Investing in Sustainable Professional Development in Early Childhood Services

The ISSA Quality Resource Pack

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We know that educators make a difference in children's lives, but what makes a difference in the practices of educators?

- ISSA is a vibrant network that connects professionals and non-profit organizations working in the field of early childhood development.

- Established in the Netherlands in 1999, ISSA's community today stretches across the globe with its more than 50 members primarily located in Europe and Central Asia.

- Building upon the Step by Step Program initiated by the Open Society Foundations in 1994, ISSA aims to ensure equal access to quality care and education for all young children from 0 to 10 years old

The quality of services and learning environments for young children is a burning issue for a growing number of countries.

Access is no longer considered sufficient if it is not accompanied by **quality**, supported by **motivated and competent individuals**, as well as adequate **systems and frameworks**.

What image of teachers do we have in mind when thinking of increasing professionalism?

- A **practitioner** who has to apply research- or evidence-based knowledge and practices?

- A **reflective practitioner** that questions the practice and individually or collectively seeks ways to give answers to challenging practice-based questions?

- A **researcher** that contributes to knowledge creation based on his/her everyday practice/expertise, as a witness of growing uncertainty and diversity in children's and families' lives?

What is ISSA's view and experience in the CEE/CIS region in creating sustainable mechanisms for the professional development of practitioners working in early childhood services?

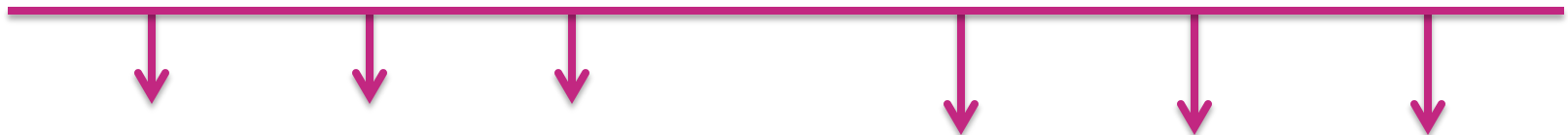# A sustainable model for improving the quality of practice

| *Shared understanding and ownership of the concept of quality practices* | *Trust in teachers' professionalism and build on their individual practice-based competences* | *Nurture teachers' critical reflection, initiative, and autonomy* | *Strengthen self-assessment and collegial professional dialogue* | *Mechanisms and tools to create a network of support among and for teachers* |

A sustainable model for improving the quality of practice
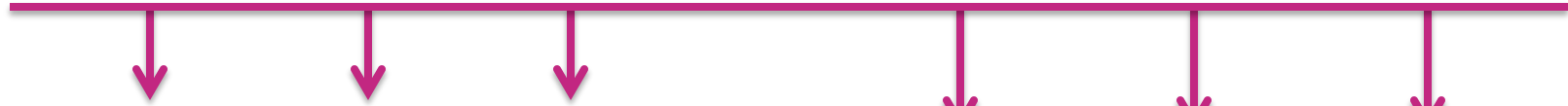
- **Trainings – classic way of going wider – group approach**
- **Mentoring – support and assistance for deeper understanding – individual approach**
- **Building Learning Communities – setting the scene for continuous improvement of quality – individual approach supported by peer and group learning**

Involvement of:

teachers and principals

methodologists and inspectors

parents

higher education institutions

policy/decision makers

Competences needed to nurture a sustainable model of professional development

- Self-reflection

- Critical thinking and inquiring

- Experimenting

- Documentation

- Planning based on self–reflection, documentation and dialogue

- Cooperative learning, collegiality

What can sustain the need for self-improvement in educators?

- Career motivation
- Reputation
- Self-esteem
- Recognition
- Salary
- Satisfaction
- Climate of support

What undermines self-improvement?

- The lack of trust
- The feeling of not being valued
- Promotion of only one right way to do it
- Too much bureaucracy
- Low payment
- Lack of time for professional development
- Discouragement of initiative and dialogue
- Lack of concern for the working conditions
- Too much competition, lack of collegiality
- The feeling of being alone as a professional
- The culture of sanctions

