



BELGIUM FACT SHEET



Lead country partner	VBJK - Centre for Innovation in the Early Years
Project duration	January 2018 – November 2020
Keywords	Professional identity, educare, collaboration, continuous professional development

ABOUT VALUE PROJECT

VALUE – Value Diversity in Care and Education is a three year (January 2018 – November 2020) Forward Looking Cooperation Project co-funded by the European Commission’s Erasmus+ Programme undertaken by a consortium of partners:

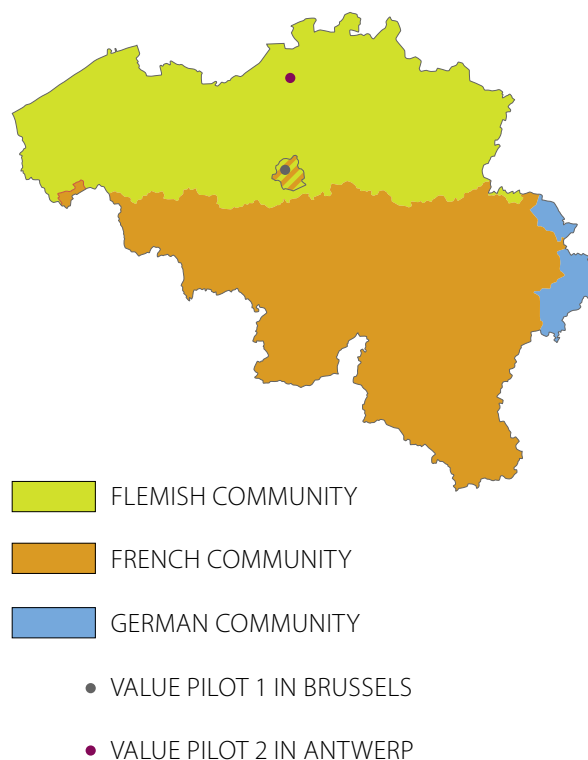
- ▶ **Belgium:** VBJK - Centre for Innovation in the Early Years, Erasmus University College, Karel de Grote University College
- ▶ **Denmark:** DPU - Denmarks institut for Pædagogik, Aarhus University
- ▶ **Portugal:** Aga Khan Foundation, ESE – IP-Santarém
- ▶ **Slovenia:** ERI - Educational Research Institute

VALUE focusses on strengthening the collaboration between all ECEC practitioners involved in the care and learning process of young children, valuing the divers background and experience of ECEC practitioners. Special attention is payed to the role and position of assisting practitioners: how to strengthen their professional role and identity? How to involve them in professional development and planning time?

In other words, VALUE is all about valuing diversity in care and education: valuing diversity in the collaboration between ECEC practitioners will help us to address better the learning and care needs of diverse children, families and communities.

PILOT SCHOOL

Two schools participated in the Belgian (Flemish) VALUE pilot.



DE KAMELEON | BRUSSELS (ANDERLECHT)

<http://gbskameleon.weebly.com/>

Affiliated to the subsidized public educational network. There are 76 pupils in preschool education (2.5-6 years old) divided in 4 age specific classes.



MARIA BOODSCHAP | ANTWERP (FLANDERS)

<https://www.mariaboodschap.be/>

Affiliated to the Catholic educational network. In total there are 135 children in the preschool (2.5-6 years old) divided in 6 mixed age groups. Both schools are characterized by a high percentage of ethnic diversity in children and families, which mirrors the diversity of the neighbourhoods of the school. However, this diversity is not represented in the core practitioners of the school teams.

See more in the [Baseline Report](#)

LEARNING PATH

The Belgian Pilot examines how collaborative learning between ECEC core and assisting practitioners can be supported as part of sustainable CPD (Continuous Professional Development) path in the context of the Flemish community of Belgium.

The two VALUE learning paths aimed at improving the educare approach of a diversity of children and families by enabling a good collaboration between core and assisting practitioners and raising their professional identity.

Although the 2 VALUE CPD pathways were different in the 2 pilot schools, there were also some similarities. First, in both pathways the participatory approach was crucial. The content was decided together with the facilitators and the participants. Second, both pathways were characterised by reflection on the daily practice of the participants.

VALUE LEARNING PATH BRUSSELS

- ▶ 7 preschool teachers
- ▶ 3 assisting practitioners
- ▶ 1 coach
- ▶ 1 coordinator of the out-of-school care

The VALUE learning pathway was based on the idea of narrative coaching. The VALUE cycle consisted of 4 phases with 7 meetings. In each phase, the role of the VALUE facilitator evolved from facilitator, to confronter, co-creator, and then to companion. There were also regular meetings with the school principal.

