



Working for inclusion: how early childhood education and care (ECEC) and its workforce can help Europe's youngest citizens

The final report of the cross-European programme *Working for inclusion: the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion*



Working for inclusion



Working for inclusion: how early childhood education and care (ECEC) and its workforce can help Europe's youngest citizens

Led by



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Partners



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Contents

About the <i>Working for inclusion</i> programme	4
Foreword	5
Summary and key issues	6
Résumé et questions clés	9
Sommario e punti chiave	12
Oppsummering av funn og påpeking av viktige forhold	15
Streszczenie i najważniejsze kwestie	18
Introduction	21
Towards an inclusive early years workforce	22
The child as protagonist	26
Integrated systems	30
Low inequality	36
Conclusion	41
<i>Working for inclusion</i> publications	42
Acknowledgements	43



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“We must start from the point of recognising the potentiality and the richness that diversity brings, even in the cases in which it presents difficulty and discomfort or real problems.”

Aldo Fortunati, president, La Bottega Di Geppetto, San Miniato, Italy

About the Working for inclusion programme

The two-year *Working for inclusion* programme was about focusing attention on and strengthening understanding of how the early years workforce can support social inclusion and address poverty.

The programme was funded by the European Commission under the EU Progress (Employment and Social Inclusion) programme with the support of the Scottish Government and led by Children in Scotland with partners and associate partners in nine other countries. The main partner organisations and countries were:

- Scotland and UK: Children in Scotland
- Italy: La Bottega Di Geppetto
- Norway: Nordland Research Institute
- Poland: Comenius Foundation for Child Development

Other partner countries were Denmark, France, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden.

The *Working for inclusion* programme sought to encourage discussion and an exchange of ideas and information across member states and has formed part of the Open Method of Coordination introduced in Lisbon in 2000, to support member states learning with and from each other in addressing the goals set out in the Lisbon Treaty.

Each of the main partners led learning and debate on a specific theme, hosting four study visits with a range of delegates – including politicians and practitioners who shared their insight and learning nationwide – and conferences with up to 200 national and international delegates.

1. Working with the child as protagonist – active agents in their own learning. Lead partner: La Bottega Di Geppetto, Italy, May 2009

2. Working with diversity, particularly ethnicity, language, disability and gender. Lead partner: Children in Scotland, Scotland and UK, September 2009

3. Inclusive workforce models for rural and remote areas. Lead partner: Nordland Research Institute, Norway, January 2010

4. Working inclusively with children and families across agencies and age groups. Lead partner: Comenius Foundation for Child Development, Poland, May 2010

5. Working for inclusion in Europe: how early years childhood education and care (ECEC) and its workforce can help Europe's youngest citizens. Closing conference organised with the support of Eurochild, Brussels, December 2010

With online publications for each country visit and conference, ten detailed country profiles, a study visit briefing and report, and a research overview, the project has reached thousands of elected members, policymakers and practitioners across Europe.

All material is available online free at www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi

Foreword

The *Working for inclusion* programme brings together facts, figures, anecdotes and insights, which we believe present a persuasive call for national, regional and local governments to invest in developing higher quality services for our youngest children.

The programme, funded by the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity, with the support of the Scottish Government, included government at all levels, trade unions and a range of institutions and organisations involved in the education and support of the early years workforce, as well as practitioners. This final programme report highlights the contribution that early childhood education and care services make to children's wellbeing and lifelong learning. It also attests to their economic value, not only in preventing more expensive interventions later but in galvanising local economies and tackling poverty.

One of the strongest issues to emerge is the value of integrated early years systems – overcoming the continuing divide between early education and care, which can still be found in many European countries. Those countries with fully integrated systems and other important interconnected policies designed to support early childhood and families appear to have higher qualified, better paid staff, lower levels of child poverty and higher levels of child wellbeing. They also all started off with split systems. The forthcoming Communication on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), which the European Commission is expected to publish early next year, will provide an important opportunity to address this issue.

The research undertaken for the programme

underlined the value of universal services and equitable social welfare systems with strong income redistribution.

Societies' view of childhood and of families is revealed to have an important impact on the quality of services. In San Miniato in Italy, the child as protagonist emphasises children's autonomy in their own lives as competent and active rather than passive and awaiting direction from adults. It influences every aspect of provision – the way staff interact with children, staff's relationship with families, and the design and use of space.

At the conclusion of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, *Working for inclusion* offers important new information on the role that services for young children and their workforce can play in tackling child poverty and promoting social inclusion. The many reports published under the *Working for inclusion* programme will help us all in addressing these issues.

Bronwen Cohen, chief executive, Children in Scotland and *Working for inclusion* programme director

Aldo Fortunati, president, La Bottega Di Geppetto, San Miniato, Italy

Teresa Ogrodzińska, president, Comenius Foundation For Child Development

Wenche Rønning, researcher, Nordland Research Institute

Summary and key issues

Focus on the early years to reduce child poverty

Families with young children are at particular risk of poverty – across Europe nearly one in six households with a child under six lives in poverty. In seven European countries this rises to one in five households.

To make a significant difference to reducing child poverty and increasing social inclusion across Europe, policy should focus on the experience of young children and their families.

The *Working for inclusion* programme found that countries with low levels of child poverty and high child wellbeing also have consistently the highest levels of fully integrated early childhood care and education provision associated with generous benefit systems and strong income redistribution. In general, these countries have a better qualified and higher paid workforce, and systems based on strong values of equality, rights and democracy.

Nordic countries have the best track record on early childhood education and care, inequality and child wellbeing. However, Slovenia has shown that such success is not the preserve of wealthy north Europeans, and local administrations such as San Miniato in Italy demonstrate that it is not just country-wide policies that can make a difference.

Importance of fully integrated systems at European, national and local levels

Fully integrated systems of early years childcare and education have no divide between early childhood education and care for children under the age of three and children from three until the age of compulsory schooling. Full integration is manifest in government departments, workforce education, qualifications, funding, pay and conditions, service structures, inspection regimes and curriculum.

Only six European countries (Sweden, Finland,

Norway, Denmark, Slovenia and Latvia) have fully integrated early childhood education and care systems. Four countries (Germany, Austria, Spain and the UK) have partially integrated systems, which retain a division, particularly within the workforce.

Fully integrated early education and childhood systems – associated with high levels of universal entitlement and a high quality, well paid workforce – are a key indicator of a country's success in reducing child poverty and promoting social inclusion.

When early childhood is not integrated or only partially integrated (as is the case in the majority of European member states) children aged under three, and their families, experience a poorer standard of care with a higher cost to parents, with less equal access to all families, and more poorly educated and poorly paid staff.

Split systems are unequal systems, unequal for children, parents and the workforce.

Key issues for the European Commission

Value of the Open Method of Coordination

The sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience within and across the partner countries on early childhood education and care has made an important contribution to benchmarking and policy development in all the partner countries, at all levels of government, reaching influential policymakers and thousands of practitioners. The Open Method of Coordination is a valuable and valued way of supporting member states and involving all relevant stakeholders in addressing the goals of reducing child poverty and increasing social inclusion set out by the Lisbon Treaty.

Value of Structural Funds

Working for inclusion has shown the value of European Union Structural Funds in the exploration of new models of early childhood education and care, and in raising awareness within all levels of government and civil society

Summary and key issues

of ECEC's impact in reducing child poverty and promoting social inclusion. This was particularly evident to delegates in Poland where Structural Funds have clearly made a significant impact. Structural Funds could help other countries explore new ways of bringing about integrated ECEC systems.

Importance of taking the lead

Reducing the poverty of young children Europe-wide requires EU level leadership and strategy. Integrated systems require an integrated approach at the level of the EU as well as at national and local government.

The forthcoming Communication on Early Education and Childcare offers the opportunity to stress the significance of integrated ECEC systems in reducing child poverty, and to emphasise the inequality inherent in split systems. The Communication is also an opportunity to incorporate a qualitative dimension into the 2002 Barcelona Targets concerning childcare places. A 2008 review found only five member states had met or surpassed the target for achieving places for at least 33% of children up to age three, while eight countries had met the target for places for 90% of children from three to six. Targets can help considerably to improve access but need to be integrated with other aspects of early years policy, rather than tackled in isolation.

Many EU countries benefit from a broader care qualification, for example the pedagogue model. Helping extend this model across Europe would support the integration of the early years workforce and further encourage cross-European collaboration.

Key issues for national, regional and local government

The importance of fully integrated systems

National, regional and local government should find ways to move towards integrated systems in early childhood education and care, establishing it as an important direction of travel.

The importance of universal provision

Governments should resist budget cuts that reduce the universalism of provision for young children and their families, as this would increase the inequality of early childhood education and care that is at the heart of child poverty and social inclusion. The Working for inclusion research review found that fully integrated services in association with a universal approach reach disadvantaged groups more effectively than targeted provision.

Early childhood education and care and the economy

Budget cuts that reduce the infrastructure of early childhood education and care may impact a family's ability to take up paid employment. The provision of early childhood education and care is a vital part of general economic planning, as well as being core to reducing child poverty and increasing social inclusion in particular. Conversely investment in early childhood education and care services can galvanise local economies through creating jobs and at the same time improving and upskilling the labour supply.

Summary and key issues

General points about early years education and care

Having the active child at the centre of early years policy

Children are active citizens who shape their own learning in partnership with adults in ways that are unpredictable and can challenge adults' expectations. Children and their families should be valued and respected and considered equal partners in learning by staff given time to develop positive and in-depth relationships with them.

Universal integrated early childhood education and care systems

It is necessary to rethink traditional structures and remits of services from the perspective of the child and family to bring together traditionally divided notions of (child)care related to gender equality in employment (until age three) and (early) education (from age three onwards).

Care and education are equally important to children. Split systems are unequal systems. Flexible, part- and full-time services that link parental leave from birth to entitlements to services from age one promote social inclusion and reduce child poverty. Targeted support can

entrench social exclusion – services should be universal.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce initial education

Investment in a highly qualified, autonomous workforce capable of democratic, reflective practice means a flexible, sustainable, more gender-balanced workforce working with all young children and their families.

Working with parents and communities

Priority should be given to the meaningful participation of parents and local communities in decisions about the management and curriculum of early childhood services. Not only do families benefit from information and support provided by services, but also parents' expert knowledge helps staff in their observation and understanding of each child's development. Such a two-way exchange is an important manifestation of a democratic approach.

Equitable social welfare systems

Unequal societies beget inequality. Without strong income redistribution policies and supportive, universal welfare systems, the work of the best early years workforce will not be enough to eradicate child poverty and achieve social inclusion.

Résumé et questions clés

S'orienter vers la petite enfance pour résoudre la pauvreté infantile

Les familles avec de jeunes enfants sont plus particulièrement menacées de pauvreté ; en Europe, près d'un foyer sur six avec un enfant de moins de six ans vit dans la pauvreté. Dans sept pays européens, cette statistique monte à un foyer sur cinq.