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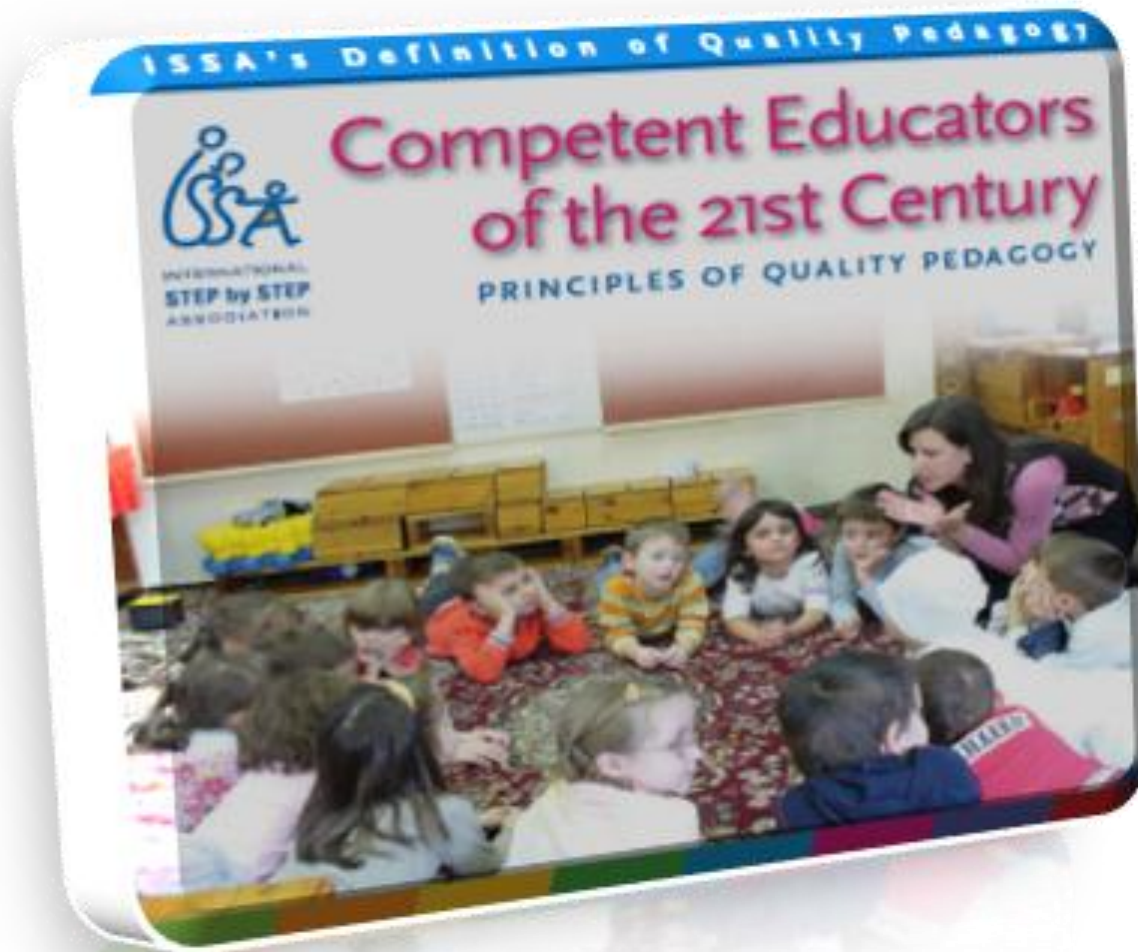# ISSA's answer to the need for continuous quality improvement

ISSA's Definition of Quality Pedagogy

The ISSA Quality Resource Pack

Competent Educators of the 21st Century: Principles of Quality Pedagogy

7 Focus Areas; 20 Principles; 85 Indicators of Quality

Focus Areas of Teaching Practice

Children's wellbeing

1. Interactions

2. Family and Community

3. Inclusion, Diversity, and the Values of Democracy

4. Assessment and Planning

5. Teaching Strategies

6. Learning Environment

7. Professional Development

What is in the ISSA Quality Resource Pack?

1. **Putting Knowledge into Practice** – A Guidebook for Educators

2. **Professional Development Tool for Improving Quality of Practices in Kindergarten/in Primary School**

3. **An Online Video Library on Quality Pedagogy**

4. **Instrument for Assessing Quality Practices in ECEC Services**

5. **An Online Course for Kindergarten Teachers**

Guidebook: Putting Knowledge into Practice

Presents the research and the important international documents that contributed to the formulation of the Principles of Quality Pedagogy and examples of **how to incorporate them into practice through indicators that describe quality**. Can be used by practitioners, mentors, trainers, learning communities, educational leaders etc.

Structure:

- **Area with Description, Principles and Indicators of Quality**

- **Why it is important?**

- **Indicators of Quality**

  - **How to Engage in Quality Practice**
  - **Moving Forward**
  - **When teachers' ... then children:**

- **Studies and Documents that Support this Focus Area**

Professional Development Tool for preschool and primary school educators

Provides **concrete examples** of different kinds of action educators take at **different levels of practice** for each indicator of quality as a continuum. Can be used as a self assessment tool, group assessment tool, an assessment tool for mentors and as descriptors when rating teacher practice.

Structure:

1. The principle of quality practices

1.1. The indicator

0	1	2	
Inadequate	Good Start	Quality practice	Moving forward
Examples	Examples	Examples	Examples

