

# INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP RESEARCH FORUM

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

Trondheim, Norway

# ILRF

### *PROGRAM AND ABSTRACT BOOKLET*

10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2014



QueenMaudUniversityCollege

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

## Practical information

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### Site of meeting:

Queen Maud University College [www.dmmh.no](http://www.dmmh.no)

Building “Låven”, room 1109



Address: Thron Nergaards veg 7. (Approx. 3,5 km from town center)

Tlf.nr 73 80 52 00

Bus from town center: Nr. 6, 7, 9, 18, 36, 37, 38, 63.

Bus stop: Dalen Hageby

### Organisers:

*Ynge Skjæveland:* +47 936 16 041

*Kari Hoås Moen:* +47 994 35 108

*Per Tore Granrusten:* +47 996 29 785

# Program of Activities

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## Tuesday 10. June.

### 09.00-10.00: Opening

Principal Hans Jørgen Leksen, QMUC.

Deputy Principal Ivar Selmer-Olsen

Deputy Principal of Research & Development Ellen Beate Hansen Sandseter

### 10.30-16.00: Visiting Early Childhood Centres

10.30: Departure QMUC

11.00-12.00: Haukvatnet Friluftsbarnhage

12.30-13.30: Kystad Gård barnhage

### 14.00-15.00: Lunch at Sverresborg Folkemuseum

15.00-16.00: "Sverrestunet" - kulturhistorisk åpen barnhage

16.00: Departure from Sverresborg

### 19.00-22.00: Gathering at QMUC

Buffet

Presentations:

- Elen Cecile Isdahl, Trondheim Municipality

- Morten Solheim, Union of Education

## Wednesday 11. June.

### 09.00-09.15: Welcome

### 09.15-10.30: Leadership in ECEC in a societal context

09.15-09.40 Eeva Hujala Contextually defined ECE leadership in Japan, Singapore and Finland.

09.40-10.05: Yngve Skjæveland Changing requirements on Leadership in ECEC institutions.

10.05-10.30: Kari Hoås Moen Stakeholders' expectations towards ECECs as learning arenas - directors attempts to influence stakeholders

### 10.30-10.45: Coffee Break

### 10.45-12.00: Leadership and autonomy in ECEC

10.45-11.10: Laila Skjei Flormælen Management for learning – how external actors expectations influence on ECEC leaders management outside ECEC's

11.10-11.35: Per Tore Granrusten Leading ECECs as learning environment for children

11.35-12.00: Kjetil Børhaug Professionalism in ECEC institutions.



**12.00-13.00: Lunch**

**13.00-14.15: Leadership, organization and development**

13.00-13.25: Dag Øyvind Lotsberg and Kjetil Børhaug Conditions for organizational development.

13.25-13.50: Andrea McFarlane Connecting educational leadership and organisational cultures in early childhood centres.

13.50-14.15: Manjula Waniganayake Building leadership capacity: An Australian narrative of sustainable change

**14.15-14.30: Coffee Break**

**14.30-15.45: Pedagogical leaders in a Norwegian context**

14.30-14.55: Elin Ødegård Professional practice under pressure. Promoting quality in leadership through interactive research.

14.55-15.20: Karin Hognestad and Marit Bøe Exploring leadership praxis.

15.20-15.45: Marit Bøe and Karin Hognestad Leading Distributed Pedagogical Leadership

**19.00: Dinner**

## Thursday 12th June

**09.00-09.20: Welcome.**

Comments to yesterday's paper presentations, and aims of the roundtable.  
Jillian Rodd

09.20-10.45: Terms and concepts to be discussed

**10.45-11.00: Coffee break**

**11.00-12.15: Research collaboration**

12:15-12:30. Closing remarks.  
Eeva Hujala

**12:30-13:30. Lunch**



# Abstracts

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## **Contextually defined ECE leadership in Japan, Singapore and Finland**

Eeva Hujala

Leadership is defined contextually and examined as a part of ECE culture in a national context. Every nation's ECE culture defines the mission and vision of their child care programs. Also, the foundations for leadership lay on the national ECE goals and strategies. To gain understanding of the cultural connections of leadership practice, a cross-cultural leadership study was implemented in Japan, Singapore and Finland. The informants in every country were 100 child care centre directors. The data was collected by questionnaires in order to ask directors' leadership tasks and every day practice in implementing leadership. Preliminary findings of this study will be introduced in the presentation.