Afin de vraiment contribuer à la réduction de la pauvreté des jeunes enfants et à l'accroissement de l'inclusion sociale à travers l'Europe, les politiques publiques devraient s'intéresser à l'expérience des jeunes enfants et à celle de leurs familles.

Le programme *Working for inclusion* (œuvrer en faveur de l'inclusion) a constaté que les pays dont la population infantine se caractérise par de faibles niveaux de pauvreté et des niveaux élevés de bien-être, ont invariablement les plus hauts niveaux de services entièrement intégrés d'éducation et d'accueil des jeunes enfants (en anglais: ECEC – Early Childhood Education and Care), associés à des régimes de prestations sociales généreux et une forte redistribution des revenus. En règle générale, ces pays disposent de personnels mieux qualifiés et mieux rémunérés ; ils adoptent également des régimes reposant sur des principes forts d'égalité, de droits et de démocratie.

Les pays scandinaves enregistrent les meilleurs résultats en termes d'éducation et d'accueil des jeunes enfants, d'égalité et de bien-être des jeunes enfants. La Slovénie a toutefois prouvé qu'un tel succès n'était pas l'apanage des pays riches d'Europe du Nord : l'exemple de l'administration locale de San Miniato démontre que le changement pour le mieux ne dépend pas seulement des politiques à l'échelle nationale.

L'importance de systèmes entièrement intégrés aux niveaux européen, national et local

Les systèmes entièrement intégrés d'éducation

et d'accueil des jeunes enfants n'opèrent aucune division entre l'éducation et l'accueil des moins de trois ans et ceux des enfants entre trois ans et l'âge de scolarisation obligatoire. L'intégration totale est manifeste dans les départements gouvernementaux, la formation des personnels, les qualifications, le financement, les salaires et conditions de travail, les structures de service, les régimes d'inspection et les programmes d'enseignement.

Six pays européens seulement (la Suède, la Finlande, la Norvège, le Danemark, la Slovénie et la Lettonie) ont entièrement intégré les systèmes d'éducation et d'accueil des jeunes enfants. Quatre pays (l'Allemagne, l'Autriche, l'Espagne et le Royaume-Uni) ont des systèmes partiellement intégrés, conservant un certain degré de division, notamment au niveau des personnels.

Des systèmes d'éducation et d'accueil des jeunes enfants entièrement intégrés – associés à des niveaux élevés de prestations universelles et des personnels hautement qualifiés et bien rémunérés – sont un indicateur clé de la réussite d'un pays en matière de réduction de la pauvreté des jeunes enfants et de la promotion de l'inclusion sociale.

Lorsque la petite enfance n'est pas intégrée, ou seulement partiellement intégrée (comme dans la majorité des États membres de l'Union européenne), les enfants de moins de trois ans et leurs familles connaissent une moins bonne qualité d'accueil à un coût supérieur pour les parents, accompagnée d'une moins grande égalité d'accès pour toutes les familles et de personnels moins bien formés et moins bien rémunérés.

Les systèmes divisés sont des systèmes inégalitaires, tant pour les enfants que pour les parents et les personnels.

Questions clés pour la Commission européenne

Résumé et questions clés

La valeur de la méthode ouverte de coordination

Le partage des connaissances, des idées et de l'expérience en matière d'éducation et d'accueil des jeunes enfants, tant au sein des pays partenaires qu'entre ces derniers, a beaucoup contribué à l'évaluation des services et à l'élaboration de politiques dans tous les pays partenaires, à tous les niveaux de gouvernance, en particulier les décideurs et des milliers de professionnels. La méthode ouverte de coordination est une façon utile et appréciée de soutenir les États membres et de faire intervenir toutes les parties pertinentes intéressées dans la réalisation des objectifs de réduction de la pauvreté des jeunes enfants et d'accroissement de l'inclusion sociale définis dans le Traité de Lisbonne.

La valeur des fonds structurels

Le programme Working for inclusion a souligné la valeur des fonds structurels de l'Union européenne, tant au niveau de l'étude de nouveaux modèles d'éducation et d'accueil des jeunes enfants qu'à celui de la sensibilisation à l'impact de l'éducation et de l'accueil des jeunes enfants sur la réduction de la pauvreté des jeunes enfants et la promotion de l'inclusion sociale, à tous les échelons de gouvernance et de la société civile. Ce constat était particulièrement évident pour les délégués polonais vu l'impact considérable des fonds structurels en Pologne. Les fonds structurels pourraient aider d'autres pays à explorer de nouveaux moyens pour instaurer des systèmes intégrés d'éducation et d'accueil des jeunes enfants.

L'importance de guider

Réduire la pauvreté des jeunes enfants dans toute l'Europe nécessite direction et stratégie au niveau communautaire. Des systèmes intégrés exigent une approche intégrée au niveau de l'Union européenne ainsi qu'au niveau des instances de décision nationales et locales.

La prochaine Communication sur l'éducation et l'accueil des jeunes enfants est l'occasion de souligner l'importance de systèmes intégrés pour

réduire la pauvreté des jeunes enfants, et de mettre en évidence les inégalités inhérentes aux systèmes divisés. Elle est également l'occasion d'incorporer une dimension qualitative aux objectifs de Barcelone 2002 concernant les lieux d'accueil de la petite enfance. Un bilan effectué en 2008 constatait que cinq États membres seulement avaient atteint ou dépassé l'objectif d'accueil pour au moins 33 % des enfants de trois ans ou moins, tandis que huit pays avaient atteint celui de 90 % pour des enfants de trois à six ans. Les objectifs contribuent de manière considérable à l'amélioration de l'accès, à condition de prendre en compte d'autres aspects des politiques publiques en direction de la petite enfance plutôt que de les traiter de manière séparés.

Un grand nombre de pays de l'UE, dispose de larges qualifications dans le domaine de la petite enfance, par exemple le modèle « pédagogue » qui englobe les besoins éducatifs des enfants ainsi que leur développement social et affectif. L'élargissement de ce modèle au reste de l'Europe favoriserait l'intégration des personnels de la petite enfance et encouragerait plus avant la collaboration transeuropéenne.

Question clés pour les instances de décision nationales et locales

L'importance de systèmes entièrement intégrés

Les instances de décision nationales et locales devraient trouver des moyens d'effectuer la transition vers des systèmes intégrés d'éducation et d'accueil des jeunes enfants, et en souligner l'importance.

L'importance de prestations universelles

Les gouvernements devraient aussi résister aux coupes budgétaires qui mettent à mal l'universalisme d'une offre de service aux jeunes enfants et à leurs familles. Celles-ci ne feraient qu'augmenter les inégalités face à l'éducation et à l'accueil auxquelles sont confrontés les jeunes enfants et qui sont au cœur des stratégies de

Résumé et questions clés

réduction de la pauvreté infantile et d'inclusion sociale. Le compte rendu des recherches du programme Working for Inclusion constate que des services entièrement intégrés associés à une démarche universelle atteignent les groupes défavorisés plus efficacement que les prestations ciblées.

L'éducation et l'accueil des jeunes enfants et l'économie

Les coupes budgétaires qui réduisent l'infrastructure dédiée à l'éducation et à l'accueil des jeunes enfants pourraient affecter la capacité des mères à bénéficier d'un emploi rémunéré.

Les services d'éducation et d'accueil des jeunes enfants sont un élément vital de la planification économique générale ; ils sont également cruciaux pour réduire la pauvreté des jeunes enfants et accroître l'inclusion sociale.

Inversement, l'investissement dans les services d'éducation et d'accueil des jeunes enfants peut dynamiser les économies locales en créant des emplois qui valorise les compétences existantes et promeut de nouvelles qualifications.

Généralités

Placer l'enfant actif au centre des politiques publiques portant sur la petite enfance

Les enfants sont des citoyens actifs qui façonnent leur propre apprentissage en partenariat avec les adultes et ce, de façons imprévisibles pouvant défier les attentes des adultes. Les enfants et leurs familles devraient être appréciés, respectés et considérés comme des partenaires à part entière dans l'apprentissage, par des personnels disposant du temps nécessaire pour développer des rapports positifs et profonds avec eux.

Éducation et accueil des jeunes enfants universels et intégrés

Il est nécessaire de repenser les structures et les missions traditionnelles des services, à partir du point de vue de l'enfant et de la famille, afin de conjuguer les notions traditionnellement divisées d'accueil (de l'enfance) liées à l'égalité des genres face à l'emploi (jusqu'à trois ans) et à l'

éducation (des jeunes enfants à partir de trois ans).

L'accueil et l'éducation sont tout aussi importants pour les enfants. Les systèmes divisés sont des systèmes inégalitaires. Des services souples, à temps complet ou partiel, qui prennent en compte le congé parental, des prestations sociales et une offre de services à partir d'un an, favorisent l'inclusion et réduisent la pauvreté des jeunes enfants. Un soutien ciblé peut renforcer l'exclusion sociale; les services devraient être universels.

La formation initiale des personnels de l'éducation et de l'accueil des jeunes enfants

Un investissement dans des personnels hautement qualifiés et autonomes, capables de pratiques démocratiques et réflexives, crée les conditions de la souplesse et de la continuité et facilite une participation plus équilibrée des hommes et des femmes, qui travaillent avec tous les jeunes enfants et leurs familles.

Travailler avec les parents et les communautés

La participation concrète des parents et des communautés locales aux décisions sur la gestion et le programme des services destinés aux jeunes enfants devrait être une priorité. Non seulement les familles bénéficient de l'information et du soutien fournis par les services, mais les parents sont aussi des experts pouvant aider les intervenants dans leur observation et leur compréhension du développement de chaque enfant. Un tel échange bidirectionnel est caractéristique d'une démarche démocratique.

Des prestations sociales équitables

Les sociétés inégalitaires produisent l'inégalité. En l'absence de politiques robustes en matière de redistribution des revenus et de prestations sociales universelles en soutien aux familles, le travail des personnels les plus compétents pour l'accueil de la petite enfance ne suffira pas à éliminer la pauvreté infantile et à assurer l'inclusion sociale.

Sommario e punti chiave

Centrare l'attenzione sulla prima infanzia per ridurre la povertà

Le famiglie con bambini piccoli sono particolarmente a rischio di povertà – in Europa quasi un sesto delle famiglie con bambini sotto i sei anni vivono in condizioni di povertà. In sette nazioni europee questo dato diventa un quinto.

Per fare realmente la differenza nella lotta per la riduzione della povertà e nell'incremento dell'inclusione sociale in Europa, le politiche dovrebbero concentrare la loro attenzione sull'esperienza dei bambini piccoli e delle loro famiglie.

Il programma *Working for inclusion* ha rilevato che i paesi con bassi livelli di povertà infantile ed alti livelli di benessere dei bambini hanno anche livelli di servizi per l'infanzia 0-6 tra i più alti, insieme a forti sistemi di protezione sociale e una forte redistribuzione della ricchezza. In generale, in questi paesi, gli operatori, gli educatori e le insegnanti che lavorano nei servizi per l'infanzia sono maggiormente qualificati ed hanno stipendi più alti; queste nazioni sono fortemente basate sui valori di uguaglianza, attuazione dei diritti e democrazia.

