CONFERENCE PROGRAM

ISSA CONFERENCE 2017
4-6 October | Ghent, Belgium
#ISSAGhent17

Local Responses, Global Advances:
Towards Competent Early Childhood Systems
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WELCOME TO THE ISSA CONFERENCE 2017!

What will the conference be about?

Complexity is the defining character of the changes we face in today’s societies. This complexity influences our choices in how to address the challenges that young children and families are facing in the early years, the founding period for lifelong learning. Migration, increasing poverty and inequality, segregation, multilingualism, mass-communication channels and tools, increasing unemployment rates, uncertainty regarding the future, social tensions and a lack of trust in political institutions, are only a few of the circumstances which affect family stability and wellbeing, and the environments in which young children grow and learn about themselves and the world around them.

These rapid changes can also bring opportunities: in an increasingly urbanized world, cities can play a key role in designing solutions to respond to the needs of young children and families. Increased connectivity across the globe makes it easier to learn about and share these solutions. The speed of the changes in today’s world also requires substantial shifts in the way early childhood systems are designed, equipped, governed, financed and supported, if we are to capitalize on the tremendous importance of early childhood development for children, families and communities. It is no longer possible to have parallel discourses that create distance between institutional arrangements, political priorities and the lived experience of families. Investments in a system that aims for the average majority excludes families on both end sides of the curve. Change management gives opportunities to customize local services/responses to all families regardless of their social and cultural backgrounds.

It is time to embrace a systemic approach to addressing the critical problems that hinder children and families’ rights, and to learn from local responsive approaches to build competent early childhood systems.

The ISSA conference 2017 will have three conference themes:

1. STRAND
Towards competent early childhood workforce and services

The early childhood workforce is the powerhouse of the early childhood system. It is through them that services become meaningful, useful, and relevant for young children and families. The current context of rapid societal change requires readiness to respond to increasing demands. This means ensuring that both pre-service and in-service training are improved beyond the traditional and sector-siloed view of the early childhood professions, and ensuring early childhood services provide a nurturing, stimulating and supportive professional environment for the workforce.

Closing the gap between theory and practice means building those competences which contribute to equalizing opportunities for all children and families, across all sectors in the early childhood workforce. Are pre-service and in-service training fit for purpose? Do they equip the early childhood workforce with the emerging competences they need to provide high-quality early years services today? What approaches in training and pedagogical coaching contribute to building a competent workforce?

In addition to the physical aspect of working with young children, the aging profile of its professionals and the unpopular career choice, a continuous search for boosting commitment and raising participation levels brings new challenges in managing an early childhood workforce.

Ensuring a motivating and supportive professional environment for the workforce is crucial. This relies upon the capacity of early childhood services and training institutions to provide professional development opportunities that value personal and professional growth, teamwork, peer learning and group reflection, and an ongoing concern for responsive quality practices through a close dialogue with families and communities.

The concern of institutions for pedagogical leadership, diversity in both workforce and professional learning experiences, and career development adds to the complex picture of providing competent early childhood services with competent staff. Thus, to what extent do the current early childhood services, pre-service and in-service institutions embrace structural and process changes to promote professionalism and services attuned with children’s and families’ demands?
The inter-institutional environment which supports educators and early childhood centre managers must also be competent. This requires collaboration between local early years services and other social, educational and cultural institutions, including departments in the city councils, organizations of ECEC centers, umbrella organizations and training institutions. Together they represent the architecture of the early childhood social system. Children and families in vulnerable situations ask for systemic and integrated responses to various, but interconnected needs in which material and immaterial resources are linked. A common culture and a shared image of a competent and active child as well as a shared rights-based ethics among practitioners from different sectors, pre- and in-service institutions, and local authorities is pivotal to inter-agency collaboration. With this in mind, which initiatives are needed on the inter-institutional level to further support creative pedagogical strategies for equipping practitioners with the capacity to meet the current demands of families and children? Peer learning groups around common issues or intervision sessions among different services and institutions could be one avenue, and in this sense the training centers (university colleges, universities, in-services training centers) and innovation centers may play an essential role.

Integration of services in more systemic ways is yet another. Didactical tools on different aspects of working with children, parents and communities can also be developed for pedagogical counsellors on institutional and inter-institutional level.

How can collaboration between services and sectors or the integration of early childhood service delivery (childcare, kindergarten, parental support centres, infant health centres, preschools) be strengthened so that the diverse needs of parents and children are better met? In developing the quality of services, the voices of the workforce, parents, children and communities can contribute in close dialogue. Ensuring smooth transitions between childcare and kindergarten and between pre-primary and primary is another challenge for an efficient inter-institutional cooperation. Collaboration between immaterial services (e.g. child care or parent support) and material services (housing, employment, urban development, welfare allowances, etc.) is also another challenge.

How do national, European and international projects contribute to strengthening the competences of early childhood services and to creating a competent inter-institutional environment addressing the challenges of contemporary hyper-diverse societies?

In a competent early childhood system, the close collaboration between policymakers, researchers and practitioners is crucial for realizing effective and democratic policies which lead to sustainable change. While research seeks to show the complexity of issues in a nuanced way, policymakers are looking for efficient solutions supported by scientific evidence. In order to achieve sustainable change, close dialogue between policymakers and practitioners is crucial. It can be nurtured through democratic consultation groups involving policymakers and ECEC stakeholders, including ECEC workforce, parents and community representatives. What are the ways for nurturing dialogue among policymakers, researchers, practitioners and other stakeholders to stimulate in-depth analysis and critical thinking around early years policies and attuned service delivery?

The governance level refers among other things to vision, financing and monitoring. Legislation differs substantially across and within countries. Despite this, structural conditions (and thus competent governance) including decent working conditions, remuneration, and adequate funding for pre-service, in-service training and service delivery play a key role. Quality assurance systems, scientifically based and democratically debated curricula, professional and training competence profiles and adequate monitoring systems are essential components of a competent early childhood system.

Consistency and coherence among these components should be ensured, knowing that issues on one level impact all other levels. With this in mind, which effective policies are needed to translate these components into a continuous and self-learning system that delivers high quality early childhood services?

International organizations like the European Union, UNICEF, UNESCO, OECD, World Bank and international foundations play an important role in influencing policy and governance. They can contribute to strengthening national early childhood systems and providing inspiration for approaches at country level. However, they may also narrow the discretionary space of regional or local policies. To what extent are their efforts supporting country policies and governance and contributing to the architecture of a competent early childhood system?
Pre-conference Events

9:00-17:00

Intervention packages to support nurturing care
Workshop hosted by WHO, UNICEF, University of Ankara and ISSA
Room: Zaal rector Vermeylen

9:00-17:00

Integrated services in the early years – towards an international platform for exchange
Workshop hosted by VBJK, Kind en Gezin, EXPOO and ISSA
Room: Refter

9:00-17:00

Developing sustainability through fundraising
Workshop hosted by The Management Centre and ISSA
Room: Zaal rector Blancquaert

Welcome Reception

19:00-21:00

Location: Ghent City Hall, Pacificatiezaal
Address: Botermarkt 1, 9000, Ghent
ISSA CONFERENCE 2017

DAY ONE: October 4th, Wednesday

8:00-17:30  Registration and Information Desk open

9:00-9:30  Opening Ceremony

Keynote address: From stories of actors of change to competent early childhood education and care systems

Keynote speaker: Jan Peeters, Director, Centre for Innovation in the Early Years (VBJK), Belgium

9:00-17:00  Overview of Ghent’s Competent System

11:00-11:30  Coffee Break

11:30-13:00  Concurrent Sessions 1

13:00-14:00  Lunch Break

14:00-15:30  Concurrent Session 2 / Video Room / Field Visits

15:30-16:00  Coffee Break

16:00-17:00  Concurrent Session 3 / Video Room

17:00-17:30  Networking Session

17:30-18:30  Concurrent Session 4 / Video Room

19:00  Culinary Walking Tour (optional, by registration)
DAY TWO: October 5th, Thursday

8:00-17:30  Registration and Information Desk Open

9:00-10:30  Concurrent Sessions 5 / Video Room / Field Visits

10:30-11:00  Networking Sessions

11:00-11:30  Coffee Break

11:30-13:00  Panel Discussion: Local Responses to Global Challenges: the role of local policies in early childhood education.
Moderator:
Michel Vandenbroeck, Head of the Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Ghent University, Belgium.
Panellists:
Joan Lombardi, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress and international expert on child development and social policy for the Bernard Van Leer Foundation.
Deepa Grover, regional advisor on early childhood development at UNICEF’s Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.
Elke Decruynaere, Alderman of Education in the City of Ghent and as such, responsible for early childhood education and care in the city.
Roos van Gelderen, Alderman for the Dutch Socialist Party in Leiden, the Netherlands in the field of Youth, Care and Welfare.
Chris Cuthbert, Director of Development for the Big Lottery Fund’s A Better Start programme.

13:00-14:00  Lunch Break

14:00-15:30  Concurrent Session 6 / Video Room / Field Visits

15:30-16:00  Coffee Break

16:00-17:00  Concurrent Session 7 / Video Room

17:00-17:30  Networking Session

17:30-18:30  Concurrent Session 8 / Video Room

19:30  Buffet and Entertainment at Cocteau (optional by registration)
Address: Jan Palfijnstraat 17, 9000, Ghent
### DAY THREE: October 6th, Friday

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<td>8:00-14:00</td>
<td><strong>Registration and Information Desk open</strong></td>
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<td>9:00-10:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions 9 / Field Visits</td>
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<td>10:00-10:15</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<td>10:15-11:15</td>
<td>Concurrent Session 10</td>
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<td>11:15-11:30</td>
<td>Transition Break</td>
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<td>11:30-12:30</td>
<td><strong>Keynote address:</strong> Governance of competent systems in the EU: from potential to reality</td>
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<td><strong>Keynote speaker:</strong> Nora Milotay, Policy Analyst, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS)</td>
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<td>12:30-13:00</td>
<td>Closing Ceremony</td>
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<td>14:00</td>
<td>Sightseeing tour of Ghent (optional by registration)</td>
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## Room Key

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<td>Novincengang</td>
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<td>Uytenhove</td>
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<td>Zaal rector Blancquaert</td>
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**Inter-institutional collaboration as a motor for comprehensive local early childhood policy – an international and interactive discussion**

To elaborate a local early childhood policy needs both a structured policy process as well as an inter-institutional collaboration between health, social and education departments and service providers. Based on the Primokiz model developed by the Jacobs Foundation for such a comprehensive childhood system, the panelists will discuss the challenges they have faced in two countries (Switzerland and Germany) and why two further countries (Italy and Romania) are interested in using the approach in their work and partnerships. The panel will be moderated under the question: Is such a model applicable in both developed and emergent countries?

In the proposed countries, the Jacobs Foundation is scaling up its experience after having run a pilot program in 18 cities and three regions in Switzerland between 2012 and mid-2016. The scale-up phase aims to reach about 80 communes/cities in Switzerland over the next three years.

In Germany, the Primokiz model has been integrated into a national program steered by the Ministry of Family Affairs, the German Child and Youth Foundation and the Jacobs Foundation. So far, 19 communes have taken part at the program.

Finally, the Jacobs Foundation is looking at a potential scaling up in Italy and Romania, in collaboration with the Foundation Compagnia di San Paolo in Italy, and ISSA and CEPD-Step by Step in Romania.

The cities involved in the program, in each country, are supported by trained experts (both in the political process as well as in early childhood).

Participants in the session will be encouraged to ask questions and participate in discussions concerning the program and its process.

Followed by Panel discussion
Duration: 90 minutes

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**MyREF: the urgent need for services for young refugee children (0–4) in four European countries**

Four organisations from four European countries (VBJK from Belgium, Sardes from the Netherlands, Oslo I Akerhus University College from Norway, and Cambridge University from the UK) recently embarked on an Erasmus+ project to collect inspiring examples of early childhood services for young refugee children aged 0–4 (MyREF). The starting point of our quest was to examine to what extent the first language of young refugee children (in most cases Syrian Arabic) played a role in these services. Are children allowed to speak their first language? Do professionals make use of elements of the first language to support the learning of a second? Are...
they aware of the importance of such services, especially when children suffer from trauma? And what is the policy context in these four countries?

We designed a questionnaire with questions to enable us to categorise the different services and to filter out any “active ingredients”. In our search for services, however, the most striking finding was that we could hardly find any service which could act as a structural solution for this particular group of refugee children.

We aim to open the discussion with the following questions.

• Do you recognise this pattern in your country?
• Why are there so few services available for this particularly vulnerable group of children? Aren’t we missing enormous opportunities here?
• What is needed to offer high quality ECEC services for these children?
• Do you have examples from your own country? Is there a multilingual component? And do parents play a role?

Discussion forum  
Duration: 90 minutes  

ROOM: NOVICENGANG  
SESSION 1/3  

Anat Bar, Hapaot Center, Israel

The “Maagalim” Hapaot Center (an early childhood center) – a program for families with young children who are at high or extreme risk

The big question for discussion: what are we dealing with when we think about children at risk? What are the causes of the problems and how can we generate solutions?