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## **Changing requirements on Leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care institutions.**

Yngve Skjæveland

Norwegian Early Childhood Education and Care institutions (ECECs) have gone through substantial changes in recent decades. Due to the increase in the number of new ECEC institutions, to obtain full national coverage, the organizational structure of ECEC institutions have been changing to accommodate larger and more complex units. In addition, there has also been an increasing pressure to raise the quality in ECECs. These changes have, in turn, increased the demand for corresponding changes in leadership and management.

Despite the fact that the directors feel the expectations and requirements of leadership in ECEC to be more stringent than before, policy documents have become less detailed and less precise when it comes to requirements of leadership in ECECs and in describing the directors' tasks. It is therefore interesting to see how the governmental guidelines on management and leadership in ECEC have changed, in light of the developments in the sector. How have the requirements and demands on leaders in ECECs been communicated by the government in recent decades? This research draws on some central policy documents from the first Act of ECEC in 1975 to the present day, and particularly emphasizes leadership of ECECs as learning arenas.

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## **Stakeholders' expectations towards ECECs as learning arenas - directors attempts to influence stakeholders**

Kari Hoås Moen

According to a political perspective on organisation and leadership directors of ECECs might deal with different stakeholders with expectations to the ECECs as learning arenas. This might lead to cross pressure for the directors. One way to deal with this might be to try to influence the stakeholders. The research questions for this presentation are: Which stakeholders do directors of ECECs perceive as the most significant, when it comes to expectations to the centres as learning arenas for children? To what extent do stakeholders have different views? To what extent do the directors try to influence stakeholders? Our research has a quantitative design with a questionnaire survey. 1310 directors of ECECs in Norway responded. The data was analysed by the statistical package SPSS. Results show that the directors are most likely to experience that the Directorate for Education and Training has strong expectations to the ECECs as learning arenas. In general the directors do not report a high degree of disagreement among stakeholders; the highest reported disagreement is among primary school and the staff in the centres. However, the directors try mostly to influence the parents' perspectives on learning.

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### **Abstract**

Cathrine Frogh

**Cathrine is unfortunately unable to attend the meeting, but we have chosen to publish the abstract she should have presented**

This paper aims to explore the challenge of coordination in a multi-level system within the municipal kindergarten sector. I intend to do so by examining coordination through a structural, cultural and myth-based perspective.

As policy area, the Kindergarten sector is characterised by extensive autonomy at the municipal level, while at the same providing the municipalities with limited formal authority. Furthermore the sector is distinguished by an extensive and varied body of private service providers. It is arguable that the large numbers of private stakeholders represent coordination challenges for the local government (Børhaug and Lotsberg, 2012). In a structural perspective it raises questions as to what extent integrative efforts from the municipalities are achievable given the degree of privatisation. In a cultural perspective it raises questions of trust between the participating organisations and their degree of



involvement. It also questions whether a common perception of values across the private public sphere is within reach (Christensen and Læg Reid, 2007). In a myth perspective it raises questions of the gap between coordinative talk and action. In this paper I therefore propose to answer “how can coordination within the municipal kindergarten sector influence the local government authority’s ability to reach national and local policy goals” In doing so, I will conduct a preliminary analysis of data material from in-depth interviews with local kindergarten authorities and kindergarten directors. The material is part of an exploratory case study of two Norwegian municipalities, investigating the municipal level as stakeholder within the local kindergarten sector.

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## **Leading Early Childhood Education and Care Institutions (ECECs) as learning environment for children**

Per Tore Granrusten

The Norwegian field of early childhood education and care (ECEC) has changed radically since the millenium. The number of early childhood education and care institutions (ECECs) has increased, the new ones are often large, and many old ECECs have increased in size. The role of the director has become more visible and the focus has changed from leadership to governance. This can be seen from a “New Public Management” perspective where leaders have clear goals set by the government through policy documents, and are expected to perform leadership within the established framework. This paper examines how some directors perform their leadership under the changed requirements of the authorities. The theoretical framework is based on theories of New Public Management (Øgård, 2005), and leadership in interaction between the large and small community (Klausen, 2001). The empiric data is from the project "Leadership for learning". The study has a combined qualitative exploratory design with in-depth interviews of 16 directors in the ECECs in three municipalities in Norway, and a survey drawn on a strategic sample of 1350 directors from public and private ECECs from selected counties in Norway.