Le nazioni del nord Europa hanno la storia più importante e lunga rispetto ai servizi educativi ed alle scuole per l'infanzia, riguardo alla attuazione di condizioni di equità e di benessere per i bambini. Anche la Slovenia ha mostrato come un tale successo nelle politiche e nelle pratiche non sia una prerogativa delle ricche nazioni del nord Europa, e amministrazioni locali come il Comune di San Miniato (Italia) dimostrano che non sono soltanto le politiche nazionali che possono fare la differenza.

L'importanza di sistemi integrati a livello europeo, nazionale e locale

I sistemi di servizi educativi e scuole dell'infanzia completamente integrati non prevedono la distinzione tra servizi per bambini sotto i tre anni

e servizi o scuole per bambini da tre anni all'età scolare. La completa integrazione si manifesta nei dipartimenti di governo di competenza, nella formazione di educatori e insegnanti, nella retribuzione e nelle condizioni di lavoro, nelle strutture dei servizi, nelle funzioni di regolazione e controllo e nel curriculum di orientamento per la progettazione educativa.

Soltanto sei paesi europei (Svezia, Finlandia, Norvegia, Danimarca, Slovenia e Lettonia) hanno sistemi per l'educazione e cura dell'infanzia completamente integrati. Quattro paesi (Germania, Austria, Spagna e Regno Unito) hanno sistemi parzialmente integrati che mantengono una divisione relativa in modo particolare agli educatori ed agli insegnanti. I sistemi completamente integrati – associati ad alti livelli di diritto di accesso generalizzato ai servizi e di qualità e retribuzione degli educatori e degli insegnanti – sono indicatori chiave del successo di un paese nella lotta alla povertà infantile e nella promozione dell'inclusione sociale.

Quando la prima infanzia non fa parte di un sistema completamente o parzialmente integrato (come nel caso della maggior parte degli stati europei) i bambini sotto i tre anni e le loro famiglie fanno esperienza di uno standard di cura più debole e meno qualificato che ha anche costi maggiori per le famiglie, con livelli più bassi di accesso e con educatori ed insegnanti retribuiti in modo minore e meno qualificati.

I sistemi non integrati sono sistemi di ineguaglianza, che non garantiscono equità ai bambini, alle famiglie ed agli operatori.

Punti chiave per la Commissione Europea

Valore del Open Method of Coordination (Metodo di coordinamento aperto)

La condivisione di conoscenze, idee ed esperienze all'interno e tra le nazioni partner sui temi dei servizi educativi e di cura per l'infanzia ha contribuito in modo significativo a stabilire

Sommario e punti chiave

valori condivisi di riferimento ed allo sviluppo delle politiche in tutti i paesi partner del progetto, a tutti i livelli di governo, riuscendo a raggiungere politici influenti e migliaia di persone che operano nei servizi. L'Open Method of Coordination rappresenta un valido modo di sostenere gli stati membri e di coinvolgere gli stakeholders per indirizzarli verso gli obiettivi che riguardano la riduzione della povertà infantile e il miglioramento dell'inclusione sociale stabiliti dal Trattato di Lisbona.

Valore dei Fondi Strutturali

Working for inclusion ha mostrato il valore dei Fondi Strutturali dell'Unione Europea per l'esplorazione di nuovi modelli di servizi per l'educazione e la cura dell'infanzia e per l'aumento della consapevolezza a tutti i livelli di governo e di società civile circa l'impatto dei servizi per l'infanzia (ECEC) sulla riduzione della povertà infantile e sulla promozione dell'inclusione sociale. Questo è stato particolarmente evidente per i delegati in Polonia, paese in cui i Fondi Strutturali hanno avuto un chiaro impatto significativo. I Fondi Strutturali possono aiutare altre nazioni a trovare nuovi modi per sollecitare lo sviluppo di sistemi integrati.

L'importanza di guadagnare priorità

La riduzione della povertà dei bambini piccoli in tutta Europa richiede una guida e delle strategie a livello europeo. I sistemi integrati necessitano di un approccio integrato sia a livello europeo che a livello nazionale e locale.

La prossima Comunicazione sull'Educazione e sulla Cura dell'Infanzia offre l'opportunità per porre l'accento sul significato del sistema integrato dei servizi per l'infanzia nella lotta alla povertà infantile e per enfatizzare l'ineguaglianza che portano con sé i sistemi non integrati. La Comunicazione è anche un'opportunità per inserire una dimensione qualitativa negli obiettivi di Barcellona del 2002 per ciò che riguarda la ricettività dei servizi. Un'analisi del 2008 ha mostrato che solo cinque stati membri hanno

raggiunto o superato l'obiettivo sulla copertura del 33% per i bambini sotto i tre anni, mentre otto nazioni hanno raggiunto l'obiettivo della copertura del 90% per i bambini da tre a sei anni. Gli obiettivi possono aiutare in modo considerevole a migliorare i livelli di accesso, ma hanno bisogno di essere integrati con altri aspetti delle politiche per l'infanzia piuttosto che essere affrontati in modo isolato.

Molti paesi dell'Unione Europea beneficiano di un sistema di formazione e qualificazione degli operatori più ampio, come ad esempio il modello del educatore-pedagogista. Sostenere l'applicazione di questo modello in tutta Europa potrebbe dare supporto all'integrazione degli educatori e degli insegnanti che operano nel campo dell'infanzia e successivamente incoraggiare la collaborazione tra gli stati membri.

Temi chiave per i governi nazionali e regionali

L'importanza dei sistemi completamente integrati

I governi nazionali, regionali e locali dovrebbero orientarsi verso sistemi integrati per l'educazione e la cura dell'infanzia, facendoli diventare obiettivi importanti.

L'importanza di un'offerta universale

I governi dovrebbero sospendere i tagli economici che riducono la possibilità di rendere l'accesso ai servizi universale, poiché la mancata universalità aumenta i livelli di disuguaglianza nell'educazione e nella cura dell'infanzia, fattore centrale per la povertà infantile e per l'inclusione sociale. L'analisi della ricerca di Working for inclusion ha evidenziato come i servizi completamente integrati insieme ad un approccio universale siano in grado di raggiungere i gruppi svantaggiati in modo più efficace di quanto non facciano i servizi specifici per categorie svantaggiate.

Sommario e punti chiave

L'educazione e la cura dell'infanzia e l'economia

I tagli economici che riducono le strutture per la cura e l'educazione dell'infanzia potrebbero avere conseguenze sulla capacità delle famiglie di mantenere un impiego. L'offerta dei servizi e delle scuole per l'infanzia è una parte vitale della programmazione economica generale, così come è centrale particolarmente per la riduzione della povertà infantile e per la promozione dell'inclusione sociale. D'altra parte, gli investimenti nei servizi e nelle scuole per l'infanzia potrebbe dare nuova forza alle economie locali attraverso la creazione di posti di lavoro ed allo stesso tempo migliorando e qualificando l'offerta del mondo del lavoro.

Punti generali

Considerare il bambino protagonista al centro delle politiche per la prima infanzia

I bambini sono cittadini competenti e attivi, che formano le loro conoscenze -insieme all'adulto - in modi originali e talvolta imprevedibili, sfidando spesso le aspettative degli adulti. Ai bambini ed alle loro famiglie si dovrebbe dare valore e rispetto ed andrebbero considerati interlocutori importanti nel loro percorso di apprendimento, insieme agli educatori ed alle insegnanti, dando loro tempo di sviluppare relazioni positive e profonde tra di loro.

Sistemi universali e integrati per l'educazione e la cura dell'infanzia

E' necessaria una visione delle strutture e delle competenze dei servizi, ripensandoli attraverso la prospettiva dei bambini e delle famiglie per far coesistere il concetto di cura in relazione alle pari opportunità nel mondo del lavoro (solitamente associato ai servizi per bambini sotto i tre anni) ed il concetto di educazione (solitamente associato ai servizi per bambini dai tre anni in poi).

La cura e l'educazione sono entrambi concetti importanti in relazione ai bambini. I sistemi non

integrati sono sistemi non equi. Servizi flessibili, a tempo corto e lungo che coniugano i congedi parentali con il diritto di accesso promuovono l'inclusione sociale e riducono la povertà infantile. Le politiche esclusivamente mirate a obiettivi specifici rischiano di consolidare l'esclusione sociale; anche per questo i servizi devono essere concepiti e realizzati come universali.

La formazione di base degli operatori dei servizi e delle scuole per l'infanzia

Investire in educatori ed insegnanti altamente qualificati, autonomi e capaci di pratiche democratiche e riflettute significa ottenere operatori flessibili, aggiornabili, maggiormente equilibrati a livello di genere, che siano in grado di lavorare con tutti i bambini e con tutte le loro famiglie.

Lavorare con i genitori e con la comunità

Una partecipazione significativa dei genitori e delle comunità locali rispetto alle decisioni che riguardano la gestione ed il curriculum dei servizi e delle scuole per l'infanzia dovrebbe essere considerata una priorità. Non soltanto le famiglie traggono benefici dalle informazioni e dal sostegno forniti dai servizi, ma anche le conoscenze dei genitori in quanto portatori di esperienze possono essere d'aiuto per gli operatori nell'osservazione e nella comprensione dello sviluppo di ogni singolo bambino. Questo scambio bidirezionale è una manifestazione importante di un tipo di approccio che si può definire democratico.

Sistemi di welfare per l'equità sociale

Le società che non sono eque generano disuguaglianza. Senza politiche forti di redistribuzione della ricchezza e senza sistemi di welfare che siano universali e articolati in molteplici opportunità, il solo lavoro dei migliori educatori ed insegnanti che operano nel campo dell'infanzia non può essere sufficiente per sradicare la povertà infantile e raggiungere l'inclusione sociale.

Oppsummering av funn og påpeking av viktige forhold

Fokus på små barn for å redusere barnefattigdom

Familier med små barn har særlig høy risiko for å bli fattige. I Europa er omlag hver sjettede husholdning med barn under seks år fattige. I sju europeiske land er risikoen så høy at den omfatter 20 prosent av husholdningene.

For å kunne utgjøre en signifikant forskjell med hensyn til reduksjon av fattigdom og øke sosial inkludering på tvers av alle landene i Europa, bør det utvikles politikk som setter fokus på erfaringene til små barn og deres familier.

Gjennom prosjektet *Working for Inclusion* fant man at land med lavt nivå av barnefattigdom og høyt nivå for barns velvære, også har de best utviklede og mest integrerte systemene for omsorg og utdanning for små barn, og, assosiert med dette, også sjenerøse velferdssystemer og sterk omfordeling av inntekter. Generelt sett har disse landene en bedre kvalifisert og høyere lønnet arbeidsstokk, og systemer basert på verdier om likeverd, rettigheter og demokrati.