The development of the brain, the first stages in the creation of an individual’s personality, and the many personal relationships that infants create in their surroundings explains the urgency for providing high-quality services at an early stage.

In Israel, early childhood services are not unified under one structure; in many cases, the therapeutic services, the educational frameworks, and guidance programs for parents fall under different authority and financial frameworks.

The “Maagalim” Hapaot Center in Israel enables treatment for families with young children who are at risk in developmental physical and emotional domains (families at the extreme end of risk) who are unable to use the available services. These families cannot place their trust in services and have usually had many unsuccessful treatments. The parents usually have serious mental problems and the families try to cope with socio-economic, health-related and other problems.

“Maagalim” encompasses a wide range of services, and relates in a holistic manner to the child, family and community and the relations between them. The intensive and flexible treatments include emotional and developmental treatment and accompany the family in daily activities (related to social problems) in close cooperation with social workers from social services, all under one roof.

In order to work with such families, therapists need to examine themselves, and the families respond to every new understanding. There is a need for intensive supervision, teamwork and support to enable the carrying of this very heavy emotional burden, to prevent emotional shutdown and detachment, and enable continued engagement with an ongoing pain.

As we know, we should pay attention to children at risk not only for their own sake, but also for the rest of the society. Discussions in the sessions will revolve around questions such as the following. What policy should we have in order to cope with so many families at high? What kind of professionals do we need in the field? How can different organizations work together for the same goals?

Presentation followed by discussions  
Duration: 60 minutes  

Graziella Lippolis, Handicap International, Belgium

The effect of stimulation physiotherapy on acute child malnutrition

In case of acute malnutrition, the WHO protocols of care suggest including physical and psycho-social stimulation activities to complement nutritional and curative medical treatments.

In Mali, Handicap International has developed a project targeted at malnourished children, in which early stimulation activities were provided by health workers (group stimulation activities) and stimulation physiotherapy (individual stimulation exercises) were provided by physiotherapists.

In the framework of the project, a study was conducted, aiming to evaluate the effects and added value of stimulation physiotherapy on the psycho-motor and cognitive development of children aged 6 months to 5 years. The study compared the development of a cohort of children benefiting from complete care (stimulation
activities and stimulation physiotherapy) to a cohort of children benefiting only from stimulation activities provided by health workers.

The results indicated a significant increase in the ratio weight/size for the children who benefited from stimulation physiotherapy, and no significant increase for the group without physiotherapy. This was an important reduction between days 1–35 regarding the median delay of development, as well as higher improvement of the scores related to language, grasping and motor function for children with stimulation physiotherapy, and no or less significant improvement for the group without physiotherapy. The main conclusion is that, in order to reduce the development delay in malnourished children, stimulation plays an important role. Meanwhile, training health workers to provide global and group stimulation without proposing specific stimulation exercises related to the specific level of development of the malnourished child shows limited results.

Following the study, a simple stimulation tool called blue box has been developed targeting health workers not specialized in rehabilitation in order for them to better identify the child’s level of development and to be able, accordingly, to propose basic stimulation exercises.

Based on these results, the discussions during the session will focus on the difference between stimulation activities and stimulation physiotherapy; how health professionals in low- and middle-income countries can offer stimulation exercises to malnourished children; and the type of supervision/accompaniment they would require from rehabilitation professionals.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 30 minutes

ROOM: MUSEUM DIERICK
SESSION 1/4

Karolien Nijs, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium
Sven Claeys, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium
Ingrid Wils, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium

Out-of-school care in the City of Ghent – an out-of-the-box experience

In this workshop, we look at the benefits of our visionary, innovative and unique out-of-school care programs provided by professionally trained caregivers.

The City of Ghent has aimed to improve equal access to ECEC for all its children and provide ‘out-of-the-box’ out-of-school care for more than 5,000 children across 43 facilities.

The main aim is to offer children equal chances to develop themselves, feel good, participate and relate with people and society, while respecting diversity. Our caregivers are supported by pedagogical coaches and trained in a continuing education program in a competent system. Children, parents, community and the care team are engaged as valuable partners.

The organization does not aim to replace the family context, but rather support and develop it. Belgian children start kindergarten for free when they are 2.5 years old. On school days, we provide care for children aged 2.5 – 6 before and after school and during lunch breaks. In school hours, kindergarten teachers offer their support. During holidays, a specific program for children aged 2.5 – 12 is provided. We also support cooperative parent groups which organize their own holiday childcare.

Our centers are places in which the child’s free choices are essential; a variety of activities provokes, challenges, offers new experiences, and relates to the children’s exploratory drive, needs and potential.

Caregivers are trained to approach children and parents with an open, positive, non-judgmental spirit.

To ensure a continuum of care and connection with the child’s network, the out-of-school care collaborates actively with families, daycare centers, schools and neighbourhoods. Parents are always welcome and stimulated to participate in decision-making. Children explore the neighbourhood, shop locally and use public spaces.

Childcare is part of the local community and tries to mirror its values in its daily practice.

This workshop introduces our ‘out-of-the-box’ out-of-school care with a short presentation and film. Through interactive exercises with some of our care coordinators, participants can learn how this care is experienced by children, parents, teams and communities.

Join one of our field visits and find out how this care works in practice.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 90 minutes
**ISSA CONFERENCE 2017**

**VIDEO ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR VERMUYLEN**
**SESSION 1/5**

Tatiana Matokhina, Foundation Education Initiatives Support, Kyrgyzstan
Sholpan Baitikova, LLC “Master-club Fillin”, Kyrgyzstan

**New forms of teacher professional development for new times — experiences from Kyrgyzstan**

The pedagogical workshop as a form of professional development for teachers at the workplace is new in principle and in content. It has not yet become widespread in the field of education in Kyrgyzstan. Nevertheless, the process of introducing a pedagogical workshop into pre-school and school educational organizations is gradually developing thanks to the efforts of the Foundation of Educational Initiatives Support (FEIS). FEIS has been working purposefully in this direction for more than seven years. Two methodological guidance manuals have been developed. They not only explain the effectiveness of professional interaction in the workplace, but also give practical advice on its organization.

In 45 educational organizations in Kyrgyzstan with which the FEIS cooperates, the pedagogical workshop successfully works and performs its main function: to help teachers continuously improve their competence. The continuity and sustainability of the education of teachers in the form of a pedagogical workshop at the workplace is provided in cyclic recurrence, practical orientation and the direct participation of teachers in the formulation of tasks and their solution.

In this session, you will become acquainted with the experience of introducing a pedagogical workshop to educational organizations in Kyrgyzstan (using a documentary film created by FEIS). This will be done in the format of a structured discussion to discuss the possibilities of a pedagogical workshop for forming a learning community, and the presentation of various models for continuing education that are used in different countries.

*Film presentation*
*Duration: 60 minutes*

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Irena Nikaj, University “Fan S. Noli”, Korca, Albania

**Early childhood public/private education in Albania — outcomes and new perspectives in the Korca region**

Research suggests that investments in very early childhood education, especially in the first three years, are sources of long-term qualitative development in social and work capital.

In Albania, in the past 20 years there have been controversial developments towards early childhood education policies. At the end of the 20th century, policies became more focused on this age group, with a move from governmental and non-governmental controversy toward higher education, before returning to a few policies here and there, without much change and very little development.

The University of Korca - Faculty of Education, Department of Education has a long standing experience in education, in both preschool and school issues.

We have identified opportunities to develop a study program for early childhood education (ages 0–3) and an opportunity to apply it in the Korca region. We invite you to discuss our work and also: the rise of public/private investments in early education and policies; international and national standards of early education and the possibility for improvement; cultural and social norms about inclusion in education.

*Presentation followed by discussions*
*Duration: 30 minutes*

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**ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR GILIS**
**SESSION 1/6**

Ivelina Borisova, UNICEF HQ, USA
Tanja Rankovic, UNICEF, Republic of Serbia
Dipu Shakya, UNICEF, Nepal

**A roadmap for a strong pre-primary/early education sub-sector — unpacking the building blocks, challenges and opportunities**

With the advent of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, there is a renewed momentum for early childhood development and early learning globally. More specifically, SDG 4.2 seeks to ensure that by 2030, “all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education” and calls for at least one year of pre-primary education prior to school
Furthermore, in today's societies, with their multifaceted and rapid changes and challenges that affect the environment in which young children grow and learn, early childhood education systems must address the disconnect between political priorities, governance structures and the lived experiences of families and children. There is, therefore, a need to consider how best to support the successful development and strengthening of a functional pre-primary sub-sector or sub-system that delivers quality pre-primary programs to all children with responsiveness, efficiency and equity.

The objective of this session is to present a conceptual framework developed by UNICEF with support from partners, that provides a systematic and coherent frame of reference for understanding the building blocks and mechanisms that come into play to enable the inception and development of a strong pre-primary sub-sector. If all core functions of the sub-sector are developed and well connected, the sub-sector should be able to deliver quality early learning opportunities for all children.

The framework looks closely at:
1) factors in the enabling environment that facilitate the development of the pre-primary sub-sector;
2) core functions of the sub-sector and how these can be developed and/or enhanced and
3) desired outcomes.

Additionally, a pre-primary planning and self-assessment tool based on the framework will be presented, the aim of which is to help national stakeholders reflect on the strengths and gaps of their pre-primary system and to facilitate the development of a roadmap with concrete actions for addressing key bottlenecks across the sub-sector.

These new tools and resources will be presented, followed by two brief country-level reflections – from Serbia and Nepal. The country level presentations will address key bottlenecks to sub-sector strengthening as well as opportunities to build a competent teacher workforce, implement appropriate curriculum and standards, and having supporting mechanisms for quality assurance and regulation. Presentations will be followed by discussion, reactions, feedback and questions.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 90 minutes

ROOM: OUDE INFIRMERIE
SESSION 1/7
[To be announced]

ROOM: DORMITORIUMZAAL
SESSION 1/8

Zarina Kurbonbekova, Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation, Tajikistan
Lola Nasridinova, Parents Organisation of children with Autysm IRODA, Tajikistan

The role of parents in developing an ECI system in Tajikistan
Children make up 40% of the population of Tajikistan. There is no reliable data of children with special needs,
as there is no unified registry. Health workers are not aware of innovative approaches to the rehabilitation, education and socialization of children with developmental disabilities. Since there are no early intervention programs, older children generally cannot attend school. Parents lack access to information on new methods and technologies, so they cannot adequately help their children, who become isolated and suffer chronic stress. OSI has been working in the field since 2012, building the capacity of local specialists and parents, and introducing new models and tools through parental organizations of children with disabilities. Our low-cost piloting on early screening and early childhood intervention for primary health has been adopted by the government. With the support of OSI and the active work of parent organizations together with professional associations, the government has explored how to better serve children with development disorders and/or at risk of development disabilities. We have been able to persuade the government to include elements such as national registry, early screening and early childhood intervention in the new National strategy of Health for the Mother and Child. The result of our work shows that the increasing capacity of parent organizations of children with disabilities, and cooperation among parents and specialists increases the role of parents in the advocacy of the program and also strengthens the implementation of a family-centered early-childhood intervention program in the country.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 45 minutes

Strand 3

Rusudan Bochorishvili, First Step Georgia
Nino Tsintsadze, Georgian Portage Association, Georgia
Katuna Dolidze, Ilia State University, Georgia
Maia Gabunia, Georgian Academy of Childhood Disability, Georgia

A coalition for the development of an early-childhood intervention system and preschool inclusive education in Georgia – achievements and challenges

If you are interested in how to create an early-childhood intervention system and ways to link it to early and preschool education in a resource-poor country, you are welcome to join us. The successes and challenges of developing an early childhood intervention (ECI) and early and preschool education system in Georgia, a post-Soviet, low-income country which typically aimed to address disabilities by prescribing medication, will be presented and discussed during this session. Several years ago, Georgia started to meet requirements for the de-institutionalization of thousands of young children living in orphanages. It created a pilot Portage Program, developing an early childhood intervention and inclusive early and preschool education system. The endeavor was in cooperation with stakeholder organizations, using their strengths and bearing in mind that every child and every family is unique, and every family needs some support (with some needing more than others). The ECI policy and action plan and the newly adopted Law on Early and Preschool Education will be highlighted in the presentation, focusing on new initiatives supported and implemented by the Georgian state, non-governmental and higher education organizations. Mechanisms for fulfilling the objectives of ECI and Early and Preschool Education Law in Georgia will be introduced, together with the development of a nationwide system for community outreach, developmental surveillance and screening, identifying and referring to early childhood intervention services and kindergartens, and links between the ECI system and inclusive early and preschool education. After the presentation, three main topics will be offered for discussion:

• the experience of different countries in establishing a nationwide ECI system;
• the main features of high-quality, inclusive early and preschool education and ways to achieve it;
• the role of higher education in providing high-quality ECI and inclusive early-education services.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 45 minutes

Strand 3

ROOM: UYTENHOVE
SESSION 1/9

Sarah Van Haute, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium
An Pede, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium
Marga Eeckhout, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium

Small actions, great consequences – a practical workshop on diversity in early childhood

In the world young children live in today, diversity is an everyday reality. We see childcare as a miniature world, where little people experience great things. The City of Ghent provides daycare and out-of-school care for more than 6,500 children aged 0–6 (up to 12 during holidays). The primary goal is to offer equal chances for children to develop, feel good, participate and relate with people and society, while respecting diversity. Children, parents, community and care teams are
engaged in being valuable partners.
We organize childcare in order to contribute to the total development of a child and the quality of society.
A democratic society starts with living together, playing together and doing things together. Our childcare professionals use simple games and other materials to make similarities and differences part of the daily reality of young children. Essential for children and parents to understand is who they are at this moment. Are they accepted and welcomed for who they are?
In this workshop, you’ll experience how we make diversity a part of daily life in the earliest years of the children in our childcare centers. We will offer tips and tricks and let you try out various tools with which to undertake small actions with great consequences for young children and their families.

