2. ACTORS:
Providers, Authorities and other Agents

Actors can be *national, regional or local authorities, schools, ITE providers, teacher educators and teacher candidates* etc. In the following, they will be described with regards to their function and relevance as well as their interactions (e.g. collaboration between schools and TTCs).

ITE Providers

In this section, we present (1) **the institutional setting** of ITE providers. In most countries the responsible institutions are universities and/or other higher education institutions like colleges. However, how are ITE providers organized across the country? Are they public or private? How much autonomy do they have in relation to superior agencies like federal ministries? On another level, we also ask about the organization of ITE providers (hierarchy, decisionmaking boards, personnel structure, adminstration) as well as their connectedness to other actors and levels.

Another important element is (2) **the education program,** which these ITE providers pursue. In their global analysis of teacher education systems, Darling-Hammond & Liebermann (2012) differentiate two forms of education programs, which also serve as reference points for our analysis. Firstly, they define *academic programs*, which are research oriented and refer to academic knowledge, mainly being located in universities. Secondly, they define *professional programs*, which refer to vocational competencies and focus on practical education, thus mainly being located at other higher education institutions like *PH ("Pädagogische Hochschule")* in Austria and Switzerland or *hogskoler* in Sweden or *hogescholen* in the Netherlands (Swennen & Snoek, 2012, p. 22). According to these different *programs*, the organizational cultures, personal identities and professional practices vary from case to case, e.g. in Austria educators of *professional programs* may have a stronger sense of identity for being a teacher than university researchers. This is because they are trained teachers in the first place and often teach at the same time at schools and at ITE providers. At university, however, teaching has a different appreciation in terms of career opportunities and, thus, sometimes is being seen as imposition.

The next element of analysis are (3) **the identities and roles** of the individual actors. Who are the educators, researchers and teacher candidates? What are their roles and identities inside and outside of the organization? How about the attractiveness of their profession (compared to others in the same area)? How popular and how worthwhile is it to become a teacher? Are salaries attractive and what career stages and opportunities do teachers have?

In general, teacher educators have different roles and identities. They can be educators, lecturers, researchers or practitioners, to name just the most common categories. A practical method to analyse their role of teaching is to define their relation to practice in terms of *first order practitioners* or *second order practitioners* (Murray & Male, 2005). First order practitioners teach students in a specific subject with specific content (e.g. physics) – we label them as teachers. Second order practitioners teach students who are to become teachers, they teach teaching (e.g. subject-related didactics and teaching methodology) – we label them as *educators*. In general, pre-service teacher educators are second-order-practitioners, they teach teaching. However, they can also be first order practitioners at the same time, e.g. when they are teaching a specific subject in a school. One important conclusion which research has drawn from this differentiation is the lack of professionalization and the lack of identity of second-order practitioners (as educators) (Izadinia, 2014, Swennen et al., 2010). The reasons therefor are interconnected: on the one hand, their profession (as educators) is not linked to traditional institutions like schools or universities. Thus, it has not the same level of institutionalization and legitimation. That is also why these practitioners struggle with other identities which may be more powerful and representative in terms of institutionalized background and traditional legitimation, e.g. being a lecturer at university or a teacher at school (Swennen & Snoek, 2012, p. 25).

Another way to explore the role of initial teacher educators is through their relation to research. Those who work at university and are required to fulfil performance targets in research may conceive themselves primarily as researchers, in contrast to those who never have worked in any research oriented environment. At the same time, a process of "academization" of higher education institutions can recently be observed in several countries, which transforms not only their organizational cultures but also their employees' identities.

Finally – and as we focus on the teacher educators, to a less extent – we also may ask, who (4) the **teacher candidates** are and how they successfully apply for the study programs. Here we present basic demographic information and ask, where the students are coming from, whether most of them are following a continuous education pathway or if there are also "career changers" (i.e. educational background and qualification different to "classic" teachers). As ITE has changed over the years, e.g. due to changing job requirements for teachers or paradigm shifts of pedagogical methods (like cooperative learning), so have also changed the roles and identities of ITE students. Thus, it will be relevant to ask for the TTC strategies of attracting and selecting the candidates: Who are the target groups for attracting potential students? Are there specific criteria for selection? What chances and opportunities of employment are offered to the candidates?