De nordiske landene har de beste historiske merittene i form av relativt små forskjeller i levekår, god velferd, omsorg og utdanning for små barn. Imidlertid har Slovenia vist at slik suksess ikke er avgrenset til rike nordeuropeiske land, og lokale myndigheter som eksempelvis San Miniato, Italia, har vist at det ikke bare er nasjonal politikk som kan utgjøre en forskjell.

Betydningen av fullt integrerte systemer på europeisk og nasjonalt nivå

Fullt integrerte systemer skiller ikke mellom utdanning og omsorg for barn under skolepliktig alder. Full integrasjon viser seg gjennom at oppgavene for denne målgruppen er samlet på departementsnivå, at det eksisterer en enhetlig og felles utdanning for personalet som arbeider med barna, felles kvalifikasjoner, felles finansiering, enhetlige lønns- og arbeidsvilkår,

enhetlige servicestrukturer, felles kvalitetssikringssystemer og felles innhold gjennom læreplan/rammeplan.

Det er kun seks europeiske land (Sverige, Finland, Norge, Danmark, Slovenia og Latvia) som har fullt integrerte systemer for omsorg og utdanning for små barn. Fire land (Tyskland, Østerrike, Spania og Storbritannia) har delvis integrerte systemer som opprettholder et skille mellom omsorg og utdanning, i særlig grad med hensyn til arbeidsstokken.

Fullt integrerte systemer for omsorg og utdanning, kombinert med høy grad av generell tilslutning til systemet og en godt kvalifisert og høyt lønnet arbeidsstokk, er nøkkelindikatorer dersom et land skal kunne redusere barnefattigdom og styrke sosial inkludering.

Når omsorgs- og utdanningstjenester for små barn ikke er integrert, eller bare er delvis integrert, slik tilfellet er i de fleste europeiske land, opplever barn under tre år og deres familier en lavere standard på de tjenestene som tilbys, til en høyere pris, og med liten grad av likeverdighet med hensyn til hvem som får tilgang til tjenestene. Personalet som arbeider med barna, er også lavere utdannet og lavere lønnet.

Ikke-integrerte systemer er ikke likeverdige, verken for barna, deres foresatte eller for de som arbeider med barna.

Viktige forhold som EU-kommisjonen bør vurdere

Betydningen av den åpne metoden for koordinering

Det å kunne dele kunnskaper, ideer og erfaringer om omsorg og utdanning for små barn innen og på tvers av partnerlandene har gitt et viktig bidrag til benchmarking og politikktutforming i de enkelte deltakerlandene, på alle nivåer, gjennom at man har nådd ut til

Oppsummering av funn og påpeking av viktige forhold

alt fra innflytelsesrike politikktutformere og tusenvis av personer som jobber med barn. Den åpne metoden for koordinering er en verdifull og verdsatt måte å støtte medlemslandene og involvere alle relevante interessenter, gjennom å adressere målene definert i Lisboa-traktaten om å redusere barnefattigdom og øke sosial inkludering.

Betydningen av EUs strukturform

Prosjektet Working for Inclusion har vist hvilken betydning EUs strukturfond har for utforskning av nye modeller for omsorg og utdanning for små barn, og for å øke bevisstheten på alle nivå innen politikk og administrasjon og i det sivile samfunn om hvilken betydning gode tjenester for barn har for å redusere barnefattigdom og øke sosial inkludering. Dette ble i særlig grad synliggjort gjennom studiebesøket i Polen der delegatene fikk oppleve hvilken betydning strukturfondene har hatt for å bygge ut gode tjenester for barn. Strukturfondene er også en viktig ressurs for andre land som skal utforske hvordan man kan utvikle integrerte systemer for omsorgs- og utdanningstjenester for barn.

Betydningen av å ta ledelsen

For å kunne redusere barnefattigdom i hele EU-området kreves det sterkt lederskap og en klar strategi fra EU-nivået. Integrerte systemer krever en integrert tilnærming både på EU-nivå så vel som på nasjonalt og lokalt nivå.

De kommende drøftingene knyttet til omsorg og utdanning for små barn gir mulighet for å vektlegge viktigheten av integrerte systemer for å redusere barnefattigdom, og for å fokusere på den innebygde ulikheten som finnes innen ikke-integrerte systemer. Disse drøftingene gir også en mulighet for å inkludere en kvalitativ dimensjon i Barcelona-målene fra 2002 om økning i antall plasser for omsorg og utdanning for små barn. En kartlegging i 2008 viste at kun fem av medlemslandene hadde nådd eller gått forbi målene om å ha et omfang av plasser som tilsvarte 33 prosent av aldersgruppen barn under

tre år, mens åtte medlemsland hadde klart målet om å ha plasser for 90 prosent av aldersgruppen tre til seks år. Slike mål kan i betydelig grad hjelpe til i arbeidet med å øke tilgangen til tjenester, men målene må integreres med andre aspekter av politikk for tjenester for små barn, i stedet for å bli håndtert isolert.

Mange EU-land vil kunne profitere på å inkludere en bredere kvalifikasjon for personell som skal jobbe med små barn, eksempelvis gjennom å ta i bruk pedagogmodellen. Det å bidra til å spre denne modellen i Europa vil støtte integrasjonen av arbeidsstokken som jobber med små barn og ytterligere oppmuntre til samarbeid på tvers av medlemslandene.

Viktige forhold for nasjonale og regionale myndigheter

Betydningen av fullt integrerte systemer

Nasjonale og regionale myndigheter bør vektlegge arbeidet med å etablere integrerte systemer for omsorgs- og utdanningstjenester for små barn.

Betydningen av universelle tjenester

Myndigheter på nasjonal og regionalt nivå bør unngå budsjettkutt som reduserer universell tilgang til tjenester for små barn og deres familier, fordi dette vil øke ulikheten i tilgang på omsorgs- og utdanningstjenester, noe som er av sentral betydning for å kunne motvirke barnefattigdom og øke sosial inkludering. Forskingen som ble gjennomført som del av Working for Inclusion prosjektet viste at fullt integrerte tjenester, kombinert med en universell tilnærming, når grupper som er i fare for å bli marginalisert på en bedre måte enn tjenester som er målrettet kun mot disse gruppene.

Finansiering av omsorgs- og utdanningstjenester for små barn

Budsjettkutt som bygger ned omsorgs- og utdanningstjenester for små barn, kan redusere

Oppsummering av funn og påpeking av viktige forhold

familiens mulighet for å kunne ta lønnet arbeid. Tilbudet av omsorgs- og utdanningstjenester for små barn har vital betydning for den generelle økonomiske planleggingen, i tillegg til at det er svært viktig for å kunne redusere barnefattigdom og øke sosial inkludering, mer spesifikt. På tilsvarende måte kan investering i omsorgs- og utdanningstjenester for små barn stimulere lokale økonomier gjennom at det skapes jobber, samtidig som arbeidsstokken utvikles og utdannes.

Generelle forhold

Det aktive barnet i sentrum ved utvikling av barne- og ungdomspolitik

Barn er aktive borgere som former sin egen utvikling og lærer sammen med voksne på en rekke ulike måter, ofte utfordrende og uforutsigbart for oss som voksne. Barn og deres familier må respekteres, verdsettes og vurderes som likeverdige partnere i læringsprosessen, og de som arbeider med barn og deres familier må gis tid og mulighet til å utvikle positive og gode relasjoner til både barna og deres foresatte.

Universelle, integrerte systemer for omsorgs- og utdanningstjenester

Det er nødvendig å tenke nytt og revurdere tradisjonelle strukturer og mandat for tjenester for små barn, med mål om å ta barnets og familiens perspektiv, for på den måten å bringe sammen tradisjonelt delte forestillinger om omsorg og utdanning. Omsorg og utdanning har like stor betydning for barn. Delte systemer er ikke likeverdige. Fleksible deltids- og heltidstjenester som knytter rett til

omsorgspermisjon ved fødsel med rett til tjenester for barna fra de er ett år, stimulerer sosial inkludering og bidrar til å redusere barnefattigdom. Tjenester som kun er målrettet mot utsatte grupper kan befeste sosial ekskludering – universelle tjenester er av avgjørende betydning.

Grunnutdanning for arbeidsstokken som arbeider innen omsorgs- og utdanningstjenester for små barn

Investering i en høyt kvalifisert, uavhengig arbeidsstokk som kan involvere seg i en demokratisk, reflekterende praksis danner grunnlag for en fleksibel, bærekraftig, mer likestilt arbeidsstokk som kan arbeide med alle små barn og deres familier.

Å arbeide med foreldre og lokalsamfunn

Det er viktig å prioritere meningsfull deltakelse fra foreldre og lokalsamfunn i beslutninger om ledelse av og innhold i tjenester for små barn. Familier vil ha fordel av den informasjon og støtte som tjenestene kan gi, samtidig som foreldrenes ekspertise hjelper de ansatte i sin observasjon av og forståelse av det enkelte barns utvikling. Slik gjensidighet er en viktig manifestasjon av en demokratisk tilnærming.

Likeverdige sosiale velferdssystemer

Samfunn med ulikhet avler ulikeverd. Uten en sterk omfordelingspolitikk og støttende, universelle velferdssystemer vil selv ikke en utmerket praksis fra de som arbeider med små barn være nok til å utrydde barnefattigdom og oppnå sosial inkludering.

Streszczenie i najważniejsze kwestie

Wczesna opieka i edukacja jako sposób przeciwdziałania ubóstwu wśród dzieci

Rodziny z małymi dziećmi są szczególnie zagrożone ubóstwem. Statystyki pokazują, że w Europie bieda dotyka prawie co szóste gospodarstwo domowe, w którym wychowuje się dziecko poniżej szóstego roku życia, a w siedmiu krajach europejskich wskaźnik ten jest jeszcze wyższy i wynosi 20%.

Aby znacząco zmniejszyć skalę ubóstwa wśród dzieci i zapewnić większy poziom integracji społecznej należy w proponowanych strategiach działania znacznie szerzej uwzględnić warunki życia najmłodszych i ich rodzin.

Z danych uzyskanych w ramach programu *Working for inclusion* („Praca na rzecz integracji”) wynika, że kraje o niskim wskaźniku ubóstwa dzieci i wysokim wskaźniku komfortu życia najmłodszych mają także najwyższe wskaźniki upowszechnienia zintegrowanych usług opieki i edukacji wczesnodziecięcej oraz sprawnie działające systemy pomocy społecznej z silną redystrybucją dochodów. Ponadto tamtejsza kadra pedagogiczna jest na ogół wyżej wykwalifikowana i lepiej opłacana, a w programach dydaktycznych silny nacisk kładzie się na równouprawnienie, prawa człowieka i zasady demokracji.