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## **Professionalism in ECEC institutions**

Kjetil Børhaug

Norwegian ECEC centers have suffered historically from a lack of interest and support from local governments and others who ran centers. Regretful as that might have been, it allowed

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for a development of substantial professional autonomy at the center level, even though a majority of employees were not fully trained ECEC teachers. As the ECEC sector expands and gain political significance, both national and local governments develop a broader interest in ECEC. Also many non-governmental owners of ECEC centers engage more extensively in their centers and the actual services they offer. This represent a changing context for the role pre-school teachers should have and could alter the professional autonomy they have had until recently. In a street level bureaucracy perspective (Mikael Lipsky 1980), it could be assumed that this development would increase the pressure on center managers and reduce their autonomy. On the other hand, in a governance network perspective we would assume that owner engagement in center affairs would allow for mutual adjustments, coordination, negotiation and cooperation. Which would also represent a changing context for professionalism, but in a different way. In this paper an interview material with governmental and non-governmental owners is analysed in an attempt to discuss these assumptions.

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## Conditions for organizational development

Dag Lotsberg and Kjetil Børhaug

Norwegian Early Childhood Education and Care centers are expected to be able to develop themselves. There are legal provisions which ensure a certain amount of professional competence in each center, there are increasing requirements in national policies for improved educational quality and there have been numerous programs aimed at stimulating such local level development. Such development efforts may take many forms . They may vary concerning what their main focus is, for instance children's learning, management, parent-center relations or adult-child relations, to mention but a few. They may vary concerning initiation and scope. In a management theory perspective, we are particularly interested in the role of the center director. What is her/his role in such projects? To what extent is she/he the initiator? Management is contextual and it must be assumed that various contextual factors may contribute to or prevent directors in leading for development. What factors makes it difficult to launch local development projects and what factors has a positive effect? We will examine these questions based on a survey from 2009. It was sent to all Norwegian ECEc directors, and it contained questions about whether the center had development projects, about what and who initiated it. Next, there are items measuring the preventing power of various obstacles. Finally, we will be able to examine whether variations in development activity and director engagement vary with size, public – private ownership, directors' gender, experience, and professional profile.





## **Connecting educational leadership and organisational cultures in early childhood centres.**

Andrea McFarlane

An early career researcher begins her quest to investigate connections between educational leadership and organisational cultures in early childhood centres. With the introduction in Australia of a framework to guide early childhood practitioner understanding of children and childhood, as well as the introduction of a new national early childhood services accreditation system, an understanding of how this apparatus of early childhood education will be communicated between staff in early childhood centres needs to be examined to provide support for staff in that task.

Past research in the area of educational leadership, mostly from outside of Australia, has tended to focus on traits and behaviours of individuals that might identify and qualify leadership attributes that contribute to positive leadership. Instead this research will provide evidence relevant to the Australian context, and will focus on actual practices enacted in early childhood centres that contribute to a shared creation of the organisational culture and leadership.

A social systems theoretical framework, specifically Bolman and Deal's (2013) 'reframing' model, underpin the approach of this study. Making use of four 'frames' - structural, human resource, political and symbolic - multiple perspectives on how early childhood organisations function day-to-day will be investigated. An ecocultural (ecological-cultural) theoretical approach (Weisner, 2001) will enable the investigation of participants' work environments, everyday routines and activities, practice and language. Using interviews this research will attempt to explore the 'cultural pathways' (Weisner, 2001, p. 276) found working within EC settings in order to gain new insights on the interconnectivities between leadership and organisational culture.

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## **Building leadership capacity: An Australian narrative of sustainable change**

Manjula Waniganayake and Anthony Semann

This presentation will explore principles of leadership capacity building including the importance of participant ownership, contextually situated investigations and external facilitation and mentoring over time. It will focus on the development of early childhood leaders in the State of New South Wales through a year long program carried out with four cohorts. Children's Services Central has sponsored this program for five years continuously,



as a key agency that provides professional development and learning for the early childhood sector. Known as the 'Aspiring Leaders Forum' (ALF), it supports the career planning of early childhood leaders and investigates leadership change achieved through projects undertaken in participants' local communities. The leadership capacity building work also involves participation in a series of facilitated workshops which included strengthening leadership knowledge and opportunities to share experiences about leadership roles and responsibilities. Continuous shared learning was sustained through the development of a learning community comprising face-to-face and virtual interactions, scaffolded through support from two lead researchers. Findings based on participants' feedback suggest that the application of these capacity building principles can empower participants in realising their leadership potential in sustainable ways.