VALUE LEARNING PATH ANTWERP

- ▶ 6 preschool teachers
- ▶ 1 childcare worker

The VALUE cycle consisted of 4 phases with a kick-off and 6 meetings. During this VALUE CPD pathway, a great deal of effort was put into providing inspiration (e.g., a study visit to an inspiring preschool and an inspiring childcare service for children between 0-3 years of age) and reflection. Next, the VALUE CPD pathway was linked to the new curriculum of the Catholic educational network (ZILL – Eagerness to Live and Learn). There were also regular meetings with the school principal.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PILOT

The views of the schools on the VALUE learning path were collected from (in)formal evaluation moments during the process of the VALUE learning path, focus groups with the school teams and interviews with the school principals.

From hearing all this voices, the VALUE team highlighted some crucial conditions for the learning path and its impact in individuals and teams:

- ▶ The VALUE learning path raised awareness of the importance of interprofessional collaboration in order to overcome the artificial divide between care and learning of young children and create an educare approach.
- ▶ Leadership as a precondition for success: school leaders should provide the organizational and structural environment to strengthen collaboration between all professionals, such as child-free hours.
- ▶ The role of the facilitator and an open and safe environment are crucial to enable shared reflection and action. One strength of the Belgian VALUE case was the different background and expertise of the VALUE facilitators' tandem (i.e., pedagogical coaches in childcare 0-3 years of age and preschool education 2.5-6).
- ▶ Structural conditions like limited working hours of a childcare worker in one school, lack of childfree hours, high adult child ratio hinder a collaborative and educare approach.

See more in the [Country Report](#) and [Roadmap](#)

STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

A stakeholders group for the Flemish Community of Belgium was established:

- ▶ Department of Education
- ▶ Department of Welfare, Growing Up Agency (Opgroeien)
- ▶ Different educational networks

- ▶ University Colleges that offer both a bachelor in preschool education and a bachelor in pedagogy of young children
- ▶ The city of Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels
- ▶ Professionals from the pilot schools
- ▶ The project officers of VBJK.

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Raise the awareness of the difficult and invisible position in which assisting practitioners often find themselves in Flemish preschool education;
- ▶ Provide advice on the content of the overall VALUE project;
- ▶ Follow-up and give advice on the design, process and results of the VALUE pilots;
- ▶ Discuss the structural bottlenecks that hinder interprofessional learning and collaborative practice of core and assisting staff in preschool education;
- ▶ Co-create policy recommendations;
- ▶ Create support for and disseminate the VALUE project results and policy recommendations.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Based on the Flemish VALUE pilots and discussions with the stakeholders group, overall recommendations for regional Flemish policy, local policy and school policies were developed aiming to answer the following question. How can a smart deployment of childcare workers in preschool education lead to: effective qual-

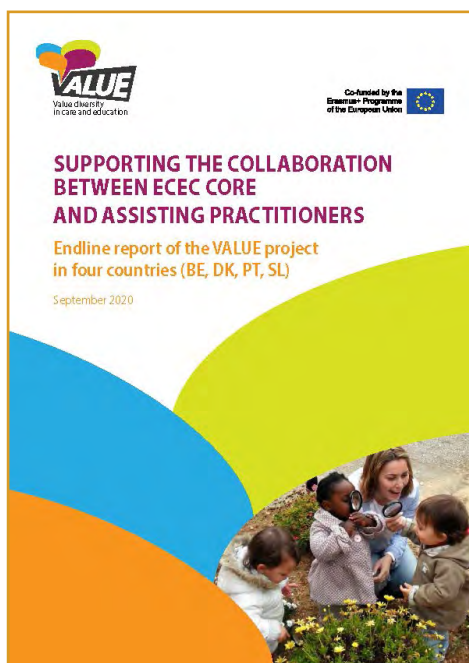
ity improvement for children and families and sustainable jobs for all ECEC staff?

ANCHORS POINTS

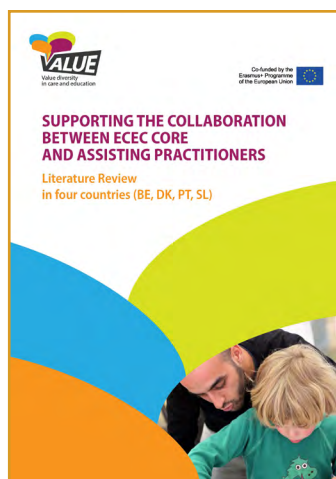
- ▶ Create visibility for childcare workers as important educators for preschool children.
- ▶ Introduce an educare approach in which childcare workers and preschool teachers collaborate on an equal footing.
- ▶ Invest in sustainable professional development initiatives, close to the workplace and giving childcare workers and preschool teachers the opportunity to participate in shared reflection on everyday practice.
- ▶ Invest in structural conditions: a lower adult child ratio, appropriate care infrastructure and more continuous deployment (more hours and full-time positions) of childcare workers in preschools.