Najlepszymi wskaźnikami w zakresie upowszechnienia edukacji, równouprawnienia i komfortu życia dzieci mogą się pochwalić kraje skandynawskie; niemniej przykład Słowenii dowodzi, że sukcesy w tych dziedzinach nie ograniczają się jedynie do państw bogatej Północy, a przykład gminy San Miniato, Włochy, pokazuje, że znakomite wyniki mogą przynosić także rozwiązania lokalne, nie tylko ogólnokrajowe.

Znaczenie pełnej integracji systemów opiekuńczo-edukacyjnych na poziomie

europejskim, narodowym i lokalnym

W pełni zintegrowane systemy wczesnej opieki i edukacji cechują się brakiem podziału na usługi dla dzieci do lat trzech oraz dla dzieci od lat trzech do wieku, w którym rozpoczyna się obowiązek szkolny. O integracji świadczą: struktura ministerstw, wykształcenie nauczycieli, kwalifikacje zawodowe, nakłady budżetowe, poziom zarobków, warunki pracy, formy usług, zasady nadzoru merytorycznego oraz wytyczne programowe.

W pełni zintegrowane systemy wczesnej opieki i edukacji funkcjonują zaledwie w sześciu krajach europejskich (Szwecji, Finlandii, Norwegii, Danii, Słowenii i Łotwie). W czterech krajach (Niemczech, Austrii, Hiszpanii i Wielkiej Brytanii) działają systemy częściowo zintegrowane, w których podział nadal istnieje, zwłaszcza w odniesieniu do kadry pedagogicznej.

W pełni zintegrowane usługi wczesnodziecięcej opieki i edukacji – powszechnie dostępne i realizowane przez wysoko wykwalifikowaną, dobrze opłacaną kadre – odgrywają pierwszoplanową rolę w zmniejszaniu ubóstwa dzieci i rozwijaniu więzi społecznych.

Tam, gdzie programy opiekuńczo-edukacyjne nie są zintegrowane, lub są tylko częściowo zintegrowane (jak w większości państw członkowskich UE), dzieci do lat trzech mają gorszą opiekę, rodzice ponoszą wyższe koszty, dostęp do usług charakteryzuje się nierównością, a kadra pedagogiczna jest słabiej wykształcona i gorzej opłacana.

Systemy podzielone to systemy oparte na nierówności – dzieci, rodziców i nauczycieli.

Najważniejsze kwestie dla Komisji Europejskiej

Znaczenie Otwartej Metody Koordynacji
Wymiana informacji, pomysłów i doświadczeń na

Streszczenie i najważniejsze kwestie

temat wczesnodziecięcej opieki i edukacji pomiędzy współpracującymi krajami pomogła im w opracowaniu kryteriów i strategii działania dla wszystkich szczebli administracji, przyciągając uwagę wpływowych polityków oraz tysięcy nauczycieli. Otwarta Metoda Koordynacji to dobry sposób wspierania państw członkowskich, a także angażowania wszystkich zainteresowanych przeciwdziałaniem ubóstwu wśród dzieci i rozwojem integracji społecznej zgodnie z zapisami Traktatu Lizbońskiego.

Znaczenie funduszy strukturalnych

Program „Praca na rzecz integracji” uświadamia ważną rolę unijnych funduszy strukturalnych dla rozwoju nowych form opieki i edukacji wczesnodziecięcej oraz upowszechniania wśród rządzących i społeczeństwa wiedzy na temat oddziaływania programów opiekuńczo-edukacyjnych. Programy te pomagają zmniejszyć skalę ubóstwa wśród najmłodszych i wzmacniają więzi społeczne. Potwierdzają to zwłaszcza polscy współpracownicy programu – w ich kraju fundusze strukturalne odgrywają bardzo istotną rolę. Fundusze strukturalne mogą pomóc także innym krajom we wprowadzeniu nowych zintegrowanych form opieki i edukacji dla najmłodszych.

Znaczenie przywództwa

Ograniczanie skali ubóstwa wśród najmłodszych obywateli Europy wymaga przywództwa ogólnoeuropejskiego oraz opracowania ogólnoeuropejskiej strategii działania. Wprowadzenie systemów zintegrowanych nie będzie możliwe bez integracji działań na szczeblu unijnym, a także krajowym i samorządowym.

Zapowiedziany komunikat Komisji dotyczący wczesnej opieki i edukacji to znakomita okazja do dyskusji na temat roli zintegrowanych systemów opiekuńczo-edukacyjnych w zmniejszaniu ubóstwa wśród dzieci, a także na temat nierówności wpisanych w systemy podzielone. Komunikat stworzy możliwość włączenia wymiaru jakościowego do przyjętych

w Barcelonie w 2002 roku założeń dotyczących placówek wczesnej opieki i edukacji. Z analizy przeprowadzonej w 2008 roku wynika bowiem, że zakładany cel zapewnienia miejsc w placówkach dla co najmniej 33% dzieci w wieku do lat trzech osiągnęło lub przekroczyło zaledwie pięć państw członkowskich, a osiem państw spełniło kryterium zapewnienia miejsc dla 90% dzieci w wieku 3-6 lat. Założenia mogą pomóc znacząco zwiększyć dostępność placówek, ale zamiast realizować je jako odrębne zadania, należałoby je zintegrować z innymi aspektami polityki wobec najmłodszych.

Wiele krajów Unii przyjęło szerszy model usług opiekuńczych, które realizują na przykład pedagodzy społeczni. Upowszechnianie tego modelu w całej Europie może pomóc w zintegrowaniu kadry i rozszerzeniu współpracy ogólnoeuropejskiej.

Najważniejsze kwestie dla władz państwowych i samorządowych

Znaczenie pełnej integracji usług

Władze państwowe, regionalne i lokalne powinny dążyć do pełnej integracji systemów opieki i edukacji wczesnodziecięcej.

Znaczenie powszechnej dostępności placówek

Nie powinno się zmniejszać środków budżetowych na placówki opiekuńczo-edukacyjne, ponieważ ogranicza to dostępność usług dla dzieci i ich rodzin, co prowadzi do nierówności, a w następstwie do ubóstwa i braku integracji społecznej. Z analizy przeprowadzonej w ramach programu „Praca na rzecz integracji” wynika, że pełna integracja usług w połączeniu z ich powszechną dostępnością pomaga grupom zmarginalizowanym znacznie skuteczniej niż specjalnie ukierunkowane programy pomocy.

Znaczenie usług wczesnej opieki i edukacji dla rozwoju gospodarczego

Streszczenie i najważniejsze kwestie

Cięcia budżetowe, które prowadzą do zamykania placówek, mogą negatywnie wpłynąć na możliwość znalezienia pracy przez rodziców. Usługi opiekuńczo-edukacyjne nie tylko przeciwdziałają ubóstwu wśród dzieci i zwiększają integrację społeczną, ale także w istotny sposób przyczyniają się do rozwoju gospodarczego. Inwestycja w usługi opiekuńczo-edukacyjne może ożywić lokalną działalność gospodarczą, stworzyć nowe miejsca pracy i podnieść kwalifikacje zawodowe zatrudnionych.

Zagadnienia ogólne

Aktywizacja dziecka jako zasada działania

Dziecko to aktywny obywatel, który zdobywa wiedzę w kontaktach z dorosłymi. Dziecko uczy się w sposób zaskakujący i, być może, czasem niezgodny z oczekiwaniami dorosłych. Nauczyciele powinni cenić i szanować swoich wychowanków oraz ich rodziny, i traktować ich jako równych partnerów w procesie edukacji; powinni mieć też wystarczająco dużo czasu, by nawiązać życzliwe, głębokie więzi ze swoimi podopiecznymi.

Powszechny dostęp do zintegrowanych systemów wczesnej opieki i edukacji

Należy koniecznie poddać analizie tradycyjne formy i zakres usług z punktu widzenia dziecka i jego rodziny tak, by połączyć tradycyjnie rozumianą opiekę (nad dziećmi do lat trzech) oraz edukację (dla dzieci od lat trzech wzwyż).

Dla dziecka opieka jest równie ważna jak edukacja. Systemy podzielone to systemy oparte na nierówności. Usługi elastyczne, oferowane w pełnym i niepełnym wymiarze godzin, z których można skorzystać po zakończeniu urlopu

przysługującego rodzicom po urodzeniu dziecka, umożliwiają integrację społeczną i zmniejszają skalę ubóstwa wśród najmłodszych. Specjalnie ukierunkowane programy pomocy mogą utrwalać wykluczenie społeczne, więc usługi powinny być powszechnie dostępne dla wszystkich.

Wykształcenie kadry nauczycielskiej

Inwestycja w wysoko wykwalifikowanych samodzielnych pracowników, którzy umieją postępować w sposób demokratyczny i są zdolni do autorefleksji przyczyni się do większej elastyczności działań, stabilności zatrudnienia i lepszej reprezentacji kadry nauczycielskiej pod względem płci.

Współpraca z domem i społecznością lokalną

Należy nawiązać konstruktywną współpracę z rodzicami i mieszkańcami po to, by zachęcić ich do współdecydowania o sposobie prowadzenia placówki i metodach realizacji programu dydaktycznego dla zapewnienia jak najlepszych warunków do rozwoju dzieci. Nie tylko rodzice korzystają z wiedzy i doświadczenia nauczycieli, również nauczyciele w swojej pracy z dziećmi korzystają z wiedzy i doświadczenia rodziców. Obopólna wymiana doświadczeń jest ważnym świadectwem postawy demokratycznej.

Równy dostęp do systemów pomocy społecznej

Społeczeństwa, w których nie ma równości, odtwarzają nierówności. Bez silnej redystrybucji dochodów i skutecznych systemów powszechnej pomocy nawet najlepsi nauczyciele nie pomogą w zwalczaniu ubóstwa i nie zapewnią integracji społecznej.

Introduction

2010 was the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. At the same time as there has been an increasing urgency to address poverty, social inclusion and discrimination at EU level, there is a growing consensus that one crucial way to achieve this is by investing in services not just for children from age three, but to provide support for families and children from birth.

The economic argument for this is compelling: early childhood education and care systems that include reliable childcare enable parents to work, and by supporting children in their early learning and parents in their parenting, we can contribute to reducing poverty and disadvantage and help to prevent problems of social exclusion and discrimination in later life.

An expansion in services for young children and their families with an integrated and well educated birth-to-six workforce would contribute to the increase in good quality employment that is an aim of the EU, attracting young people with increasingly high levels of education, rather than the decreasing supply of poorly educated young women at risk of social exclusion themselves.

People, not economic units

However, in the rush to secure a good return on our investment, to calculate inputs and measure outputs, it is vital that we remember that children, families and the early years workforce are made up of complex, unpredictable and rich people, not production line components.

Changes in attitudes and behaviour arise through trust developed over time, in respectful relationships where professionals and parents work together and where children are the agents of their own learning, and learn to question and explore at their own pace.

By witnessing and disseminating other countries' cultural assumptions and practice methods, the participants in the *Working for inclusion* programme have been able to reflect and improve on their own countries' direction of travel in providing early years services. The best systems and practice benefit from being challenged and refreshed, and those in the early stages of development need to be supported in their ambition and aspiration.