Interactive workshop
Duration: 90 minutes

Room: Zaal Rector Blancquaert
Session 1/10
Elaine Hynes, Early Childhood Ireland

What a Difference a Year Makes! Exploring the impact of accredited training on practice in early childhood settings

In 2016, a minimum qualification requirement was introduced for those working in Early Childhood Education and Care settings in Ireland. As a result, there has been a significant focus on the importance of high-quality training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
This research focuses on the experience of a group of educators in completing an accredited qualification in early childhood education and care (ECEC) and aims to assess the impact of this training on practices in ECCE settings.
The training program, which was two years in duration, was delivered through a blended-learning approach. The study brings together a group of educators, one year after the completion of the initial training program, to reflect on their experiences and how it has impacted on their practice over time. The research explores the factors which supported meaning-making, the transfer of theory to practice in ECCE settings, and the benefits of continuing professional development. It draws on research in the field of transformational learning and is underpinned by the work of Mezirow (1991) and Boyd (1991). The main findings from the study indicate that:
• learning takes time to transfer into practice;
• change can be a gradual process;
• critical reflection is key to learning;
• CPD is required, following on from completion of training, to support the transfer of theory into practice.
Following the presentation, there will be an opportunity for discussion and to ask questions relating to the key issues from the research.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 45 minutes

Jana Kargerová, Step by Step CR, Czech Republic
Petra Vallin, Step by Step CR, Czech Republic

Reflection on the WANDA method – the teachers’ perspective

The main goal of this presentation is to share information on how a group-reflection method (WANDA) has been implemented into the Czech primary school context, and how it has been perceived by a team of teachers among whom the method is used on a regular basis.
After eight WANDA sessions, teachers were asked to reflect on the method. This was in the form of an open-ended questionnaire. The teachers evaluated the pros and cons of the sessions and identified any weak points. They suggested improvements for both the organization of the course and its content.
The teachers spontaneously recognized WANDA as being relevant in two areas. The first was the development of metacognitive (reflective thinking) skills. The second area was related to professional knowledge, especially concerning strategies and guidelines on how to cope with common situations. Here is an example of such response.
"Especially useful are the ideas of others – the greater the number of heads, the greater the knowledge (Czech proverb) – and the experience that one would not be able to come up with alone.” Most teachers mentioned that they expect to use this form of reflection in their future profession. The most important advantage of WANDA was seen in understanding the method of reflection. Teachers also highlighted the benefits in being able to reflect on their self-realization, especially in that it was important to find out that others are facing similar problems in their profession.
Most of the situations discussed during our WANDA sessions were related to the challenges of student
motivation, behaviour and respect, but also other topics such as complexity of peer relationships (including cyber bullying), or the difficulties of parent–teacher communication and collaboration. First, participants will learn about our experience with the WANDA reflection method. Then, we would like to open up a discussion on what other potential uses WANDA might have in education.

_Presentation followed by discussions_  
_Duration: 45 minutes_  

**Concurrent Sessions 2: 14:00-15:30**

**ROOM: REFTER  
SESSION 2/1**

Dragana Sretenov, Open Society Foundations (OSF), United Kingdom  
Anna Kukuruza, Charity Fund Early Intervention Institute (CFEI), Ukraine  
Eric Bloemkolk, SOFT Tulip, The Netherlands  
Maia Gabunia, Georgian Academy of Childhood Disability, Georgia  
Rusudan Bochorishvili, First Step Georgia  
Tsintsadze Nino, Portage Georgia  
Vania Kaneva, For Our Children Foundation, Bulgaria

**Civil society’s role in shaping the development of early childhood intervention systems in Europe – Open Society Foundation’s experience in supporting civil society in Georgia, Ukraine and Bulgaria**

The United Nations has adopted two international human rights treaties that, when taken together, articulate the human right to appropriate support and care for infants and young children at risk of developmental delays and with disabilities. These treaties, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, Art. 23), including General Comment 7 to the CRC Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood (2005), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, Art. 7, 8 and 25), also describe the standards by which all States Parties can guide the development of policies, systems and services necessary to comply with the Conventions.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) focuses on children’s early development and specifically on vulnerable children from conception until the age of six. Infancy is a crucial developmental stage when an individual forms the core of his or her confidence, establishes intensive interpersonal bonds, develops the ability to trust and relate to others, and lays down the foundation for lifelong learning and thinking. Due to rapid brain development, which takes place in the early development of children, the benefits of ECI at this stage are unique and lead to a greater impact than at any later stage of children’s life.

In this field, it is crucial for the development of the child and parents to benefit from well-developed and comprehensive holistic services that could provide support from the very early stages of life to both the child and caregivers. A lack of support or placing young children in institutions, which still happens in many countries, can lead to further delays in a child’s development that requires ongoing specialist support and a dependency on institutional care throughout life. Breaking the cycle of institutionalization and segregation and empowering young people to become active participants in our society begins with providing the support of ECI systems as soon as the risk factors are identified, until the child is ready to transit to inclusive pre-primary setting.

The panelists will highlight the importance of developing ECI systems, with a particular focus on discussing the role of civil society. To demonstrate this process, selected results from several European countries, supported by OSF’s Early Childhood Program, will be presented. The focus of the panel will be sharing practical know-how on ECI system development.

_Panel discussion_  
_Duration: 90 minutes_  

_Strand 1_  

_Strand 2_
Who cares? Understanding the complexity of the work of the early childhood workforce

A competent early childhood system requires skilled, knowledgeable, and physically and emotionally fit staff. Yet, in many parts of the world, the specialist knowledge and skills of this predominantly female workforce remains unacknowledged. Many countries face difficulties in attracting and retaining staff. Poor pay and conditions, low professional status, and inadequate workforce preparation are considered to be contributing factors. Australian evidence also points to high levels of absenteeism related to staff injury and illness. We argue therefore, that building a competent workforce requires a deep understanding of:

- the complexity of the work of early childhood education and care;
- the specialist skills and knowledge that high-quality educators employ; and
- the impact of early childhood work on the psychological and physiological well-being of staff.

In response to these concerns, this panel will:

- outline a three-year Australian study that aims to make explicit the complexity of the work of high-quality, early childhood educators;
- discuss the findings of a comparative analysis of Australian and New Zealand early educator time use; and
- share the initial findings of a study on educators’ well-being.

Our findings highlight the multiplicity of demands placed upon educators during the course of a typical working day. Despite significant differences in national contexts, the work categories developed for Australian early childhood educators also apply in New Zealand and the multiple demands upon educators are echoed. However, there are differences in the intentional emphasis placed on indigenous cultural practices.

We argue that studies of educators’ physiological and psychological well-being must consider the impact of organisational, socio-cultural and political contexts. The panel invites discussion on the potential of internationally comparative studies of the work of high-quality, early childhood educators to better inform early childhood policy, professional preparation, professional development, health and well-being interventions, and to change the public’s perception of this work.

Panel discussion
Duration: 90 minutes

Perception of male undergraduates on the father’s involvement in early childcare

A father’s negligence in regards to early childcare has been a concern in most homes, with little understanding of the benefits of their involvement. This has major consequences in the development of the child. This research investigated the perception of male undergraduates on fathers’ involvement in early childcare in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Ogun State. The study utilized a descriptive survey design with 400 respondents randomly selected from ten colleges in the university. A questionnaire was used to elicit responses from respondents. A pilot study was carried out which had a Cronbach’s Alpha reliability of 0.75. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

Results revealed that among the perceived importance of paternal involvement in early childcare, ranking first was that fathers should set rules for children and ensure compliance. This was followed by a perception that fathers should demonstrate a caring attitude towards the child’s mother. The presence of a father in order to discipline a child ranked third.

Results also showed that, among the perceived constraints associated with paternal involvement in early childcare, boredom and location of the father’s work ranked first, followed by the cultural role and responsibility of mothers over the child, a father’s lack of financial capacity and then a lack of exposure and illiteracy.

Findings indicated that among the perceived effects of negligence of paternal involvement in early childcare, emotional insensitivity to other people’s feelings ranked second. The child’s unwillingness to learn ranked third, alongside the child’s lack of confidence in social skills. The test of the hypotheses showed that there is significant relationship between the perceived effect of a father’s negligence and the perceived importance of a father’s involvement. Also, there is a significant correlation between the constraints associated with paternal involvement and the perceived importance of fathers being involved in early childcare. The findings concluded that boredom and the location of a father’s work was a major constraint associated with
involvement in early childcare. The major perceived effect of a father’s negligence was the lack of emotional sensitivity to other people’s feelings and unwillingness to learn. It is recommended that families should prepare male children for the legal, financial, and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood.

Poster presentation
Duration: 45 minutes
Strand 1

Monika Kelpsiene, Kindergarten “Justinukas”, Lithuania
Sigita Burvyte, Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania
Margarita Jankunec, Kindergarten “Justinukas”, Lithuania
Elena Kocai, Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania

Promoting positive parenting in preschool institutions – how to build a relationship based on mutual respect among teachers, parents and children

We believe that successful child self-realization greatly depends on positive parenting. That’s why we established the “Positive Parenthood Club” in kindergartens. The club is organized by support specialists in order to facilitate collaboration among teachers and parents and to foster a better understanding of children’s behavior. Parents and teachers, with the help of a psychologist or social pedagogue, become better acquainted with themselves and the children they care for.

During club meetings, we outline the roles of responsible parenting which support a child’s healthy development: the love giver; the teacher of life; the daily care giver; the setter of the limits; the social relations consultant.

Pre-school support specialists (psychologists and social pedagogues) conduct training sessions for educators in order to strengthen their competence in working with children. During this session, there will be an opportunity to analyze and experience the above-mentioned roles in specific situations. We believe that these roles are universal, and after practical experience, everyone can find a way to adopt them.

A model for positive parenting will be presented based on these roles. The model is intended for support specialists in order to help teachers and parents develop a positive set of competences. Questions such as the following will be discussed during the presentation.

• What are the most effective ways of allowing parents to be informed and engaged with the activities of the “Positive Parenthood Club”?
• What parent education methods are most effective in creating a harmonious educational environment for children, both within the family and in pre-school education?

Poster presentation
Duration: 45 minutes
Strand 1

ROOM: MUSEUM DIERICK SESSION 2/4

Pascale Camus, Office de la Naissance et de l’Enfance (ONE), Belgium
François Maréchal, Office de la Naissance et de l’Enfance (ONE), Belgium

Together, let’s reach more inclusive childhood services

Isn’t it important to feel welcome when you arrive somewhere? Especially, if you are a young child or a parent? Gaining access to more inclusive childhood services does not only consist of creating welcoming and humane spaces. It is also about thinking of how professionals can create a trusting relationship with each family, how they can promote diversity, how they can talk about it with children, and how they can create a professional network in which to improve and multiply their resources.

Does “inclusive places” mean that they are specialized spaces for children with disabilities? No, it does not. Inclusive places ought to welcome each and every child, with their diverse needs.

In order to talk about this inspiring topic, we will bring along our pedagogical suitcases. They contain a large amount of objects which are used to suggest inclusive activities for children.

Our aim is to talk about inclusive places and what they require, while rummaging inside those fascinating suitcases. We don’t plan on a non-interactive lecture. We want to talk with other professionals about what is needed to reach more inclusive places. Articulating theory and practice is our approach and one which we hope you will enjoy! Feel welcome to join us, ask us questions and participate! We look forward to meeting you.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 90 minutes
Strand 1
The Brazilian Legal Framework for Early Childhood – developing process and advocacy campaigns for Brazilian municipalities

Child-oriented policies are at the core of the Legal Framework for Early Childhood, a law issued by the Brazilian federal government in 2016 that guides the federal, state and municipal government into prioritizing children from birth to six years old in services and public policies. By acknowledging children as citizens and owners of rights, it builds up many advances such as the determination of an Integrated National Policy and the establishment of specific public-policy guidelines for early childhood. The Legal Framework has a holistic approach and foresees intersectoral coordination in which administrators from all levels of the government are responsible for assuring early childhood development (ECD) and aligning children rights to the priorities of public policies and strategies.