See more in the [Country Report](#) and in [Actions for policy and practice](#)

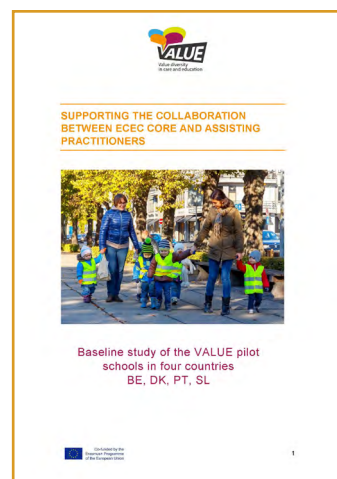
VALUE PROJECT RESOURCES



ENDLINE REPORT



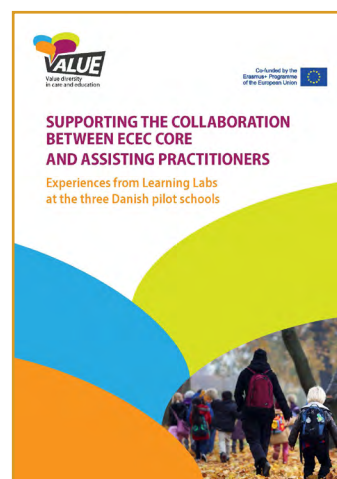
LITERATURE REVIEW



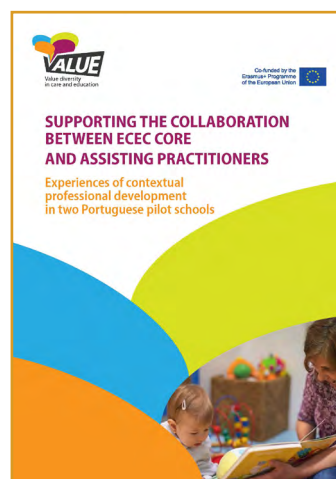
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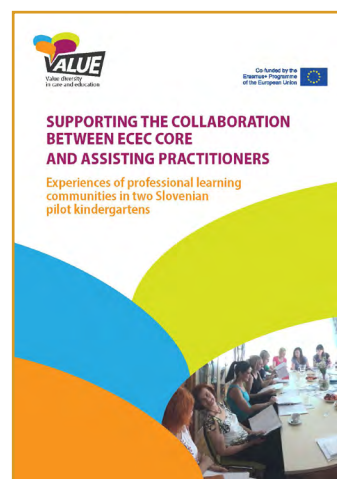
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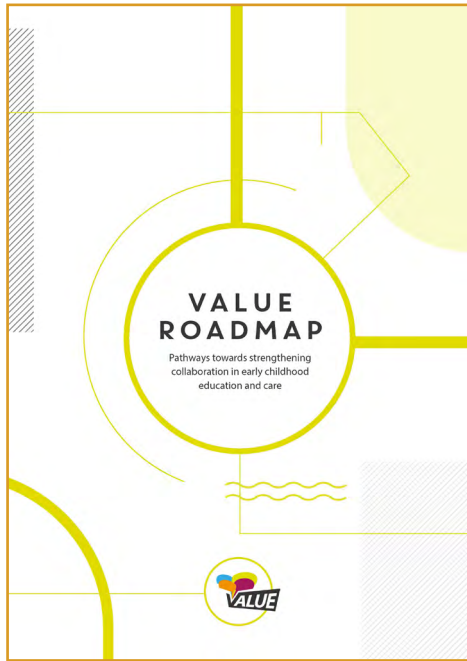
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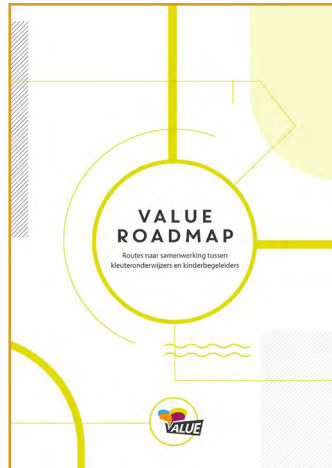
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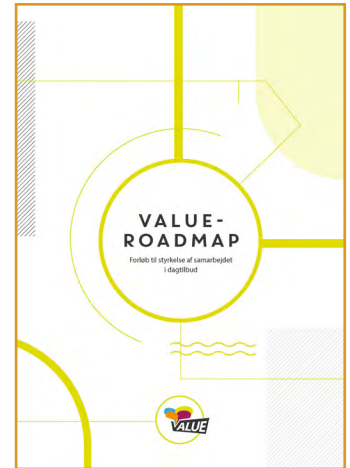
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ROADMAP ENG



ROADMAP NL



ROADMAP DN



ROADMAP PT



ROADMAP SL



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