Throughout the project there has been much to discuss, complex arguments to engage in, and subtleties and nuances of practice to observe, and all of this is explored in the many free publications available online (see page 42 for more details).

The work undertaken by *Working for inclusion* researchers and delegates has created a picture of how the early years workforce fits within a society's attitudes towards children, government structures and social welfare systems.

This report is intended to present that picture, simply and persuasively: how it is that the development of early years workforce and services can support a reduction in poverty and an increase in social inclusion.

Towards an inclusive early years workforce



Credit: Children in Scotland

"A substantial body of evidence shows that, especially for disadvantaged children, pre-primary education can produce large socio-economic returns."

Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities through Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe, European Commission, January 2009

"Parents were very proud of their preschool centre and were clearly learning alongside their children."

Kathleen Easton, headteacher, Scotland, visiting Poland

"It is, I think, very typical of the best local experiences of early childhood education in Italy that they understand what they have achieved is founded on culture and values; management and technical practices have a recognised place, but one that is subservient to politics and ethics"

Aldo Fortunati, president, La Bottega Di Geppetto, San Miniato, Italy

Towards an inclusive early years workforce

It is not just a matter of the inclusion policies and practice an early years workforce applies that is important: what ensures a truly inclusive workforce is who they are, how they are valued and how their practice fits within wider policies affecting children and families.

An inclusive early years workforce is one that promotes inclusion and is itself inclusive and included. In its diversity it represents society as a whole, and its members are valued and paid sufficiently well that they are not part of the working poor in danger of exclusion themselves.

Fragmented and low status: increasing inequality

Poor organisation of early years services can generate more inequality of opportunity than equality of opportunity: through the creation of poor employment; by allowing lower standards of care for children under three; by targeting and separating disadvantaged children from their mainstream peers; and by creating barriers to access for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- *Poor employment:* in split systems of early childhood education and care, still found in most member states, the workforce caring for children under three years is dominated by poorly educated women in unstable, often temporary employment contracts, with poor pay and conditions, who become a group themselves at risk of social exclusion.
- *Lower standards of care:* workforce divisions between staff who work in 'early education' services with school age children (government funded), and those who work in 'childcare' services with children from birth onwards (often paid for privately),

result in poorer and sometimes harmful care for the very young, whose – usually working – parents often have very little choice in who should look after their children.

- *Targeting and separating disadvantaged children from their mainstream peers:* this results in negative effects on social learning, vocabulary and attitudes to diversity. By contrast universal provision with centres for all social classes together sensitises parents to exclusion issues and the importance of education.
- *Barriers to access:* childcare services, as opposed to government funded settings for children aged three and over, are less widely available, can be costly, and often create a divide between those in employment able to afford care, and those targeted for free care because of disadvantage, risk or disability. Children from immigrant families, those in rural areas, or living in poverty, are least likely to be able to access care services or support for very young children, so that when entering a government funded setting at age three or four they may already feel at a disadvantage, and their families isolated from many public sources of support.

However, when the right structures, initial education and employment are in place, an inclusive workforce committed to democratic, reflective and universal practice can work together with parents and children to create positive early years settings staffed by consistent, securely employed professionals, where children, families and staff are valued by communities. In these settings and the societies that produce them, poverty and inequality are much reduced.

Towards an inclusive early years workforce



Children and staff at the Regnbuen Kindergarten, Bodø, Norway Credit: Children in Scotland

A professional workforce: the pedagogue in rural Norway

Pedagogues are degree-educated professionals who have trained to work in a range of settings with young and old alike. They have a whole-person approach to personal development, and they incorporate the arts, crafts, technology, dance and sport in their work. Their training provides a professional framework that encourages reflection rather than a knowledge of any particular curriculum.

Professionally trained pedagogues in Norway have a range of skills that are particularly valuable in delivering services in rural areas, where flexibility is an asset. Pedagogical training is one of the specialisms available to student teachers, and the government has strengthened the recruiting of pedagogues in the last year. Many of those leading kindergartens or drop-in centres for parents and children are qualified pedagogues. Legislation dictates that there must be one pedagogical leader for every seven to nine children under the age of three years, and one for every 14 to 18 children over this age. Pedagogues also play a key role in implementing the inclusive approach to children with disabilities and additional support needs.

Towards an inclusive early years workforce

Integrated and valued: working in an inclusive way

The range and type of inclusive working is enormous, covering specialist support work in majority language acquisition, working with children with disabilities and additional support for learning needs, working with ethnicity, on gender issues, in rural areas, and with parents. The knowledge and training required is distinctive in each different field and experts can support mainstream practice. However, in creating specialisms there is a risk of separating working for inclusion out as a professional approach, a technique linked to predefined results.

If ways and means of working for inclusion in early childhood are not governed by deeper understandings of democracy and reflective, respectful partnership approaches to working with children and their families, then they become techniques, which can be overtaken by bureaucracy and process. In this situation staff become technicians, interchangeable and less important than the checklists of a curriculum

designed to deliver particular outcomes. And if inclusion is seen as requiring specialist rather than mainstream skills, then not all children will be supported. As one Norwegian delegate visiting Poland observed: "If demands regarding different qualifications become too specific it will be very difficult to develop viable services in rural areas."

The early years workforce, while not a silver bullet, is a vital and core component in a society's efforts to reduce poverty and social inclusion. Early years services may be core to achieving greater inclusion, but they cannot succeed without:

- a democratic, reflective understanding of the child
- the right government structures and systems to support the workforce
- a welfare system designed to reduce inequality.

The following sections explore these three complementary and equally vital component parts.

Working in partnership: parental support in Poland

Attendance rates at early years settings in Poland are among lowest in the EU, with 2% of children under three years in formal settings and 57% of three to six year olds attending preschool, on a part-time and full-time basis. Services are distributed unequally, with fewer kindergarten places in regions most affected by unemployment and more resources and higher attendance in urban areas. In rural areas in 2008/2009, 28.6 % of three to five year-olds attended preschool. The Comenius Foundation *Where there are no preschools* programme provides equal educational opportunities for children aged three to five years, especially in rural areas with high unemployment.

The programme uses itinerant teachers and support from parents, to help communities create centres for groups of 10–15 children offering activities for three to four hours a day, three to four days a week. It follows the early childhood education core curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of National Education, with fewer hours than mainstream settings, smaller groups, mixed age grouping, and with active parent participation. External evaluation shows children from such centres perform very well at primary school. In 2007, the Ministry of National Education included these "other forms of kindergarten education" into education law.

The child as protagonist



Credit: La Bottega Di Geppetto

"It takes a brave and competent practitioner to embark upon a journey each day without absolute certainty where it will take them"

Executive councillor for education at West Lothian Council, Scotland, visiting San Miniato, Italy

"I thought I understood this concept of the child through my own children and grandchildren, but I can see that when you're looking at the workforce you need to do an enormous amount of preparation beforehand. The workforce has to be exceptionally well trained."

Consultant in public health, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, visiting San Miniato, Italy

A community approach: San Miniato, Italy

Community participation, parental satisfaction and take up of services for young children are high in San Miniato. The local authority's 25-year investment in services for very young children and their families means that some 45% of children under the age of three attend a nursery or other early childhood service and 100% of children three to five in early years centres. This is four times higher than the Italian national average and, with the exception of Denmark and Iceland, no country in Europe can claim a similar level of provision.

The most defining mark of the success of these centres is their popularity with families, not just expressed by numbers on waiting lists, but in the way families participate, learn from and contribute to services. Alfonso Lippi, mayor of San Miniato from 1990 to 1999, reflected: "Every year we expanded the system with new services with the aim of increasing the supply and distributing it in a more balanced way ... we developed experimental programmes and integrated services in which we tried to meet the needs of families who were initially not interested in full time care by offering them the opportunity to participate along with their children for a few afternoons a week ... if you focus on the quality of services and on increasing the supply, the demand does not decrease (as one might expect) but instead grows".

The child as protagonist

In one of the best known centres of expertise in early childhood – the city of Reggio Emilia – practitioners constantly ask the question: “what is our/your image of the child?” They ask because they understand the powerful influence of social constructs of the child. Reggio’s focus on a democratic, cooperative and questioning environment for fostering young children’s learning is in part a desire not to repeat the experience of fascism by nurturing a vision of children who can think and act for themselves.

The child is so often the focus of policy and planning documents, curricula and qualifications and yet what we mean by child, or childhood is rarely questioned or discussed. Some might argue such discussion is the luxurious preserve of academics, not for policymakers who need to focus on practical matters. However such an argument fails to understand the power of our image of the child and how it determines the kind of workforce, institutions and welfare structures we provide, not only shaping the nature of public services, but reflecting and shaping our society, with all its inequality and problems of social inclusion.

The concept of the child as protagonist emphasises the child’s autonomy in their own lives as competent and active rather than passive and awaiting direction from adults. It is a view that has been central to the development of early childhood institutions in San Miniato, Italy (and elsewhere, including Norway), influencing every aspect of early years provision – the way in which early years staff interact with children and support their learning, their relationship with the children’s families and the design and use of the physical space.

Parents as experts

The image of the child as rich and competent extends to families in San Miniato. Close collaboration with parents is deemed vital. Staff recognise that families bring an intimate and continuous experience of the child that enables the staff to create appropriate learning opportunities. There are frequent in-depth meetings and discussions of staff’s written observations with parents as well as daily conversations, that help staff better respond to each child’s circumstance. Parents’ expert knowledge helps staff, who in turn support parents in their observation and understanding of their child’s development and so increase their skills, confidence and enjoyment of their parenting.

Valuing diversity

References to poverty, to disability, or to language barriers can conjure an image of a weak and vulnerable child in need of protection rather than a rich and competent citizen. The universal approach of San Miniato’s early years settings and its positive focus on the “rich” child and family, challenge assumptions about disadvantage or disability, particularly in how such labels can define and so exclude children from the mainstream. As two Polish observers commented: “San Miniato’s formula of not addressing services to special groups helps with social integration” and “the child as protagonist approach offers unique opportunities of children from disadvantaged areas to experience being in a socially mixed group as a partner. The philosophy puts them on an equal footing”.

The child as protagonist

A highly competent workforce

Staff turnover in the early years centres in San Miniato is very low, their work is satisfying and is valued locally. The main qualified group enter the profession with a degree in any discipline, must pass an entrance exam set by San Miniato's own training and research centre and undertake intense on-the-job training. Staff are viewed not as technicians employing a range of handed-down techniques or activities with set outcomes, but like the children they work with, they are viewed as highly competent protagonists. They are given the confidence to respond to children's actions and interactions quickly and instinctively. The adults and children

share experiences that are not wholly planned and so learn together. The relationship tends to be more symmetrical, built on conversation and cooperation than in a setting where all activities are planned and directed by adults.