The law was developed by a combined effort of members from the Federal Government, Federal Congress, the National Network for Early childhood development (RNPI) and other Civil Society Organizations, especially by more than 354 parliamentarians and professionals who participated in the Executive Leadership Program on Early Child Development (ELP). This is a comprehensive training program featured in the Núcleo Ciência Pela Infância (NCPI) – a collaborative initiative launched by the Maria Cecilia Souto Vidigal Foundation – the Center of the Developing Child at Harvard University and four other partner organizations in Brazil.

The intensive program was designed to engage key leaders and technically prepare them to apply scientific knowledge on ECD to the formulation, implementation and improvement of public programs and policies. One of the main impacts of the program has been its contribution to the approval of the Legal Framework for ECD. In this session, we plan to present the process of development and approval of the Legal Framework, as well as an advocacy strategy implemented by RNPI to encourage more than 400 candidates running in the 2017 mayoral elections to implement ECD policies and programs.

The session will combine a presentation with time for Q&A and group discussions. A final plenary discussion will synthesize the main results of the discussions, and give debate opportunities to inspire initiatives in other developing countries where there is no robust early childhood system – mostly in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 90 minutes

How to ensure access to quality ECD for Roma children in institutional care

A high degree of social exclusion and isolation, which has a lasting negative impact on Roma children, characterizes the situation for the Roma population in Europe. Every third Roma child goes to bed hungry at least once a month; and 50% of Roma youth between the ages of six and 24 do not attend school. Even when pre-schools are available, access can often be limited due to lack of transport from remote settlements or high costs. Most importantly, it is known that Roma children, including newborns, are at risk of institutionalization, and tend to have limited chances of a healthy, happy childhood.

There is a significant overrepresentation of Roma children in institutional care in several countries, including Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Italy and Slovakia. Child protection and social service systems do not adequately support families and children, especially Roma families, to avoid child endangerment and the placement of children in institutional care. The main factors contributing to the overrepresentation of Roma children in institutional care include poverty and material conditions, school absenteeism, single parenthood and migration. Access to mainstream, quality services, including early childhood education is significantly limited for children in institutional care.

The main objective of the session is to present possible actions for overcoming barriers to quality services in the case of institutionalized children. It will include adequate early childhood interventions preventing institutional care, the shift to community-based services, such as foster parents and also fostering access to quality services. Panelists will come from social and education fields, representing both policy makers and local practitioners.

The session will begin with short introductions by the three panelists, followed by an interactive discussion, moderated by a facilitator. Participants will have the opportunity to actively contribute, and conclusions will be summarized by the facilitator and placed on a flipchart and projector screen. Taking into account the need for further policy developments in this field, the conclusions of the session will be followed up by a short policy paper and policy dialogue related to the EU and national level.
Panel discussion (or workshop)
Duration: 90 minutes

ROOM: OUDE INFIRMERIE
SESSION 2/7

Anke van Keulen, Bureau MUTANT, The Netherlands
Elena Misik, Step by Step Macedonia Foundation for Education and Cultural Initiatives, Macedonia
Branka Djajkovska, Step by Step Macedonia Foundation for Education and Cultural Initiatives, Macedonia
Cornelia Cincilei, Step by Step Educational Program, Moldova
Neda Sindik, Pedagogical Center of Montenegro
Mateja Režek, DRCPI Step by Step, Slovenia
Ana del Barrio Saiz, EQF Working Group, The Netherlands
Ankie Vandekerckhove, VBJK, Belgium

Five Steps to Quality: the European Quality Framework as a lens – five countries share their experiences of implementation

The European Quality Framework (EQF) for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) addresses the most relevant themes on ECEC in a comprehensive way, and places ECEC in a broader societal framework. The EQF was made through consensus by a working group of experts from almost every EU member state. The framework is based on scientific research and addresses five major themes: Accessibility; Staff and working conditions; Curriculum; Monitoring and evaluation; Policy and financing.

MUTANT (the Netherlands) and VBJK (Belgium) have designed a training pack for an improved implementation of the EQF’s ‘Five Steps to Quality’. This pack was used to look into different country contexts (Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Moldova and the Netherlands) on areas such as advocacy, reflection, cooperation with stakeholders, policy revision, etc. In the workshop, we will share information about the EQF, its relevance and usefulness, and share experiences of our countries. Participants will explore, reflect upon and discuss how they can apply this information within their own context.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 90 minutes

ROOM: DORMITORIUMZAAAL
SESSION 2/8

Olivera Kameranac, University of Waikato, New Zealand

Re-thinking teachers’ roles and responsibilities during a time of rapid changes for early childhood education in Aotearoa, New Zealand

Over the last two decades, neo-liberal education reform has notably transformed the landscape of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Aotearoa, New Zealand. From a universal approach to ensure quality ECEC with a professionalised workforce for all children, the country has swung to a ‘hands-off’ approach, which has allowed the market to define who provides early childhood service to whom and how. Increasing privatisation and marketisation has given early childhood teachers and managers in both service types (community and for-profit) many challenges (e.g. how to secure sustainability in the market). At the same time, it has also opened up a space for teachers and managers to re-think their roles, responsibilities, understanding of professionalism, and the purpose of early childhood services over this time of rapid competition and change.

Drawing on data from my ongoing doctoral study, I will outline some dominant discourses in New Zealand early childhood policies that have created tensions between resources available to ECEC services and the increasing demands of children, families and communities. In particular, I will focus on examples of some ECEC services that have used existing tensions as an opportunity to make structural and process changes, and thus respond adequately to the needs of children, families and communities. Furthermore, I will discuss how teachers and managers have re-constructed their roles, responsibilities and subjectivities in their specific working contexts, and have therefore strengthened the sense of agency, advocacy and critical engagement to build professional and responsive teaching practice in their ECEC settings. Illustrated examples will serve as a foundation for critical reflection, sharing experiences and discussion with participants on questions such as the following.

- What are the structural and process changes that early childhood services need in order to be more attuned to aspirations and needs of children, families and communities during a time of rapid change?
- What are the competences that early childhood professionals need to develop?
Competent systems in the US: a case study of “pipeline” programs for minority and disadvantaged students

One of the challenges facing minority and disadvantaged populations in the US is access to educational opportunities so that they can become empowered citizens able to fully participate in society. Among the most effective solutions is the creation of inter-institutional “pipelines,” programs that formally connect one stage (and institution) of education to the next. In the past, pipeline programs have connected higher education with high schools. These programs have been successful in educating students about justice, the legal system and their rights. They have provided students with a constructive and empowering vision of their place in society and how they may exercise and develop their talents to become participants in a system that recognizes their unique voices.

What are only now being explored are pipelines that would connect higher education and younger students, including in ECEC. There is ample opportunity and some precedent for programs in which older students collaborate with younger ones in exercises that aim at fostering a sense of justice and fairness, of empathy and mutual support, of rights and duties, in a context and using methods suitable to early childhood. Examples include treating children’s stories as a point of departure for exercises in legal reasoning and socio-emotional development. Questions based on a familiar children’s story can foster a sense of justice, empathy, compassion, participation and agency. At the same time, the posing of these questions can enrich the worldview of both younger and older children by providing them with a wider and exhilarating sense of life’s possibilities and of their own potential as unique individuals.

The goal of “pipelines” that connect institutions of higher education and ECEC is to enhance the opportunities of all children to participate in society on an equal footing, while respecting the uniqueness and individuality of each.

Enhancing children’s development through recorded observations and documentation

“ZigZag” is a pedagogical profile which has inspired a number of childcare centers in Ghent. It is based on the insights of Loris Malaguzzi from Reggio Emilia, combined with the vision on childcare of the City of Ghent. It focuses on the total well-being, diversity, participation and involvement of children in their environment. The caregivers are trained to enhance children’s development by reflecting on recorded observations. The teams reflect continuously and critically on their own work and attitudes.

Children are encouraged to be their own primary educators: each child is a strong, capable and resilient person, driven by inborn curiosity and acting from an investigative learning attitude, relating to others and the environment. ZigZag childcare practitioners work with the ‘pedagogy of listening’: not leading, but following; not knowing, but investigating; not telling but listening. They explore who children are and what they think, do and feel. They investigate children’s interests, take their opinions into account and try to understand all of the “hundred languages” that children use. They observe what each child does and how they interact, and record the children’s learning processes, making them more visible.

The care team is challenged to expose connections, visualize interactions, look at collaboration with others and establish links between theory and practice. Based on the documented interests, the team creates situations and environments in which children can learn from each other, play and communicate in groups, triggering curiosity and appealing to the children’s drive to explore.

In this workshop, we focus on the ‘pedagogy of listening’. How can recording children’s learning processes enhance critical reflection in teams? How do childcare practitioners enable children’s actions and interactions, supporting their development, based on thorough observations?

A short film and presentation will be followed by interactive exercises. By joining one of our field visits, you can see how this works in practice.
**Interactive workshop on a specific topic**  
**Duration:** 90 minutes  
**Strand 1**  

**ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR BLANQUAERT**  
**SESSION 2/10**

Ulviya Mikayilova, Center for Innovations in Education, Azerbaijan  
Elmina Kazimzade, Center for Innovations in Education, Azerbaijan

**Towards inclusive early-childhood policies: barriers and opportunities in different contexts**

In this session, the case of inclusive education reform for young children with disabilities in Azerbaijan will be presented. The authors use an education policy framework to understand which factors contribute to limited progress in national education policy reform. The analysis particularly examines how social, educational, and cultural factors affect policy planning, formulation and implementation, as well as the evaluation of policy options.

As result of a “pragmatic” approach undertaken by the government, the idea of inclusive education was addressed through its “translation” into the hybridization of special schools. The authors plan to provide a discussion of lessons learned from the reform process where, despite the challenges faced within the first cycle in the inclusive education reform process, positive attitude changes towards the concept of inclusive education gained traction and wider acceptance.

This wider acceptance of inclusive education ideas brings hope for future developments on the national level. Finally, the analysis of the national inclusive education reform process may be helpful for further reforms, as well as for international discourse on the country-specific localization of inclusive education.

*Presentation followed by discussions*  
**Duration:** 45 minutes  
**Strand 3**

Antje Dijk, Municipality of Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Mirjam Vermond, OKIDO, The Netherlands

**Inclusion of children with special needs in Amsterdam daycare centers: OKIDO makes it possible**

We firmly believe in trying to give children with special needs as much regular access to daycare centers as possible. Therefore, we have developed an inclusive approach based on flagging problems at an early age and coaching by specialised professionals. The municipality of Amsterdam and OKIDO would like to share 25 years of experience and discuss how we organise support at daycare centers and preschools.

After a short presentation, there will be plenty of room to discuss the following topics. What kind of support do teachers need to make inclusion feasible and successful? Concerning the possibilities/impossibilities within regular daycare centers and preschools and the nature/severity of the problems these children may face, are there any limits, and if so, what can limit inclusion? To what extent can (local) governments contribute to successfully include children with special needs in regular daycare centers and preschools?

*Presentation followed by discussions*  
**Duration:** 45 minutes  
**Strand 1**

**Field Visits: 14:00-16:00**

Meeting point by the entrance of Het Pand

**CHILDCARE: Nieuwland - Daycare center for babies and toddlers from 0 to 3 years**

Nieuwland is an inclusive childcare center, offering 98 places for children between 0 and 3 years. Every child is welcome, but a number of places are reserved for children with specific needs (e.g. disabilities). Inclusive care, as part of the social function of childcare, is one of the cornerstones of the vision on childcare, accessible to every child and family, of the City of Ghent.

We aim for individual attention and encourage social behavior in a group for all children. Flexibility by responding to the individuality and the own rhythm of each child is essential in our care.
In this field visit you can see how inclusive childcare is realized in Ghent. Which conditions are necessary to achieve inclusive childcare; how do we lower the barriers for families with children with special needs; how do we help each child to find its own place in the group; how do we approach and explore differences and similarities; how do we connect children?

**CHILD CARE: ‘t Sleepken - Out-of-school care for children aged 2.5 to 6 years**

“Sleepken” is a community-oriented childcare center, located in an old industrial district with a high level of diversity. They build on a multicultural and strong community network to connect children, parents, neighborhood and team.

To ensure a continuum of care and connection with the child’s network, the daycare and out-of-school care collaborate actively with each other, as well as with the families, schools and neighborhood. Children explore the neighborhood, shop locally and use public spaces. The childcare is part of the local community and tries to mirror its values in its daily practice. Parents are always welcome and stimulated to participate in decision-making.

This field visit shows you how a child care center can help to strengthen community networks. Discover our tips, quick wins and possible pitfalls inviting the neighborhood into the childcare center and taking the center outside in the neighborhood.