Online Video Library on Quality Pedagogy

Provides concrete examples of practice with questions for reflection regarding different indicators that describe quality. To be used by practitioners, mentors, trainers and learning communities.
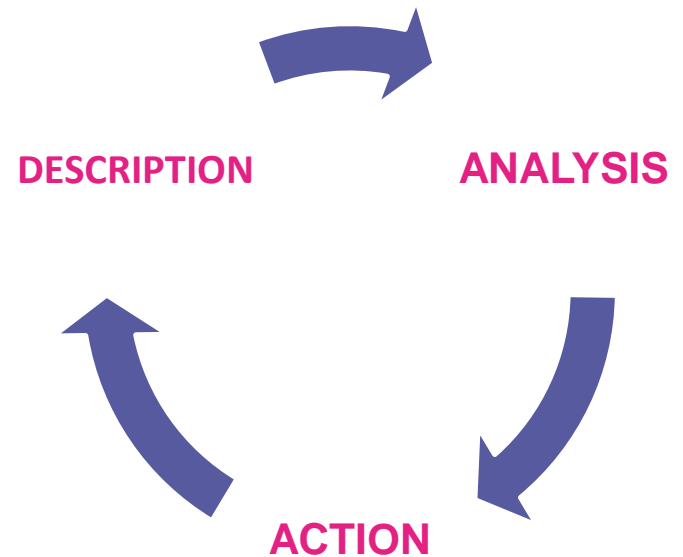
DESCRIPTION – CONTEXT + FOCUS

ANALYSIS - REFLECTION ON VIDEO

ACTION – WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO

DESCRIPTION → ANALYSIS → ACTION

Instrument for Assessing Quality Practices in ECE Services

6 Focus Areas; 20 Principles; 36 Indicators of Quality

- A condensed version of the *Professional Development Tool for Improving Quality of Practices* to assess educator performance on 36 indicators, in order to define <u>targeted/tailored additional professional development to reach quality practice.</u>

- A monitoring instrument to assess the results of different interventions, including training, mentoring, working in professional learning communities, etc.

- The relevance of the *Instrument* depends strongly on the deep and comprehensive understanding of the ISSA Principles and Indicators – establishing reliability.

The **ISSA Principles** are available for downloading in English, Russian Spanish and French on the ISSA website: www.issa.nl

The **ISSA Principles and the accompanying set of resources** are translated in almost all languages in the CEE/CIS region and are available by **contacting our members in countries**.

	Name of the Organisation	City, COUNTRY
01	Qendra Hap pas Hapi	Tirana, Albania
02	Fundación Leer	Buenos Aires, Argentina
03	Step by Step Benevolent Foundation	Yerevan, Armenia
04	Center for Innovations in Education	Baku, Azerbaijan
05	Promotion of Parents and Educators in Education	Baku, Azerbaijan
06	Belorussian Parents' and Teachers' League Step by Step	Minsk, Belarus
07	Centre for Innovation in the Early Years (VBJK)	Gent, Belgium
08	University College VIVES	Tielt, Belgium
09	Center for Educational Initiatives Step by Step	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
10	Step by Step Program Foundation	Sofia, Bulgaria
11	Burgas Free University	Burgas, Bulgaria
12	Open Academy Step by Step	Zagreb, Croatia
13	Step by Step Czech Republic	Prague, Czech Republic

	Name of the Organisation	City, COUNTRY
14	Hea Algus	Tartu, Estonia
15	Center for Educational Initiatives	Tbilisi, Georgia
16	"Schedia" Centre for Artistic and Pedagogical	Athens, Greece
17	Step by Step Program/Tipa Tipa	Port-au-Prince, Haiti
18	Partners Hungary Foundation	Budapest, Hungary
19	Step by Step Community Foundation	Almaty, Kazakhstan
20	Kosova Education Center	Pristina, Kosovo
21	Balkan Sunflowers	Pristina, Kosovo
22	Foundation for Education Initiatives Support	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
23	Center for Education Initiatives	Jekabpils, Latvia
24	Center for Innovative Education	Vilnius, Lithuania
25	University of Applied Sciences, Preschool Education Department	Vilnius, Lithuania
26	Vaikystés sodas	Vilnius, Lithuania
27	Step by Step Foundation for Educational and Cultural Initiatives of Macedonia	Skopje, Macedonia

	Name of the Organisation	City, COUNTRY
28	Multikultura	Tetovo, Macedonia
29	Step by Step Educational Program	Chisinau, Moldova
30	Mongolian Education Alliance (NGO)	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
31	Pedagogical Center of Montenegro	Podgorica, Montenegro
32	Comenius Foundation for Child Development	Warsaw, Poland
33	Step by Step Centre for Education and Professional Development	Bucharest, Romania
34	Russian Foundation for Education Development «Soobschestvo»	St. Petersburg, Russia
35	CIP-Center for Interactive Pedagogy	Belgrade, Republic of Serbia
36	Group for Children and Youth "Indigo"	Nis, Republic of Serbia
37	Roma Humanitarian Center	Bujanovac, Republic of Serbia
38	Wide Open School	Ziar nad Hronom, Slovakia
39	Educational Research Institute, Center for Pedagogical Initiatives Step by Step	Ljubljana, Slovenia

	Name of the Organisation	City, COUNTRY
40	Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation Tajikistan, Early Childhood Development Program	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
41	Bureau MUTANT	Wageningen, The Netherlands
42	Child Care International	Lettele, The Netherlands
43	International Child Development Initiatives	Leiden, The Netherlands
44	Mother Child Education Foundation – ACEV	Istanbul, Turkey
45	Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation	Kyiv, Ukraine
46	The University of Northampton, Early Years Division	Northampton, United Kingdom
47	Antioch University Los Angeles	Culver City, CA, USA

You are kindly invited to our International Conference:

Thank you!

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