This view of children is shared by the community of San Miniato as a whole, which is what enables the city to strive to provide universal provision (currently at 45%). When whole countries subscribe to this idea of the child, the early years workforce is valued and supported, with joined-up government systems and structures and a welfare system that fosters equality, as the next two sections show.

A whole-country approach: Denmark

Denmark has a long tradition of respect for childhood and preserving 'a time for childhood'. This historical thread reaches back to the strong 19th century Danish people's education movement and in early childhood includes the influence of Fröbel. Today, new parents in Denmark are supported by a year of well paid parental leave, which can be divided between parents. Children have an entitlement to early childhood education and care following parental leave, and some municipalities guarantee a place for every child once they turn one. There are a range of providers from full- and part-time centre-based care to childminders caring for children in their home, which is more popular in rural areas. Denmark has the highest rate of nursery enrolment in Europe: 66% for children aged from birth to three, and from three to six the rate is 97%.

Denmark's early childhood services are integrated and managed by one government ministry. The EU average percentage of households with children living in poverty is 17.2%: in Denmark it is 11.5. Denmark ranks 6th in Europe for children's wellbeing and 7th for dividing resources and opportunities equally among men and women.

The child as protagonist



Parents and staff meeting, San Miniato, Italy Credit: La Bottega Di Geppetto



Norwegian nature kindergarten Credit: Anders Forstad

"Democracy forms the foundation of the pre-school. For this reason, all pre-school activity should be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values"

Swedish preschool curriculum

"Democracy is far more than a system of government, not just a political matter; it is not simply the practice of majority rule. It is a moral ideal and way of life, both personal and collective, that needs constant attention and practice. It is about the inclusion and influence of everyone, minorities as well as majorities; disagreement, but also negotiating on the basis of shared adherence to certain principles. As such it values certain attitudes, qualities and behaviours, whether in major decisions of state or in the everyday life of the family, nursery or school: plurality, respect for difference, dialogue, listening, deliberation, shared enquiry, critical judgement, cooperation, collective decision-making, individual freedom, the common good, participation"

Peter Moss (2009). There are alternatives! Markets and democratic experimentalism in early childhood education care. The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation

"Cooperation with and respect for families seemed very strong in San Miniato. By empowering the family and sharing the values underpinning the services with them, the child is given the opportunity to be a protagonist not only while at nursery, but also in the home/family sphere."
Delegates from Bodø, Norway, visiting San Miniato, Italy

Integrated systems



Parents and babies at Mørkved Family Centre, Norway
Credit: Children in Scotland

"All the services acting on behalf of children do everything to ensure all children's rights. It would not be possible if all the services did not cooperate together"

Polish lawyer in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

"The early years interdisciplinary team reports to the municipality's head of children, young people and families. The team is situated in the office of the public health nurse, midwife services, mental health services, medical and physiotherapist services. There is cooperation with educational services and the psychological/pedagogical team."

Childhood educator, Agrupamento de Escolas di Pedro de Santarem, Portugal

"Norway has a system of strongly integrated educational and social services that is based on a strong political vision both at national and local level and supported by significant public funding."

Manager of services to the person and solidarity policies sector, San Miniato, Italy

What are integrated systems?

In most of the 28 European countries studied,

responsibility for all aspects of early childhood education and care is divided between different government departments or agencies.

This means different arrangements for funding, regulation and inspection, access, staff education and professional development, pay and conditions, data collection and service planning. The division is typically related to children's age: services for children under three tend to be located in health or welfare departments, with an emphasis on "care", while services for children over three are in

education, often with an emphasis on "education" or "school readiness".

Institutions with children from birth to school age are therefore often answerable to different departments and agencies at the same time.

Where there is a workforce divided according to children's age, workers with children over three years usually have a tertiary level qualification (often teaching), while those working with younger children have an upper secondary or lower qualification. Where there is an integrated workforce, it usually consists of a professional with a basic education at tertiary level and a lower qualified assistant, often educated to secondary level.

In France, Hungary, Italy, Poland and the UK, for example, the workforce is divided, with one group working predominantly with children aged under three and another group working mainly with those aged from three to six.

In other countries, where one department has full responsibility of early childhood education and care – a fully integrated system – including Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Latvia and Slovenia, one workforce works with the whole age range of children from birth to age six.

Integrated systems



Age-integrated setting, San Miniato, Italy Credit: La Bottega Di Geppetto

Why are integrated systems important to social inclusion?

Integrated systems are both an indication of and an essential component of low poverty and high social inclusion.

Split systems are, by contrast, unequal systems – unequal for children, parents and the workforce. Fewer children under three have access to early childhood education and care in split systems. When they do, it is more costly for their parents, and the staff who work with them are less well educated and are poorly paid.

Countries with fully integrated systems have highly qualified, well paid staff across the age range, low levels of child poverty and high levels of child wellbeing. This is not necessarily cause and effect. Low poverty and high social inclusion are favoured by a package of interconnected policies to which integrated early childhood education and care is one important contribution. However, a country that chooses to move towards integration is choosing to shape its society rather than remain in thrall to traditional political structures that exacerbate inequality.

The structural divisions in most countries that consign different workers and institutions to

children at different ages are historical; every country began with a split system. Split systems have evolved according to cultural and social issues and demands such as a desire for more women to enter the labour market and a need for alternative care for their children; or governments wishing to improve education outcomes by focusing on improving young children's so-called school readiness.

In countries that have integrated systems, effort has been made to consider how best to support early childhood and the needs of the family as a whole and to provide systems and structures that are simple, consistent, and concerned with high quality services across the age range. They are usually linked to extended parental leave entitlements.

There are no examples of countries with split systems with low poverty and high social inclusion, or examples of countries that have retained a split system and still managed to reduce levels of child poverty and increase child wellbeing. Equally, no countries have retained the split system and at the same time raised the qualifications and pay of those working with under threes up to the same level of those working with children over three.

Integrated systems

Table 1: early childhood education and care entitlements and attendance

Country, by order of child wellbeing	Child wellbeing, 2005/6	Length of well paid parental leave - months	Entitlement to early childhood education	Attendance rate (%) at ECEC services, 2006		
				0-3 years Formal	0-3 years Informal	3 to compulsory school age
Netherlands	1 st	4 (8.5)	Yes-4 yrs	45 (4)	56 (3)	89 (7)
Sweden	2 nd	13 (36)	Yes-1 yr	44 (27)	4 (2)	92 (58)
Norway	3 rd	12.5 (36)	Yes-1 yr	34 (22)	7 (1)	80 (52)
Finland	5 th	9 (36)	Yes- birth	26 (21)	5 (2)	77 (56)
Denmark	6 th	12 (11)	Yes-6 mths	73 (66)	1 (0)	96 (80)
Slovenia	7 th	12.5(11)	Yes – end PL*	29 (26)	60 (23)	81 (66)
Germany	8 th	15 (36)	Yes-3 yrs	18 (7)	27 (3)	93 (27)
Ireland	9 th	6 (16)	Yes-4 yrs	18 (5)	36 (14)	93 (13)
Luxembourg	10 th	10	Yes-4 yrs	31 (17)	41 (11)	58 (16)
Austria	11 th	4 (24)	Yes-5 yrs	4 (1)	36 (5)	71 (16)
Cyprus	12 th	4	Yes-4.8 yrs	25 (18)	53 (40)	87 (37)
Spain	13 th	4 (36)	NI	39 (19)	27 (9)	91 (44)
Belgium	14 th	4 (10)	Yes-2½ yrs	40 (23)	30 (8)	98 (62)
France	15 th	4 (36)	Yes-3 yrs	31 (17)	28 (14)	94 (42)
Czech Rep	16 th	6.5 (36)	No	2 (1)	20 (2)	67 (39)
Slovakia	17 th	6.5	No	5 (4)	23 (8)	73 (63)
Estonia	18 th	15 (36)	NI	18 (12)	32 (10)	85 (78)
Italy	19 th	4.5 (13.5)	NI	26 (16)	35 (13)	90 (66)
Poland	20 th	4 (36)	Yes-3 yrs	2 (2)	NI	57 (21)
Portugal	21 st	5 (34)	No	33 (32)	46 (37)	75 (66)
Hungary	22 nd	25 (36)	Yes-5 yrs	8 (6)	48 (6)	79 (58)
Greece	23 rd	4 (9)	No	10 (8)	54 (29)	61 (20)
UK	24 th	1.5 (18)	Yes-3 yrs	33 (5)	38 (8)	89 (24)
Romania	25 th	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
Bulgaria	26 th	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
Latvia	27 th	4	Yes-5 yrs	16 (14)	14 (9)	60 (56)
Lithuania	28 th	12	NI	4 (4)	21 (14)	56 (47)
Malta	29 th	3	NI	8 (3)	16 (5)	57 (25)
EU27	NA	NA	NA	26 (12)	NI	84 (40)

NI = No information

Integrated systems

Table 1: early childhood education and care entitlements and attendance

Explanatory notes

This table is extracted from the report Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce, which has references for all sources. The report is online free at www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi.

Child wellbeing

This is an average ranking of member states plus Norway and Iceland (4th), for seven dimensions of child wellbeing (under 18s): health; subjective wellbeing; children's relationships; material resources; behaviour and risk; education; housing and environment.

Parental leave

Period of statutory maternity, paternity and parental leave paid at two thirds or more of normal earnings; figure in brackets indicates total period of leave available (in months) combining paid and unpaid leave.

Entitlement

*Includes countries where attendance at ECEC is compulsory as well as countries where an entitlement exists for voluntary attendance. (*end PL indicates entitlement from end of parental leave.)*

Attendance rate

***Formal** covers centre based services, including schools, and family day carers in organised services. **Informal** covers private family day carers, nannies, relatives and friends.*

***Unbracketed figures** are for all children; **bracketed figures** are for children attending 30 hours or more per week.*



Special teacher Siv Rødland working with Amalie, 4, Norway
Credit: Children in Scotland

Integrated systems

Table 2: Integrated systems: split or integrated services?

Country by order of child wellbeing	Unitary or split ECEC system	Ministry mainly responsible for services for:		Services age-integrated or age-separated
		0-3 years	3-compulsory school age	
Netherlands	Split	Welfare	Education	Both
Sweden	Unitary	Education	Education	Integrated
Norway	Unitary	Education	Education	Integrated
Finland	Unitary	Welfare	Welfare	Integrated
Denmark	Unitary	Welfare	Welfare	Both
Slovenia	Unitary	Education	Education	Integrated
Germany	PT Unitary*	Welfare	Welfare	Separated
Ireland	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
Luxembourg	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
Austria	PT Unitary*	Welfare	Welfare	Separated
Cyprus	Split	Welfare	Education	Both
Spain	PT Unitary**	Education	Education	Both
Belgium	Split*	Welfare	Education	Separated
France	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
Czech Rep	Split	Health	Education	Separated
Slovakia	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
Estonia	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
Italy	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
Poland***	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
Portugal	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
Hungary	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
Greece	Split	Welfare	Education	Both
UK	PT unitary**	Education	Education	Both
Romania	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
Bulgaria	Split	Health	Education	Separated
Latvia	Unitary	Education	Education	Integrated
Lithuania	Split	Welfare	Education	Both
Malta	Split	Welfare	Education	Separated
EU27	NA	NA	NA	NA

* Federal state

** ECEC responsibility devolved to autonomous communities (Spain) or nations (UK)

*** A new law, which will be voted in by the end of 2010, moves services for 0-3 from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Welfare.