**EDUCATION: De Buurt - Kindergarten and Primary School for children aged 2.5 to 12 years**

Independent parent-driven method school, offering education for children aged 2.5 to 12, in mixed age groups. De Buurt differs from mainstream education in vision, teaching methods and active participation from parents, children and team.

The school is located in a large house with garden, with a homely atmosphere. There are no teachers, kitchen. There is always room for a cozy chat with a cup of coffee or tea.

This field visit focuses on 2 essential principles of the school: community-oriented and experience-driven project education. In community-oriented education accessibility and collaboration within the neighborhood to offer maximum chances to children are key elements. The children learn by participating in the daily live in the neighborhood. Experience-oriented project education teaches children, in addition to math and language, to solve problems, set goals, process information, plan, design strategies, collaborate, make appointments, evaluate, express feelings, persevere, etc. Learning on a physical, social, emotional and creative level and acquiring good learning and thinking skills are part of the daily curriculum.

**Concurrent Sessions 3: 16:00-17:00**

**ROOM: REFTER 3/1**

Stanislav Daniel, International Step by Step Association (ISSA), The Netherlands

**Global leaders – local action**

Every revolution starts with local action. Join us to discuss how local initiatives can improve the situation of children from Romani, Traveller and migrant families. Learn how grassroots activism can bring us closer towards competent early childhood governance and policies.

Will Sonila (Albania) provide information leading to the empowerment of Romani parents? Can Lisa (United Kingdom) provide Traveller parents with the right knowledge to positively affect their children’s lives? Will Božidar (Serbia) break through stereotypes and attract younger children to kindergartens? How is Brigita (Slovenia) going to improve teaching practices through educational videos? Will Siniša (Croatia) succeed in bringing more harmony to families by empowering fathers? Can Driton (Kosovo) inspire families to provide their children with playing and learning space? And what brings them all together?

In this thought-provoking session, a group of six participants on the Global Leaders for Young Children program will present their advocacy plans in which they start local action to initiate sustainable changes for Romani, Traveller and migrant children. Take this opportunity to learn something new and contribute to better implementation by sharing your own thoughts and experiences.

Global Leaders for Young Children program is a worldwide program for emerging leaders focused on building their knowledge, capacities and networks. Its European cohort is implemented in partnership with the World
Rethinking care work in early childhood care and education theory, policy and practice

This presentation reports on one part of a Canadian research project that aims to reposition and reassert care and care work into Canadian early childhood education, care practices and policy deliberations. This presentation will have three parts focusing on care work in early childhood settings. Part one analyzes current understandings of care work and its unique characteristics across disciplines and their relevance to early childhood settings. Part two draws on empirical data to illustrate how different levels of government in Canada represent/conceptualize the care and care aspect of early learning and childcare, through an analysis of contemporary government documents and proceedings. Part three analyzes cultural themes such as maternalism, and mother-substitute love in relation to concerns about reinscribing social inequalities in early childhood work (Romero & Pérez, 2016). To conclude, some alternative ways of framing care work in early childhood settings are explored. Collectively, the presentation seeks to critically analyze and rethink care work in theory, policy and practice. Issues for discussion include how care work is understood and the influence of cultural themes, sociopolitical opportunities and constraints on these understandings in different countries, and new ways of thinking about care work in local contexts.

A competent early childhood system means an inclusive system – the Early Childhood Quality Inclusion Profile (ECQUIP) tool for aligned action

Aiming for a competent early childhood system requires a solid commitment to equity and quality. Only systems anchored in Inclusive Early Childhood Development (IECD) will emerge as competent, equitable, and effective. An array of Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators advance early childhood development priorities. The 2030 Agenda’s commitment “to leave no one behind” affirms an inclusive approach. Yet, most advocacy action continues to reflect a marginalization and exclusion of the needs and rights of young children with disabilities and their families. Manifestos tend to declare allegiance to each and every child, but actions remain focused on just some children. Achieving SDG ECD targets and leaving no one behind requires a fresh and sustained effort at connecting the dots between the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Early Childhood Development Task Force of the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities (www.gpcwd.org/early-childhood-development.html) fosters aligned action for collective impacts establishing competent systems with Inclusive Early Childhood Development priorities in policies, programs, and practices. Conceptual and practical tools for such advocacy will be the focus of this presentation and discussion. An overview of the Early Childhood Quality Inclusion Profile (ECQUIP) and in particular, its “triple-twin-tracking” component, will serve as a framework for seeking strategic engagement and synergy with emergent partnerships, networks, and collaborations which can transform early childhood services, the workforce, inter-institutional environments, and policy frameworks. Participants, individually or in small groups, will select a policy or program in their current experience to assess according to elements of ECQUIP. Country perspectives will be shared in addressing a key Strand 3 issue: How do we allow diverse and divergent efforts (from such partners as ECDAN, the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, or the Global Action on Disability network) to achieve competent and equitable early childhood systems?
Giulia Cortellesi, International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI), The Netherlands
Francesca Petrucci, Associazione 21 Luglio, Italy

Community-based ECEC supporting the desegregation and inclusion of young Roma children: the TOY (Together Old and Young) for Inclusion approach

The segregation of Roma in Europe, and around the world, is determined by socioeconomic and historical factors, and has a detrimental effect on young children (and their families) in terms of their rights, development, and future (Lee, et al. 2014). The European funded project, TOY for Inclusion: Community-based Early Childhood and Care for Roma Children (2017–2019, www.toyproject.net/project/toy-for-inclusion-2) aims to improve the transition experience of young Roma children into schools by offering an innovative response to the discrimination of Roma communities.

TOY for Inclusion involves the creation of community-based ECEC hubs which build on the strengths of communities with regards to intergenerational learning and parenting skills. It strengthens the links between informal, non-formal, and formal settings for young children, and at the same time improves the capacity of all those working with young children with respect to anti-discrimination. It serves to increase the inclusiveness of ECEC settings. Practitioners working in schools, ECEC services, health services, libraries, cultural and art projects are invited to cooperate and organize activities in the hubs via Local Action Teams whose membership is cross-sectoral. These include parents and community members.

The TOY for Inclusion hubs are located in areas reachable for both Roma and non-Roma families, designed and run by local committees composed of representatives from both communities, and includes school and preschool teachers and local authorities.

During the presentation, we will discuss the current situation with regard to the introduction of an ECEC hub and the intergenerational learning approach in Roma communities. Focus will be on the experiences of one community in Rome (Italy).

Participants will discuss the potential opportunities and challenges of applying the TOY intergenerational approach to Roma communities, and how it can promote social inclusion, intercultural dialogue and access to both ECEC settings and primary schools. The added value of ECEC hubs to promote inclusive ECEC in diverse communities will also be discussed, along with the different ways in which the TOY for Inclusion approach could take form in different contexts.
discussion about the possibilities of ensuring a smooth transition processes in a strong and equal partnership between parents and staff, whereby aspects of ‘care’ are equally valued as aspects of ‘education’. Where possible, additional video footage will be used to enrich the debate.

Film presentation
Duration: 60 minutes

Strand 1

ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR GILIS
SESSION 3/6

Antonia Scholz, German Youth Institute, Germany

Integrating refugee children into ECEC in Germany – experiences and challenges

In 2015 and 2016, a considerable number of refugee children arrived in Germany with their families. As a consequence, the early childhood education and care (ECEC) system in Germany has been facing a complex challenge: to integrate children into ECEC services by simultaneously taking into consideration the situation of newly arrived families. In order to adequately address the situation and to develop existing services, evidence-based research is needed.

The German Youth Institute has therefore conducted a research project to investigate the situation on the ground. This contribution provides findings from a survey among 3,600 ECEC centers in Germany on the work with refugee children. Conducted in early 2016, the survey explored the extent to which refugee children were enrolled in ECEC at that time, and it provides an overview of the centers’ experiences. The findings show that ECEC centers, as well as the whole sector, have reacted to this particular challenge in different ways.

Data is provided on the enrolment patterns and admission processes of refugee children, on working conditions, on cooperation with parents, on external support for the centers, and also on inter-institutional collaboration within the field.

Within the session, selected findings of the survey will be presented in order to discuss the observed developments related to the refugee question in a two-fold perspective
• To what extent has the German ECEC sector been proved ‘competent’ in finding systemic responses to the challenges arising from recent refugee immigration?
• What further implications are there that might need to be addressed more explicitly – both for policy makers and professionals?

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

Strand 2

ROOM: OUDE INFIRMERIE
SESSION 3/7

Sara Watson, ReadyNation International, USA
Radu Enache, Global Consulting & Solutions SRL, Romania
Gabriel Biris, Biris Goran Legal & Tax, Romania

Building business champions for early childhood in your country

Business allies – executives not from the children’s sector – are “unexpected champions” who can greatly advance progress on funding for comprehensive, high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood. They are ideal messengers for specific aspects of a system, such as data outcomes and are a qualified workforce that may be especially difficult to fund.

This workshop will provide examples from many countries and advice on recruiting and supporting your country’s business leaders to perform a variety of tasks to support early childhood: including working in their community; engaging employees and customers; and impacting policy change. Based on ReadyNation’s 11 years of success in engaging business to support early childhood, the workshop will cover policy changes that the business community has already enacted in Uganda (including increases in the federal budget and the first inclusion of early childhood in the national policy plan) and the U.S., as well as a new network in Australia. Romania’s new network is having an impact in the media, with its members being discussed in public appearances. As a consequence, public discourse is focusing more on the topic. ReadyNation Romania’s policy agenda includes enacting laws that give companies tax credits for money spent on early childhood, and increasing funding for educational services for children from birth through three within the existing system for preschool and school-aged children.

Specific topics include: examples of policy changes to which business leaders have contributed; finding willing business leaders; collaborating with the children’s community; options for business leader action; and sustaining
business involvement. By the end of the workshop, participants will have ideas about the policy changes that business leaders can affect, what business leaders are doing now, how to start planning such an initiative, and what information exists to help them.

*Interactive workshop on a specific topic*
*Duration: 60 minutes*

**ROOM: DORMITORIUMZAAL**
**SESSION 3/8**
[to be announced]

**ROOM: UYTENHOVE**
**SESSION 3/9**

Myriam Mony, Le Furet Petite Enfance & Diversité, France
Marie Nicole Rubio, Le Furet Petite Enfance & Diversité, France

**Ordinary violence in education in the context of diversity**

A network of training centers of childhood professionals in France and Morocco, Réseau FRIDA Enfance, has been working for 10 years on early childhood education and care and in contexts of diversity. The last working topic selected from 2013 was Ordinary violence in education in the context of diversity, relating to all services working with young children: daycare centers, hospitals, schools and centres for children without family care.

They found out that, despite the fact that people receiving children in those institutions had been properly trained, everyday violence remained at the same levels (individual and/or in the institutions). They would also deny that any violence had taken place.

This workshop is about presenting everyday violence in educational situations and its impact on child development. It is based on interviews with 100 students who have been doing a practical internship in those institutions in France and Morocco.

The purpose of the workshop is to understand how and why everyday violence takes place and how to improve the situation in both the short and long term. Lastly, the role of initial and in-service training, to prevent violence (for instance, pedagogic tools), will be presented as well as other ways to combat it.

We invite you to further discuss whether you face the same problem in institutions in your country, how these situations are managed, how you personally understand the problem, and how we can exchange our best practices in order to proceed.

*Presentation followed by discussions*
*Duration: 60 minutes*
ISSA CONFERENCE 2017

Concurrent Sessions 4: 17:30-18:30

ROOM: REFTER
SESSION 4/1

Karolien Nijs, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium
Karleen De Rijcke, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium
Danny Verdonck, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium

How to make childcare services available, accessible and affordable

In Flanders (the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium), there are not enough childcare places to fill the need. Vulnerable families are often unable to find a place for their child, cannot afford the available options or feel unwelcome. The City of Ghent has developed strategies to make quality childcare more available, accessible and affordable for all families. Childcare is provided in 74 facilities, and families can apply through a centralized registration system. The allocation of childcare places is based on objective criteria and social considerations, rather than on a “first-come, first-served” basis. This ensures better access for vulnerable families and enables us to realize the social function of childcare in our city.

As the local authority and main childcare provider, the City is involved in the Local Childcare Consultation Group (LOK). Each municipality in Flanders is required to establish this Consultation, to tackle the problems that childcare face, and strengthen the quality of childcare policy through participation. This advisory council brings together all parties involved in the care of young children, including local authorities, childcare users and organizers. Members receive input on new policy plans, local services and other community issues which may influence childcare and young children in general. They can signal bottlenecks and risks associated with new rules or plans and propose new policies and projects.

In 2017, the City established a Central Childcare Contact Point for the centralized registration of childcare requests for the whole city. Parents receive a comprehensive overview and are able to apply for all the available childcare options across the region.