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## Professional practice under pressure

Promoting quality in leadership through interactive research

Elin Ødegård

The presentation is based on results from my PhD "Newly qualified pedagogical leaders mastering and appropriation of the cultural tools of kindergarten" (Ødegård 2011), and the ongoing interactive research in three kindergartens with same owner (Ødegård 2013, 14). The aim of the project is to clarify the leaders' legitimacy and the staff's loyalty and discuss and conceptualize the relationship to quality on leadership in kindergarten. The project is framed by social cultural theory (Vygotskij & Kozulin, 2001; Wertsch, 1991, 1998) and the concepts legitimacy and loyalty are using as tools (Suchman 1995) together with relational and distributed leadership theories ( Gronn 2004, 2009, Spillane 2006, Wadel 2007, 2008).

The design is an interactive project (Sandberg and Wallo, 2013) where the leaders are responsible for formal mentoring sessions and the researchers are responsible for researching the processes.

The project has been evaluated by the Norwegian Research Ethical Committee (NESH; 2006) and ethical reflections are a part of the on-going research.

One of the PhD (Ødegård 2011) results points out leadership as a special challenge. Policy makers promote ideas from hierarchic leadership and new public management to get rid of leadership problems (Pascal. 2008). In this ongoing project I want to promote how the horizontal, relational and team based kindergarten tradition (Hard 2005, Jónsdóttir 2012, Ødegård 2011, Ødegård & Røys, 2013) may be seen as a value in leadership, but discuss the challenges and possibilities on leaders legitimacy and the staffs loyalty.

## Exploring leadership praxis

Karin Hognestad and Marit Bøe,

The aim of this presentation is to place emphasis on leadership practice, and to get a deeper understanding of how professional support as leading praxis is shaped by the social and educational conditions of the organization. Rather than theorizing professional support as leadership practice manifested solely in the positional leader, the theory of practice architectures (Kemmis, 2014) is chosen to show that leading praxis is enabled and constrained by social and educational conditions. The study relates to the Managerial Work Behavior approach (Mintzberg, 1973; Vie, 2009), and is positioned within recent research on distributed leadership (Heikka, 2014). Data from qualitative shadowing (video data and field notes) and stimulated recall interviews are produced. In analyzing the data Mintzberg's classical taxonomy of verbal contact has been used as a starting point. The category of professional support was discovered, and the sayings, doings and relatings produced from the data were investigated through the lens of practice architectures. The main argument is that rather having the focus on the participants in the practice; it is in the relationship between practice architectures of leadership and the positional pedagogical leaders' actions that praxis is realized. Drawing attention to social conditions leading praxis is an ongoing process, political contested and dependent upon context.

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## Leading Distributed Pedagogical Leadership

Marit Bøe and Karin Hognestad

Acknowledging the multiple roles of pedagogical leaders in being a teacher and a leader, the aim of the research is to address the critical role of pedagogical leaders in that they are positional leaders with a particular responsibility of leading their staff on their departments. The study investigates the positional leaders communicative activities directed to staff. Applying a practice approach to leadership the study investigates leadership as work practices conducted by experienced and skillful leaders. The study relates to the Managerial Work and Behavior approach (Mintzberg, 1973; Vie, 2009), and is positioned within recent research on distributed leadership (Heikka, 2014). Conducting qualitative shadowing, which involves investigator triangulation and video-observation; analyses demonstrate the purpose of various communicative activities exercised by the positional leaders and how they respond to the challenges in distributed pedagogical leadership. The main argument is that the purpose of positional leaders communicative activities are to create, maintain and develop conditions in which distributed pedagogical leadership can be successful. Zooming in on the positional leaders communicative activities, can lead to a deeper understanding of



how the communicative activities and the purpose of these can develop distributed pedagogical leadership

## Questions for Roundtable

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### **Organisational Culture**

What insights from different contexts can be brought to developing an understanding of culture, climate and ethos when interpreting early childhood organizational culture and leadership?

### **The use of concepts and terminology in different national contexts**

**Early Childhood Education and Care institutions** (ECECs), Early Childhood Education and Care centers (ECEc), Kindergarten, and Early Childhood Centers are all names on the same kind of institution, in different abstracts in this booklet. Is this the same kind of institution? If so; Is it possible to develop a common concept for it?

How about the concepts of:

**Leadership, management and administration?**

Or:

**Educational leader, pedagogical leader?**

## Research Collaboration

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### **Issues for discussion**

New ILRF book.

The ILRF Network: Where do we go from here?