Integrated systems

Table 2: Integrated systems: split or integrated services?

Explanatory notes

This table is extracted from the report Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce, which has references for all sources. The report is online free at www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi.

Unitary: government responsibility, access,

funding, regulation and workforce integrated across all ECEC services;

PT (part) Unitary: government responsibility integrated, but not all of other dimensions;

Split: government responsibility for ECEC split between two ministries; all other dimensions split between two systems (education or welfare).



Credit: La Bottega Di Geppetto

Low inequality



Credit: Children in Scotland

"Health and social problems are indeed more common in countries with bigger income inequalities. The two are extraordinarily closely related ... it is clear that greater equality, as well as improving the wellbeing of the whole population, is also the key to national standards of achievement and how countries perform in lots of different fields ... National standards of health, and of other important outcomes ... are substantially determined by the amount of inequality in a society." **Wilson and Pickett, *The Spirit Level*, 2009**

It is easy to think that richer countries are better placed to invest in social protection and the early years. The converse idea is that in times of economic crisis, as Europe finds itself experiencing now, it is much more difficult to direct money towards investing in social inclusion. These assumptions are not borne out by the data.

Data analysis reveals that low levels of inequality, rather than overall high wealth, are linked with greater investment in the early years workforce and services. Luxembourg, for example, has a GDP 2.6 times greater than the EU average, but 20% of households with a child 0-6 years live in poverty. Slovenia, a country

with 0.89 of the EU average, has less than 11% of households with a child 0-6 years living in poverty.

Low inequality is a characteristic of the Nordic states – sometimes described as "social democratic welfare regimes". The higher taxes demanded by these regimes means more money can be spent on universal services, including a well qualified early years workforce. Higher taxes and better universal services result in greater equality of health and education and improve social inclusion, but they also result in narrowing the gap between the have and have nots.

Low inequality

Social democracies are characterised by the principle of universal rights, including the principle that the youngest children should enjoy all the rights granted to other citizens, such as the right to care and education. Social welfare policies such as education and health systems are universal and are enacted statutorily to safeguard all citizens and permanent residents. These societies stress full employment on equal terms for both men and women. The challenge

for sociodemocratic societies is to ensure that their economies are successful enough to pay for their social services and that the majority of citizens are convinced that the taxes they pay for these services provide good value. The social democratic Nordic countries, and Slovenia, have low inequality, integrated systems for early years services and the workforce, and work to a view of the child as protagonist.

Integrated services, low inequality, child centred approach: Slovenia

The Republic of Slovenia has been a democratic parliamentary republic since 1991 and a member of the EU since 2004. Since independence in 1991, Slovenia's economic development has been very successful, making it a thriving transition country. Following economic growth, there was also an increase in employment, which has exceeded the European average since 2004.

Slovenia, like the Nordic countries, has a unitary system of provision for all children aged one to six years, preceded by a generous maternity and parental leave system of just over one year.

Slovenia has a GDP per capita of 89% of the EU average (\$32,400). In terms of income inequality it does much better than most European countries, with a Gini coefficient of 0.23 (EU average is 0.30), and an *S80/S20* (income of top 20% compared to bottom 20%) of 3.4 (EU average 4.8). It spends more on education (5.31% of GDP) and less on social expenditure (23.4% of GDP), compared to the EU averages of 4.7% and 27.2%.

The early years curriculum is declared as open, stimulating the teachers' autonomy (accompanied by a high level of professional responsibility) and has a plurality of pedagogical approaches. In the national curriculum the process oriented curriculum obligates teachers to exercise critical thinking and professional self-reflection. Child's play, especially symbolic play, is regarded as the "natural way of the child's learning and development".

Slovenia ranks 7th in Europe for child wellbeing. Only 6% of Slovenian children live in lone parent families (a risk factor for poverty), compared to the EU average of 13%, and only 12% of children are considered to be at risk of poverty compared to the EU average of 19%.

Low inequality

Table 3: wealth, poverty and wellbeing

Country by order of child wellbeing (see Table 1)	GDP per capita in PPS, 2007 (EU27=100)	Tax Receipts as % GDP, 2007	Income inequality, 2006-7 S80/S20	Gini	Households in poverty as % all households with child 0-6, 2005
Netherlands	131	39.5	3.8	.28	13.2
Sweden	122	48.5	3.5	.23	9.3
Finland	116	42.6	3.6	.26	11.3
Norway	179	43.4	4.6	NI	6.7
Denmark	120	49.4	3.4	.25	11.5
Slovenia	89	38.3	3.4	.23	10.9
Germany	115	40.3	4.1	.30	16.3
Ireland	150	32.9	4.9	.31	17.1
Luxembourg	267	36.8	4.2	.27	20.1
Austria	124	43.1	3.7	.26	14.5
Cyprus	91	42.2	4.3	.30	12.2
Spain	106	37.7	5.3	.31	17.8
Belgium	118	45.2	4.2	.26	18.9
France	109	44.7	4.0	.26	13.1
Czech Rep	80	36.1	3.5	.25	18.1
Slovakia	67	29.3	4.0	.24	15.6
Estonia	68	32.2	5.5	.33	22.2
Italy	101	43.2	5.5	.32	21.1
Poland	53	34.5	5.6	.32	25.0
Portugal	76	37.6	6.8	.37	21.0
Hungary	63	39.4	5.5	.26	19.6
Greece	95	33.9	6.1	.34	18.1
UK	119	37.2	5.4	.33	22.6
Romania	41	30.4	5.3	.34	NI
Bulgaria	37	32.6	3.5	.24	NI
Latvia	55	31.7	7.9	.35	18.5
Lithuania	60	30.3	6.3	.34	22.8
Malta	77	35.5	4.2	.26	16.1
EU27	100	40.5	4.8(EU25)	.30	17.2

Low inequality

Table 3: wealth, poverty and wellbeing

Explanatory notes

This table is extracted from the report Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce, which has references for all sources. The report is online free at www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi.

Tax receipts

Total figure from aggregating taxes on income and wealth, taxes on production and input and social contributions.

Income inequality

S80/S20 is the ratio of the total income received

by the 20% of the population with the highest income to that received by the 20% of the population with the lowest income; the higher the ratio the greater the inequality. Gini coefficient measures the extent to which the distribution of income among individuals or households within a country deviates from a perfectly equal distribution: ranges from 0 to 1, the higher the number, the greater the inequality of income.

Households in poverty

Proportion of all households with a child under six years below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, defined as 60% of the median value of equivalised disposable income.



Credit: Children in Scotland

Low inequality

Table 4: Social welfare systems, poverty and wellbeing

Type of social welfare system	Country	Social protection expenditure % GDP	Income inequality S80/S20	Poor households %	Child wellbeing
Universalist (social democratic)	Denmark	30.1	3.4	11.5	6th
	Norway	23.9	4.6	6.7	3rd
	Sweden	32	3.5	9.3	2nd
Social insurance (conservative)	France	31.5	4.0	13.1	15th
	Italy	26.4	5.5	21.1	19th
	Portugal	24.7	6.8	21	21st
Residual (liberal)	UK	26.8	5.4	22.6	24th
Post-communist	Hungary	21.9	5.5	19.6	22nd
	Poland	19.6	5.6	25	20th
	Slovenia	23.4	3.4	10.9	7th

Explanatory notes

This table is extracted from the report Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce, which has references for all sources. The report is online free at www.childreninScotland.org.uk/wfi.

Social protection expenditure is the total spent by government on social services and protection. It includes family benefits expenditure, etc. A percentage expenditure

below 20% suggests that a significant part of the population does not have access to basic services.

Income inequality is measured by the S80/S20 ratio, that is, the range between the top 20% of incomes and the bottom 20%. A ratio of 4, as in France, means that the top 20% of incomes are 4 times greater for the rich than for the rest of the population. Ratios above 5 suggest a large gap between rich and poor.

Conclusion

Countries with low levels of child poverty and high child wellbeing also have consistently the highest levels of early childhood care and education provision; that is a high quality, well paid workforce, high levels of universal entitlement and access to services, with strong parental leave policies and fully integrated services. They also have generous benefit systems and strong income redistribution, and all are based on strong values of equality, rights and democracy.

The findings of this project present a challenge for most European countries. Realising the vision is not impossible, but it cannot be achieved overnight, as delegates on the study visits have been able to observe.

Achieving high levels of early childhood care and education provision is not the preserve of whole countries. You can go it alone: San Miniato, and Reggio Emilia, both local authorities, have

managed to create an environment supportive of young children and their families while Italy itself falls short of providing such country-wide policies (though life is harder where national policies don't support local ones).

And using whole-country poverty is no excuse for not emulating wealthy Nordic achievements. Post-communist Slovenia, with a per capita GDP of 89% of the EU average, has put in place many of the necessary structures and entitlements to support a professional workforce that supports families and young children in a relatively short and recent timeframe.

Working for inclusion means shaping and directing processes over time. It might not be possible to achieve everything at one go, but establishing a goal and a clear direction of travel is the most important step in transforming the lives of young children.

Working for inclusion publications

Free online:

www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi

Working for inclusion: how early childhood education and care (ECEC) and its workforce can help Europe's youngest citizens

The final report of the *Working for Inclusion* programme

Briefing on the Working for inclusion research findings

Main conclusions of the data research

Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce

Detailed cross-European research and analysis

In-depth country profiles outlining history and current status on all aspects of early childhood education and care: Denmark, France, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK

Study visit reports and discussion papers:

Scotland

Discussion paper: Working with diversity

Study visit report 2009

Italy

Discussion paper: The child as protagonist

Study visit report 2009

Norway

Discussion Paper: Inclusive workforce models for rural and remote areas

Study visit report 2010

Poland

Discussion Paper: Working in an inclusive way with children and families

Study visit report 2010

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"The study visit to Scotland allowed me to gain new competencies in the education field. I am sure I can use this in my work with children from marginalised or dysfunctional families"

Anna Adamczyk-Chmielewska, Centre for Social Help, Belzyce, Poland, visiting Scotland

"One little boy, just under three, was sitting with a small glass in one hand and jug in the other. He was tipping them both at exactly the same time and you could almost see his thought processes in action, 'well that's not working, I'll have to try something else'. He fiddled around and finally put the glass on the table, poured the water in from the jug and he got his drink. It was a really good example of getting time to construct his own learning."

Jane Rough, early years and childcare manager, City of Edinburgh Council, Scotland, visiting San Miniato, Italy



Working for inclusion

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