In this workshop, we will share information on how families can apply for childcare through this centralized registration system. We will also present the allocation criteria used to ensure a social mix, mirroring the community in which the childcare facility is located. We then describe how we work to expand the registration and allocation model used for the city facilities to all childcare centers in Ghent, and how a Local Childcare Consultation group can support the accessibility of childcare. We will report on how good practices clash with legal barriers and policy frameworks, and how the ‘quest’ of the City of Ghent can inspire other local organizations in their search to make childcare accessible for all families.

This session will introduce the practice with a short presentation and original film materials, followed by discussions.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes
Strand 3

ROOM: PRIORZAAL
SESSION 4/2

Willeke van der Werf, Education & Pedagogy, Utrecht University, The Netherlands
Michel Vandenbroeck, Ghent University, Belgium
Pauline Slot, Education & Pedagogy, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Organizational configurations in the hybrid Dutch early-childhood education and care system – relations with diversity, inclusion and pedagogical quality

In 2005, new legislation in the Netherlands introduced private market-mechanisms in the formerly public early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. As a result, a hybrid system was created with divergent public policy ambitions for both market (for-profit) and public (non-profit) organizations. A variety of ECEC organizations emerged, aiming at different public goals with varying organizational strategies. This presentation addresses how, in this hybrid system, ECEC organizations differ and how organizational differences are related to performance regarding inclusiveness, diversity and pedagogical quality.

Applying cluster analysis to data from 120 managers of ECEC organizations, we identified four organizational configurations (Mintzberg, 1983) and related these configurations to measures of organizational performance based on staff reports and independent observations of practice.

Overall, modern professional organizations (type 1) outperformed all other organizations on all measures of interest: they were culturally more diverse and inclusive; had higher levels of job satisfaction and team-based...
professionalization; were more child- and play-centered; and provided a high level of observed pedagogical process.
Large diversified market-driven organizations (type 3) performed the worst. Traditional low client-centered professional organizations (type 4) served a diverse group of clients (as did type 1), provided an average level of pedagogical process, but performed worse on job satisfaction, professionalization and attention for diversity. Small diversified organizations (type 2) were culturally more diverse, regarding staff and clients, than large diversified organizations (type 3), but scored equally low on the other performance indicators.
The findings are striking for a society that aims to increase its inclusiveness and to reduce system-related mechanisms of early segregation and inequality in early-years services.
The theory-derived organizational configurations are clearly linked to practice, suggesting a high impact on practice of the current dynamics in the Dutch ECEC system. Inclusive ECEC requires a competent system at all levels.
We will particularly discuss implications for policy and legislation at the state level. Can we improve pedagogical quality and inclusiveness in childcare centers under the limitations from policy choices that affect organizational orientations (and if so, how)? Given present developments, what do governments require in order to make policy-decisions in favor of pedagogical quality and inclusiveness in ECEC?
Co-authors: Paul Leseman, Education & Pedagogy, Utrecht University, The Netherlands and Patrick Kenis, Organization Studies, Tilburg University, The Netherlands

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: NOVICENGANG
SESSION 4/3

Inge Laenen, C-ExE Leuven University, Belgium

MyProfile: a process-oriented monitoring, communication and transition tool

MyProfile is a monitoring system for early childhood education and care (for children aged 0–5) developed in Belgium which can also be used as a communication and transition tool. It builds on previous work on well-being and the involvement of children, and is based on previous research work for the POMS and the SICS (Laevers, 2004).
In the development, 52 child-minders were involved. Later on, many ECEC professionals began intensive training, case studies and coaching in the holistic approach. Following feedback from all the participants, a guideline with background and suggestions was developed using MyProfile.
The developmental domains which were included were based on an empirical analysis of mental activity in a myriad of other activities observed in young children within a holistic paradigm. The approach is in line with the search for the recognition of talents in children.
It promotes a positive approach and attitude, guides practitioners towards an in-depth understanding of children’s needs, and of possible interventions to meet these needs. It is accessible to practitioners who have limited professional qualifications, and facilitates focused communication with parents and colleagues. It can also be a communication tool between practitioners and children, in order to understand the child better in relation to the child’s interests and talents.
The Flemish legislation requires that ECEC has a system to monitor well-being and involvement and to communicate regularly about the development and experiences of children to parents and other professionals in care settings and preschools.
MyProfile can serve as transition tool between care settings (for children aged birth–3) and preschools (3–6). In the Netherlands, integration is underway through the digital system LooQinKO (birth–4). Over the years, we have practical evidence from Belgium (MijnPortret and ZikoVo), the UK (MyProfile), the Netherlands (LooQin) and Germany (MeinPorträt). It is usable in a variety of international settings, with small, simple adjustments.

Poster presentation
Duration: 30 minutes

Leen Dom, Karel de Grote University College, Belgium
Dietlinde Willockx, Karel de Grote University College, Belgium

Creating opportunities for dialogue between parents and child minders

The main results of our two-year research project, ‘Speaking Opportunities in out-of-school care’, will be presented. Its main goal was to investigate and develop ways to strengthen the relationship between out-of-school care organizations and parents.
In the first year of the project, we carried out a survey in Flemish out-of-school care organizations. In addition, we organized focus groups with child minders and coordinators and interviewed parents, coordinators and school
principals. This gave us a broad picture of the relationship and types of communication between the two groups. In the second year of the project, we carried out research in two out-of-school care organizations. Together with a pedagogical coach and the two teams, we established programs to strengthen the relationship between childminders and parents.

As a result of the project, short films have been developed, which coordinators of pedagogical coaches can use to work with their teams on parental involvement.

Poster presentation
Duration: 30 minutes

Jong geleerd, thuis gedaan – home-based early childhood education

Research shows that the effect of preschool and early childhood education is better when attention is paid to learning at home. Children get a better start at the primary school and it has a positive effect on learning language, social skills and developing knowledge.

Jong geleerd, thuis gedaan is a family focused preschool and ECE program at home provided by JES. JES works from the belief that children and youth, regardless of their origin, social class or religion, have equal rights to opportunities in education and in society. The organization aims to utilise the full potential of their target group and hence reduce the risk of inequality within society. The organization achieves this through programs for parents and children aged from birth to 23 years.

Within the ECE program, the home-visitor takes a strengths-based approach that promotes nurturing relationships between the mother/father and child. In 12 house visits, the parent and child are guided in playing together, doing different enriching activities based on the 12 themes children are learning at school. Jong geleerd, thuis gedaan also contributes to risk reduction by supporting and referring families to other services when necessary.

The service is provided to children aged 2–6 years from families with a lower socio-economic status, or with fewer financial recourses, lower levels of education, or from vulnerable families, such as families with a history of migration, children with a language deficiency, isolated parents/families, stress factors, etc.

During this session, we invite participants to discuss the aspects that are necessary for a successful implementation of home-visiting programs, and also about which parties it is essential to collaborate with to ensure a successful implementation.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

Strengthening social cohesion in our super-diverse society

Why, and in what way, can supportive networks around families be facilitated? One of the main objectives of family centers in Flanders is to promote meeting opportunities and strengthen social cohesion.

With the aim of promoting social cohesion, Flemish policies and especially local organizations aim to respond to rapid and complex changes in society, for families with young children. EXPOO, the Flemish Expertise Center for parenting and family support, under the umbrella of Kind en Gezin, talked with different organizations about how they set up their organization and family support to work on social cohesion. Information about six organizations was recorded in a short movie.

During this session, we want to focus on the story of one of these organizations: Elmer in Brussels. Elmer organizes neighborhood services in childcare, but they combine this with parental training: from parent to daycare-employee, from employee to pedagogical coach or manager.

Film presentation
Duration: 60 minutes
Elena Misik, Step by Step Macedonia Foundation for Education and Cultural Initiatives, Macedonia

Inter-institutional environment – pre-requisite, tool or goal?

The Roma Decade has impacted the way policies are developed for Roma. Two Country Strategies for Roma have been prepared (2005–2014 and 2014–2020), and have contributed to a greater or lesser extent to the improvement of the situation of Roma, including in education. Several strands have been pursued.

- Housing (legalization of 70% of houses, construction of community infrastructure in 50% of Roma communities)
- Education (increase in preschool enrolment, employment of Roma caregivers, full coverage in grade 1, 75% transition rate into subsequent years, progression into secondary education, improvement of student achievements, decreased drop-out rate, fewer Roma children in special schools)
- Health (elimination of discrimination in health care, achievement of full medical insurance coverage, full immunization coverage of Roma children, full access to reproductive health services, and to primary and secondary health care)
- Employment (increase in the number of registered unemployed Roma, of active measure beneficiaries)
- Culture (preservation of folklore and tradition, promotion of visual and performing arts).

Whilst attempting to summarize the extent to which such goals have been implemented to the benefit of the most disadvantaged groups of Roma, the presentation will seek to engage participants in a discussion of country experiences with the practical implementation of the Roma Decade actions around the following questions.

Have the goals of the Decade been appropriately translated into national actions (plans and activities)? What reliable evidence is there of any effects or impact? Has the implementation of activities collectively contributed to improving access to quality early childhood for Roma? Has improved enrolment (in ECEC programs, primary and secondary education) helped improve the overall educational and social inclusion of Roma? Have community-based civil-society-led interventions helped improve accountability and inter-agency collaboration, and increased access to services?

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

Bettina Schwethelm, UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, Switzerland

Supporting the development and well-being of vulnerable children through enhanced inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary coordination

Inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral services that are co-ordinated and co-managed at the local level are particularly important for vulnerable young children. Effective programs require a shared vision, that goals and policies are in place, and that professionals from different disciplines have a common understanding of child development and well-being, and of approaches in how to support families of young children. For decades, UNICEF has been actively engaged in the area of Early Childhood with a special focus on an integrated approach to Early Childhood Development (IECD).

During the session, UNICEF experts from three countries, Serbia, Armenia and Germany will present diverse approaches to inter-sectoral collaboration, aiming to improve the well-being of different groups of young vulnerable children and their families. The focus will be on:

- integrated approaches to Early Childhood Development at the municipal level across health, child protection, nutrition, education and social protection/welfare sectors and services in order to optimize the outcomes of all children in Serbia;
- on interventions demonstrating how children with profound and severe disabilities can transition from residential institutions back to a family environment and be supported with appropriate services in mainstream kindergartens and schools in an integrated community-based model of care and education in Armenia;
- on promoting and implementing integrated approaches through minimum protection standards in refugee camps in Germany through cooperation with the relevant ministries and key welfare organizations.

After short presentations, participants will be invited to discuss common themes from all the presented cases and the differences caused by different levels of integration and intervention as well as target groups.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes
Integrated early childhood education development policy framework – opportunities for the holistic transformation of Kenyan children, one child at time

Kenya benefits from the existing good will of organizations such as UNICEF to strengthen the country’s early childhood development (ECD) policies and governance and their contribution to the infrastructure of a competent ECD system. To this end, this panel discussion brings together personnel from the Ministry of Education, the University of Nairobi and UNICEF to share insights from the newly developed Kenya Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy Framework. Specifically, the panel will highlight opportunities that have been created in the light of this new IECD policy framework for the holistic transformation of Kenyan children, one child at time, including: priority life-cycles; family-based ECD programmatic areas identified for the next five years; roles and responsibilities of national and county governments in key devolved functions related to children aged 0–8 years as well as that of other non-governmental organizations, civil society, faith-based and community-based organizations, umbrella organizations, and training and research institutions. The policy foregrounds and supports the importance of building synergies between policymakers, researchers and practitioners that inform interdisciplinary pre-service and in-service training of the ECD workforce to counteract the existing sector-silo view of early childhood professional development. Adopting a change-management stance and a firm belief in embracing a systemic approach to addressing critical problems that hinder children’s and families’ rights, and to learn from local responsive approaches in order to build a competent early childhood system is imperative if children are to enjoy a nurturing, stimulating and supportive environment. Implications on the way ECD in Kenya should be designed, equipped, governed, financed and supported, are also suggested.

Panel discussion
Duration: 60 minutes

Competent quality monitoring systems – a comparison of selected approaches from different countries

In numerous countries, the question of how quality in systems of early child education and care (ECEC) can be developed and assured is subject to political and academic debate. Over the course of the last few years, different methods and practices have emerged. Monitoring and evaluation systems offer a possible approach for developing and assuring ECEC quality at different levels. Hence, they can build an important basis for a competent ECEC system.

The contribution will present key findings from a comparative analysis of quality assurance systems in Australia, Sweden, Slovenia, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, and Germany. Heuristic points of reference are the ‘educational-governance’ perspective (Ratermann & Stöbe-Blossey, 2012) and the concept of a ‘competent system’ (Urban et al., 2011).

An overview is given on the relevant framework conditions of each ECEC and the implemented quality assurance system, the stakeholders and institutions involved, as well as the most common methods and practices. Secondly, challenges and obstacles involved in the quality development process will be discussed based on findings from the comparative analysis. Thirdly, the contribution will link the findings back to the question of whether or how the observed challenges and obstacles are to some extent interlinked with the general architecture of the ‘care regime’. Of interest here are specific policy paradigms, the interplay of the state, the market, the family and civil society, and the way these are embedded within the care regime.

