they belong to the educational community and broader society
Positive impact on families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences trust to deal with the uncertainty of a new phase • Feels supported by staff in anticipating transitional moments and not pressured into making their child school ready • Is reassured which in turn has a positive impact on the child • Feel understood that this is a new, exciting yet sometimes worrying phase • Feel welcomed • Feel comfortable to asks questions to the staff • Feel valued and recognised in their parental role • Feel that they also belong to the educational community and broader society • Trust ensures that parents also send their children regularly to pre-school and primary school which in turn enhances their learning opportunities.

6. Transitions in COVID-19 times⁵

Recently, the NESET II network published a study commissioned by the European Commission, on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ECEC sector, focusing on the level of governance (Van Laere et al., 2021). Five countries/regions (Italy-Emilia Romagna Region, Belgium-Flanders, Germany-Berlin, Sweden, Croatia) have been examined, and policy guidelines have been elaborated. The theme of transitions has been explored too. The pandemic situation has obliged

⁵ This paragraph is partly an extract of the above mentioned study: Van Laere, K., Sharmahd, N., Lazzari, A., Serapioni, M., Lambert, L., Engdahl, I. et al. (2021). 'Governing quality Early Childhood Education and Care in a global crisis. Lesson learned from the Covid 19 pandemic', *NESET report*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

ECEC centres to suddenly change their practice, and in many cases parents were not allowed anymore in the centres, which made transitions from home to ECEC and school quite challenging. In most countries, children experienced a lockdown period, not being able to attend ECEC which resulted in a drastic change of their habits, witnessing the fear and anxiety of their families, and having to readapt to new societal rules. Going back to the ECEC centre has posed several related questions, on practice/policy/research level: how do we welcome back children and families after a long period of absence?

Investing in good familiarisation trajectories seems to be of uttermost importance, not only for newly inscribed children but also for children who are returning to ECEC after a period of absence. If on the one hand the pandemic created 'difficulties' in organizing warm transitional practices, on the other hand it helped underlying their fundamental importance, especially in this period, when maybe even more than other moments, children and families need to be (re)accompanied and welcomed in the ECEC spaces. Some countries tried for example to re-adapt their familiarization trajectories, by combining pedagogical vision and safety regulations. In Italy, for example, small groups of parents were allowed inside, or the familiarization period would be organized in the outdoor facilities, underlying the importance of this moment and the necessity to organize it also (and maybe especially) in crisis times.

However, the actual implementation of these guidelines depended on the context, meaning that in engaged regions with a recognised ECEC quality the guidelines have been more successfully adopted than in other ones, sometimes with great differences even amongst centres in the same municipality. Where implemented successfully, the perceived difficulties in building a relationship of trust with children (eg. fears of contagion, scepticism regarding sanitation protocols adopted by the ECEC centre) could even progressively be overcome following the positive outcome of the familiarisation period. In Belgium (Fl), many ECEC centres unfortunately cancelled familiarisation trajectories, which made families question the transition (Vlaams Parlement, 2020). Therefore often parents tended to postpone the start of their child in ECEC.

Another big challenge that the ECEC sector faced, which has a negative impact on building trust, is the fact that daily entering and picking up rituals could not be implemented, as parents had to stay outside. In some Italian ECEC centres 'welcoming' and 'goodbye' routines were rearranged in order to allow (brief) daily exchanges between professionals and parents. As parents could not physically enter the setting anymore, often children's entrance to their group was organised from the garden door of each class. At the same time, parents were asked to collaborate in respecting allocated time slot of 'arrival in the morning' and 'picking up in the afternoon', so that ECEC staff could have a quick word with everyone. Instead, digital communication with parents became an important one. For example, some ECEC centres regularly shared photo/video documentation of children's experiences and daily activities with parents (DVD, during online meetings).

An important question we can ask ourselves here is whether decision makers and experts who are in charge of setting up the hygienic and safety guidelines are sufficiently aware that working in ECEC is not only a child-oriented service but includes working both with children *and* families. Or are decision makers aware that ECEC includes working with children and families, but that the later



component was not sufficiently considered for crisis intervention? However not being able to meet parents face to face has especially an impact on the accessibility and participation of ECEC for more societally disadvantaged families.

Within the InTrans project, all these elements need to be taken into account, in order to support warm and inclusive transitions in crisis times and beyond.

7. Focus of the InTrans project

Despite the growing consensus on the importance of inclusive and warm transitions across the early years in Europe, all these inspiring good practices are still not widespread and mainstreamed. In order to upscale these good practices and generate a deeper systemic impact, a wider strategy both internationally and on the level of the different EU MS is imperative.

Considering the four levels mentioned above, with the START project partners worked especially on pedagogical continuity, professional continuity, continuity with the home and community.

However, the **structural**, more systemic level is also indispensable to have these good practices working on a broader scale (structural continuity). This concerns working on the level of the governance in order to stimulate pedagogical continuity, continuity with the home and community and professional continuity. Structural measurements and policy visions need to be developed in order to have systemic change in EU member states. This is in line with the results of the CoRe study, in 2011 commissioned by DG Education and Culture. This study on the required competences for professionals to work in ECEC, pointed out that being competent is not just the responsibility of the individual teacher or educator, the whole ECEC and educational system (institutions, training centres, and governance) has to be competent (Urban et al., 2011). Starting from the idea that a competent system is needed in order to create change, the InTrans project will work on influencing the systemic conditions so that good practices can be disseminated and implemented on a wider scale. The ultimate goal is to ensure that more children and families, especially the most vulnerable ones, can benefit from these transitional warm and inclusive practices.

Working on structural continuity in a competent educational system

InTrans works on three essential aspects of the competent system that ensure that ECEC and primary school professionals feel competent enough to work on warm and inclusive transitions by adopting a participatory pedagogical approach, in line with the needs of a diversity of children, families and local communities:

- 1. Level of policy / governance**
- 2. Level of in-service training of ECEC professionals and teachers**
- 3. Pre-service training of future ECEC professionals and teachers**

InTrans stimulates the structural continuity in the different partner countries by working proactively on three levels in order to have structural and systemic change.

1) Aims on the level of policy / governance:

- Participating policy makers are aware of the importance of inclusive transitions
- Policy makers gain knowledge on good practices of inclusive transitions and the systemic conditions needed to facilitate good practices
- Policy makers of different fields (welfare, education, ...) get to know each other and cooperate so inter-institutional collaboration on micro-level is also more promoted and supported
- Policy makers engage in creating systemic conditions required for inclusive transitions (e.g. child-centered? curricula, better working conditions of different professionals working in ECEC/primary schools, better accessibility of different institutions, educate infrastructure, joined in-service training, pre-service cooperation, ...)

2) Aims on the level of in-service training of ECEC and primary school staff:

- Participating in-service trainers are aware of the importance of inclusive transitions
- Participating in-service trainers gain knowledge on good practices of inclusive transitions and have training and reflection tools to enhance inclusive transitions
- In-service trainers/organisations of different professional profiles get to know each other and cooperate.
- In-service training institutions invest in the development of joined in-service trainings for professionals from ECEC and primary schools.

3) Aims on the level of pre-service training of future ECEC and primary school staff:

- Participating pre-service trainers/organisations are aware of the importance of inclusive transitions
- Participating pre-service trainers/organisations gain knowledge on good practices of inclusive transitions
- Pre-service training organisations of different professional profiles involved in ECEC and primary schools get to know each other and seek opportunities to collaborate.



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