On the basis of the findings and arguments presented, the audience will be invited to critically discuss key elements of a ‘competent quality-monitoring system’ that ensures high quality at all levels of the ECEC system – from the level of the ECEC service up to that of policy making. It is crucial to reflect on this process by including a range of perspectives, experiences, and insights. At the end of the session, a platform will be provided for
DAY TWO: October 5th, Thursday

**Concurrent Sessions 5: 9:00-10:30**

**ROOM: REFTER**

**SESSION 5/1**

Katrien Van Laere, VBJK Centre for Innovation in the Early Years, Belgium
Arianna Lazzari, University of Bologna, Italy
Eddie Mckinnon, Pen Green Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base, United Kingdom
Mateja Režek, Educational Research Institute (ERI), Slovenia

**Sustaining warm and inclusive transitions across the early years (START) – facilitating the collaborative learning of childcare workers, preschool and primary school teachers**

In the last decade, the relationship between ECEC and compulsory school has gained increased attention both in academic and policy debates (EC, 2010; Moss, 2013; Dockett et al., 2014). While the continuity of pedagogical approaches – grounded in shared principles and practices – is advocated by research and international organizations (OECD, 2017), transitions between childcare, preschool education and primary school settings are still generating significant challenges for children and families, especially those in vulnerable and marginalised groups. One of the main challenges of these structural splits is that childcare centres, preschools and primary schools do not have a sense of ‘problem ownership’ toward issues that might arise. When no specific care is given to these issues, transitions unintentionally tend to benefit middle-class children and their families (Dumcius et al., 2014; Amisis et al., 2007).

In this session, we discuss how collaboration between childcare services, preschool and primary schools can be strengthened to better meet the diverse needs of children and parents. Since these various practitioners are working with the same groups of children, parents and local communities, we explore how they, on an inter-institutional level, can exchange and learn from each other’s expertise and insights. It should be noted that this does not concern strengthening professionals just for the sake of professionalism as a means to make children and parents subordinate and submissive. Rather, we adopt a normative–critical and democratic stance towards professionalism in which continuous dialogue with children, parents and local communities is needed in these transitional moments (CoRe, 2011).

We will present the findings from a transnational participatory action research study (START-Erasmus +) carried out in four countries: Italy, Slovenia, UK and Belgium. We will then discuss the findings with the audience.

*Presentation followed by discussions*
*Duration: 90 minutes*

**ROOM: PRIORZAAL**

**SESSION 5/2**

Eva Deak, Partners Hungary Foundation, Hungary

**Managing conflicts and aggressive behavior in early years – creating opportunities for effective social-emotional learning**

Teachers and parents want all children to become caring and co-operative individuals, but when conflicts and aggressive behavior occur, we often do what our parents and teachers did to us: we may punish the child. We might immediately have ideas on how to solve the children’s conflict or we may urge them to solve their own problems themselves. These ways usually do not help.
Partners Hungary Foundation has developed and implemented a model that supports kindergartens and elementary school teachers, principals and parents to be able to use effective strategies to cope with conflicts and aggressive behavior. The program is meant to lead to better teacher-student and peer relationships, better co-operation and a supportive social and emotional learning environment.

During this interactive session, we invite participants to experience their own conflict resolution strategies and learn about a developed program model and different methodologies for effective conflict resolution and aggression management in early ages (such as Persona Doll; Hand in Hand Parenting; Restorative Practices; Mediation with young children, etc.). We will also roleplay the six-step mediation process and experience how mediation can work with young children. We look forward to learning from the experiences shared by participants.

*Interactive workshop on a specific topic*

*Duration: 90 minutes*

**Strand 1**

**ROOM: NOVICENGANG**

**SESSION 5/3**

Ketevan Sulava, Aflatoun International, The Netherlands

**Aflatot: Learning together with children and parents through an early childhood education programme designed to support sustainable development**

Come and find out about Aflatoun International and its early childhood education programme for sustainable development: Aflatot. We will explore early childhood as a timely period for young people to build the foundational skills they need to break the cycle of poverty and inequality, in partnership with the ECD workforce and families.

Aflatot is a programme that supports children aged 3–6 to be active citizens in their community. During this session, you will discover the knowledge, skills and attitudes children can develop towards their economic empowerment and you will learn how this educational programme has been designed to incorporate workforce development.

Through such transformative teaching strategies as active learning, Aflatot provides integrated play-based learning experiences in which children are encouraged to use independent thought and action to: meet their needs; express emotions and manage behaviors in healthy ways; promote and maintain positive connections with other children and significant adults; develop basic awareness of needs, ‘rights’ and happiness; develop understandings around the concept of value and being able to delay gratification.

These foundational concepts, combined with innovative pedagogical approaches, are made accessible to educators and care givers through sets of educational materials published by Aflatoun. During this session, you will be encouraged to discover these materials. Furthermore, as a result of the initial pilot phases and research, Aflatoun has revised its guidance to better support the workforce and to be more inclusive of families in the process. A family tool kit has been designed to support and strengthen relationships between early childhood education practitioners and other significant adults in children’s lives.

In 2016, 2,311 teachers and trainers reached a total of 72,000 children and their families. Come and learn about their experience and discover how you too can enable an education programme to build, nurture and strengthen a supportive network of relationships for the children in your communities.

*Poster presentation*

*Duration: 45 minutes*

**Strand 1**

**ROOM: MUSEUM DIERICK**

**SESSION 5/4**

Neelke Dewulf, City of Ghent Center for Inclusive Childcare, Belgium

Katiee Govaert, Kind en Gezin, Belgium

Bernadette Parmentier, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium

Anneke Van De Velde, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium

Chantal Leplat, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium

**To be included or not to be included – that’s the question**

In this workshop, representatives from the Flemish government and pedagogical experts and childcare providers from the City of Ghent introduce policies and strategies for facilitating inclusion of children with special needs in regular childcare centers. The inclusion of children with special needs has been a hot topic for many years in Flanders. It’s an important
focus in the policy of Kind & Gezin (K&G), the Flemish government agency responsible for early childhood care, as part of a broader framework on children’s rights and respect for diversity. Together with their partners, they strive to offer optimal chances for every child, wherever and however they are born and grow up. In 2014, K&G accredited 16 Centers for Inclusive Childcare the mission of which is: to provide inclusive care for young children with special needs in their own facilities; to spread expertise to other childcare providers within a specific care region; to build regional networks; and raise awareness with all stakeholders working with young children. Inclusive care, as part of the social function of childcare, is also one of the cornerstones of the vision on childcare, accessible to every child and family, of the City of Ghent.

There have been many achievements over the years, but inclusive care remains a challenge.

In this workshop, we will walk you through the policies of the Flemish government and the local authorities and demonstrate how we link policy and vision to practice, by illustrating how inclusive childcare is realized in Ghent. Which conditions are necessary to achieve inclusive childcare? How can we lower the barriers for families with children with special needs? How can we realize a goal in which every child finds a place within the group? How can we approach differences and similarities and uncover them so that they can be discussed? How can we build connections to children? Do children with special needs need special care?

These are a few of the questions that will be discussed in this workshop.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 90 minutes

**VIDEO ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR VERMEYLEN SESSION 5/5**

Ann Langelet, Onderwijscentrum Gent/ Pedagogical Centre Ghent, Belgium
Jan Peeters, VBJK, Ghent University, Belgium

**Giving a voice to children**

Ann Langelet is conducting research into the world of children from an artistic and philosophical background. In traditional educational films, adults speak about what young children feel and how we as educators should deal with them. In Anne Langelet’s video, the adult is absent and even very young babies talk directly to the viewer with their body language.

In other words, Ann is trying to give a voice to children. She will also show films where she works with children with autism and children who live in difficult circumstances. In a moving way, all these children of different ages and with different backgrounds are telling stories about their world, about their curiosity, their aspirations, hopes and dreams. Ann films from a child’s perspective and uses an artistic method of filming. These films encourage us to search for the real child, and for this reason, Ann Langelet’s films are excellent tools to be used in training or pedagogical guidance sessions.

Ann will be introduced by Jan Peeters, who has followed her work for many years. After each of the approximately five films, the audience can comment and pose questions to the film maker. Together, we try to find out how these films can be used in initial and continuous teacher training programs.

**Film presentation**
Duration: 90 minutes

**ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR GILIS SESSION 5/6**

Kaveri G, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore

**The practitioner’s voice in the context of effective leadership**

A nurturing professional environment is central to a competent and successful early childhood workforce. This is especially critical in Singapore where the early childhood industry experiences high annual attrition rates. While there are ongoing attempts to address this issue, it is important to focus on effective leadership, an essential element in workforce sustainability that respects the voices of practitioners.

It is through effective leadership that early childhood professionals can find their own voices and provide meaningful and relevant classroom-based learning experiences for the very young.

Set against this backdrop, this session explores what leadership roles look like in early childhood settings in Singapore. How leaders go about enabling change and nurturing change agents within such contexts are of critical importance given the current need to prepare young children for global citizenship. Leaders take up a multiplicity of roles that are defined by their understanding of leadership, and thus there is a need to explore this
dimension of competent workforce development. Participants will take part in a discussion that presents the unique cultural background of Singapore, the need for leaders to navigate the dynamics of working with diverse population, and the dilemmas experienced in nurturing both an effective and efficient team of early childhood educators.

You are welcome to discuss further with us: the evolving nature of leadership in the current early childhood landscape; the functions of effective leadership in fostering a competent workforce and dilemmas experienced by leaders in early childhood contexts.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 45 minutes

Strand 1

Sherri Le Mottee, Consultant to the World Bank Group Early Learning Partnership, South Africa

Finding solutions to workforce challenges through state/non-state collaboration

Despite the growing recognition across the African continent that the early years present a window of opportunity for the development of individual children and societies as a whole, young children are underserved, and the workforce is dominated by under-skilled, low-status workers, many of whom provide services in poor-quality environments.

The EFA Global Report (2015) indicates patchy changes in the numbers of qualified preschool teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa with a range as disparate as 15% in Senegal to 100% in Mauritius. These indicators are of course, mostly related to the provision of early-learning opportunities for 3–6 year olds in formal settings with little or no data on early stimulation programs for children younger than this.

Our failure to address this deficit will rapidly have devastating consequences for many young children who do not have the opportunity to realise their potential. Recognising this challenge, two regional platforms, one from civil society (the African Early Childhood Network), the other an education policy dialogue forum (the Inter Country Quality Node for ECD hosted in Mauritius by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research) have teamed up in an attempt to spearhead a solution-seeking agenda by working with other African state and non-state actors focusing on enabling eco-systems for workforce-building and strengthening across the continent.

This session will consider the ECCE workforce challenges facing many countries on the African continent. Elements of a solution-seeking collaboration between state-based institutions and non-state actors will be shared. The focus of the session will be to problematise the situation facing most African countries, explore key elements of collaboration between partners in this intervention, and critique them with participants. Essentially, it is hoped that through this presentation, problematisation and open engagement, and input from other thinkers engaged in ECCE workforce development, we will be able to deepen our work and increase its effectiveness while expanding our base of colleagues and potential partners in the field.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 45 minutes

Strand 3

ROOM: OUDE INFIRMERIE
SESSION 5/7

Diana Woolis, Carey Institute for Global Good, USA
Gareth Crawford, Carey Institute for Global Good, USA

Preparing teachers of refugees – sustainable learning in action for the early-childhood workforce

Possibly no educational context calls attention to the need for improved pre-service and in-service teacher training beyond the traditional and sector-silo view of early childhood professions than teaching teachers of refugees. These teachers may have absolutely no training, have inadequate training, and most lack the necessary work-based contextual support essential to good teacher training. Given the sheer numbers – UNESCO projects that 69 million new teachers will be needed around the globe by 2030, and UNICEF reports 1 in 200 children is a refugee – any solution would need to work at an almost unimaginable scale and at the same time be responsive to the micro-conditions of a single teacher. The need is immediate, calling for in-service and pre-service content development and learning delivery that is rapid and mobile and that provides frictionless pathways to knowledge, peer-to-peer practice communities, micro-learning and micro-credentialing.

The Center for Learning in Practice has taken up this challenge, launching a focused initiative: “Co-creating a Prototype: Teaching Teachers of Refugees,” leading a group of humanitarian and education actors who collectively serve virtually every region of the world and every aspect of learning design and delivery. Engaging them in a unique rapid prototyping process developed by Dr. Woolis, three pilot designs were generated in three days. One is for a k-12 Refugee Educator Certificate. The early childhood development pilot requires focused attention from a larger cadre of the early childhood development community to set out a similar structure. This interactive workshop is an immersive experience that engages participants in the successful rapid prototyping design process used at the initial meeting. The project-based structure provides participants with
both a pedagogical and a content-specific learning experience. The pilots co-created at the Carey Institute will ground the workshop activities and serve as a launch point for the workshop. Participants will work in small groups and the outcome of the workshop will be their own prototype that can be used to create an ECD Refugee Teacher Education training and certification pilot by participants on their own, or for consideration as an official pilot of The Carey Institute for Global Good, Center for Learning in Practice.

**Interactive workshop on a specific topic**

Duration: 90 minutes

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**ROOM: DORMITORIUMZAAL**

**SESSION 5/8**

Szilvia Pallaghy, Open Society Foundation Early Childhood Program, United Kingdom

Anasztazia Nagy, Roma Education Fund, Hungary

**Measuring evidence and impact through IDELA in Roma early childhood programs addressing competent governance and adequate policies**

Studies suggest that investments in early childhood education and care (ECEC) are 4–10 times more effective in improving the life outcomes of people from poor and marginalized groups than any other investment. It is also known that unfavorable early environments adversely affect children’s development and school readiness. Early childhood interventions, including efforts to improve access to and quality of pre-school, parental empowerment and involvement in ECEC can mediate these unfavorable early experiences and support children’s optimal development, with the greatest benefit being to vulnerable children.

Recent data by the Fundamental Rights Agency reveal that only 53% of Roma children between the ages of four and the starting age of compulsory primary education (6–7) participate in early childhood education. Even when preschools are available, access can be often limited due to a lack of transportation from remote settlements or unaffordable costs.

During this panel, we will present early childhood interventions from four countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia. Roma children and families in need will be primarily addressed. In addition to presenting the context, theory of change, and activities of the intervention, we will discuss how the outcomes and impact were measured through the IDELA tool and how findings can be used for programming, advocacy and for creating better policies.

Program implementers from Albania (Save the Children Albania), Bulgaria (Trust for Social Achievement), Romania (Roma Education Fund Romania) and Serbia (CIP and Romanipen) and evaluation experts will share their experiences and invite the audience to join in with discussion.

IDELA is a measurement tool for children’s learning outcomes and for primary caregivers’ parental practices, developed by Save the Children. It measures children’s motor development, language and early literacy, math and problem solving, and socio-emotional development. It contains population-level information about children’s school readiness.

Presentation followed by discussions

Duration: 90 minutes

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**ROOM: UYTENHOVE**

**SESSION 5/9**

An Raes, Artevelde University College, Belgium

An Piessens, Karel de Grote University College, Belgium

Gabriella De Francesco, Stad Mechelen - Sociaal Beleid, Belgium

**Sense and sensibility in overcoming parents’ barriers to childcare and work**

The goal of the INTERREG 2-Seas project PACE (Providing Access to Childcare and Employment), a collaboration between 12 partners in four European countries (UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, France), is to support and empower vulnerable families by improving their access to childcare and work. Collaboration between different services and sectors is a key element in this project. The PACE approach involves supporting families individually from within childcare. This includes: creating opportunities to increase access to childcare (e.g. changing intake procedures, organising occasional and flexible childcare through collaboration between childcare services); engaging parents in childcare through participation and volunteer work; and setting up a tailored trajectory to decrease the distance to the labour market.

The PACE approach is resolute and has logical “sense”. At the same time, this approach requires strong and
continuous “sensibility” to barriers on an individual level (e.g. lack of self-confidence and social network, language and mobility barriers), organizational level (communication culture, distrust between parents and staff, lack of network) and structural level (childcare legislation, lack of jobs for people with no degrees, affordability of childcare, parental leave systems, etc.).

The first part of the session begins with a brief explanation of the PACE approach, illustrated by the specific case of the city of Mechelen (a PACE lead partner), where innovative collaborations between childcare, social services and employment organizations have already been established.

New approaches, however, come with new barriers and challenges. We will present the participants with several barriers that the PACE project is confronted with. After this, participants will work in small groups on two barriers of their own choice, then discuss how to overcome these barriers using a method of appreciative inquiry (discover, dream, design, destiny).

Participants will be able to share the result of their work through a tablet or other interactive forum with each other, and other conference attendees. The value of this interactive session lies in the fact that participants will be challenged to design an approach on barriers that they recognize for their own organization. At the same time it will inspire the PACE project to develop new methods to answer parents’ needs and demands.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic  
Duration: 90 minutes  
Strand 2

ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR BLANQUAERT  
SESSION 5/10

Štepánka Busuleanu, Institut für den Situationsansatz (ISTA), Germany

Creating dialogue between early-years professionals and families

The workshop addresses the importance of mutual insights into the expectations, thinking and opinions of both parents and early-years professionals. Mutual understandings and a common ground between families and early-years services are required for the best interest of children. Therefore, a close dialogue with parents is necessary to understand the needs and wishes of families, to value diversity, different family traditions or languages and religious beliefs. In order to regard parents (regardless of their social or cultural background) as equal partners and respect their particular attitudes and opinions, early-years professionals need to be sensitized and prepared to deal with this challenge. We see this as paramount, since a partnership in which families are approached with respect increases the well-being of the children and, in turn, their ability to develop and grow.

The workshop is based on the experiences and findings of a pilot project called “Creating Dialogue” (2014–2016). Since 2016, the “Creating Dialogue” approach is being used to train practitioners in Berlin childcare centres and beyond.

We will discuss the following questions.
• What are the needs of practitioners and parents?
• What can assist early-years professionals in better understanding the perspectives of parents and their various expectations?
• How can both enter into dialogue and discuss a range of educational issues in an equitable way?

An interactive exercise will demonstrate how professionals can connect with parents and build a common ground. A further exercise will invite the participants to get more insights into the perspective of parents from different cultural and social backgrounds, and reflect on one’s own role. Small group discussions and an exchange of experiences are planned.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic  
Duration: 90 minutes  
Strand 1

Field Visits: 9:00-11:00

CHILD CARE: Nachtegaaltje - Daycare center for babies and toddlers from 0 to 3 years

A “green” childcare center on the outskirts of the city. The center was built in 2012 according to ecological principles. 47 children between 2 months and 3 years old are cared for in 3 vertical age groups. Nature and durability are the driving forces behind all aspects of the center. To make ‘green childcare’ work, childcare professionals are provided with the necessary resources, education and support.

As one of the pioneers of green childcare, our center incorporates sustainability and ‘green principles’ in every aspect of its pedagogical vision and daily practice. Focus is on ecological, social and economic sustainability.
We look for different ways to bring children in contact with nature, and nature into the childcare. For instance, children can sleep outside and play outside no matter what the weather. “Green childcare” also includes respecting and sustaining natural resources, adapting purchase and use of materials to real needs and conserving available space and nature. Stimulating equality, embracing diversity and engaging children, parents, community and the care team are an essential part of the principle of sustainability.

In this field visit you can see how we adopt 'green principles' and environmentally sustainable practices in an urban childcare center and learn about the many beneficial effects on the children, parents and team we observe.

**EDUCATION: Triangel - School for children aged 2,5 to 12 years**

Public school organized by the City of Ghent, offering kindergarten for children aged 2,5 to 6 and primary school from 6 to 12. Experience-oriented education gives us the opportunity to start from the needs, interests, experiences and talents of our children. Essential for the learning process is the well-being and involvement of our students. We pay particular attention to the cultural diversity within our school. For language and mathematics, differentiation is made in different level groups, with a separate track for language and mathematics. Thanks to this system, all children work at their own level and can reach their potential.

One of our main focuses for children between 2,5 and 8 years old is stimulating the reading and writing development in a natural, logical, functional and creative way. We want to inspire you with examples of free drawing and writing, lapbooks, the process of learning to read in a natural, way. By joining this field visit, you can see how this works in practice.

**EDUCATION: De Harp - School for children aged 2,5 to 12 years**

Public school organized by the City of Ghent, offering Freinet education for children aged 2,5 to 12, in mixed age groups. Ghent is the center of Freinet, Belgium's largest alternative education movement. De Harp is one of the 12 Freinet primary schools in the city. Focus is on natural learning, starting from the interests of the child, children's initiative and active parent participation. One of our main focuses is stimulating the reading and writing development in a natural, logical, functional and creative way. We want to inspire you with examples of free drawing and writing, lapbooks, the process of learning to read in a natural, way. By joining this field visit, you can see how this works in practice.

**Concurrent Sessions 6: 14:00-15:30**

**ROOM: REFTER**

**SESSION 6/1**

Hester Hulpia, VBJK, Belgium
Veerle Vervaet, VBJK, Belgium
Tine Rommens, Kind en Gezin, Belgium
Samira Castermans, De Sloep, Belgium

**Integrated services – a self-evident story?**

Integration of services has become a hot issue. It is seen as the answer to actual needs of professionals (e.g. sharing expertise) and needs of families (e.g. higher accessibility, a holistic perspective). However, there are also challenges. Working together in an integrated way is not self-evident. What can we learn from two inspiring practices that became inspiring integrated services?

1. AMIF is a project in which several organizations work together to support vulnerable new mothers with young children. Although an integration course is obligatory for newcomers in Flanders, young vulnerable mothers hardly attend the course (due to practical and psychological barriers). Hence, in order to support these mothers with their children from a holistic perspective, organizations offering preventive health care, child care, centres for basic education, and the Agency for Integration need to work together in the AMIF project. More specifically, there are new courses centering on the child and mother, focusing on the Dutch language, but also on preventive family support. All partners work together to overcome practical issues, but also share their expertise and reflect on their role. Critical preconditions are: having sufficient time; working in a competent system; bearing in mind
the need for structural changes.
2. De SLOEP, a family Centre in Ghent (since 1996) welcomes over 1,000 families from over 50 different origins.

Progressive universalism is a main principle. De SLOEP offers individual social/pedagogical, administrative and juridical advice. In combination with parent groups, meeting places, a consultation office for newborns (birth–3) and a prenatal service, De SLOEP is an integrated service. De SLOEP also collaborates with other organizations in order to enhance accessibility to health services, and the labour and housing market. So both material and immaterial support is provided, which is helpful and meaningful from the family’s perspective. Critical success factors include: having a low threshold; a wide network of partners; having extensive knowledge of ECEC, diversity, juridical and administrative expertise; and political lobbying.

Starting with these two stories, we will interact with the audience on the crucial preconditions of integrated services.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 90 minutes

Strand 2

ROOM: PRIORZAAL
SESSION 6/2

Michel Vandenbroeck, Ghent University, Belgium
Jeroen Janssen, Ghent University, Belgium
Bart Declercq, KULeuven, Belgium

Promoting process quality in Flemish ECEC through defining, measuring, monitoring and improving practice

OECD (2015) recommends a comprehensive view on quality monitoring, integrating a scientific approach with self-evaluation and external monitoring. In this vein, the governmental agency Kind en Gezin (the Flemish agency for childcare) commissioned the MeMoQ project. In this project, Ghent University and the University of Leuven collaborated to MEasure and MOonitor Quality in ECEC (ages 0–3). The aim of the project is to promote process quality in ECEC. It is comprised of four crucial pieces. Each piece will be discussed during this session and illustrated with video clips, facilitating interaction.

1. Measuring and monitoring are not possible without defining what quality is. Hence, the first piece is to develop a pedagogical framework, in collaboration with diverse stakeholders. It foregrounds the role of ECEC towards children, families and society. It offers inspiration and stimulates reflection on pedagogical principles and practices.
2. The second piece is the development of a scientific instrument and execution of a baseline measurement in a representative sample (400 settings) of both home-based and centre-based child care. This offers a view on the actual quality in Flemish ECEC, focusing on six dimensions of process quality (i.e. well-being, involvement, emotional support, educational support, environment, families and diversity). This measurement makes international comparison possible. The results and reflections will be presented.
3. The third piece is the development of a monitoring instrument in collaboration with the inspection agency. We will discuss the development and its association with the other instruments of the project, as well as the process of piloting from the perspective of both inspectors and childcare services. The audience is invited to share their experiences with inspection procedures.
4. The last piece is the development of a self-evaluation instrument. The outlines of the instrument will be presented with practical examples.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 90 minutes

Strand 1

ROOM: NOVICENGANG
SESSION 6/3

Konstantina Rentzou, European University of Cyprus

The long route towards abandoning the ECEC dichotomy in Greece — Greek ECEC professionals’ beliefs and attitudes towards integration

Although Greece has a dichotomous system both in terms of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and in terms of ECEC workers’ preparation programs, in 2016, the Greek government’s Organization for ECEC established an open colloquy about the adoption of a “Unified National Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care”, causing a heated political debate. The present study, founded on policy reform intentions and reactions to them, attempts to present the results of a research design aiming at exploring: 1) Greek ECEC professionals’ preparedness to implement and adopt integrated approaches; 2) ECEC workers’
conceptualizations of education and care; and 3) ECEC professionals’ attitudes towards integration. Participants were prompted to describe the qualifications essential to work in integrated systems, the domains in which retraining is needed, as well as the reforms that have to take place in order for integration to be achieved. Results suggest that long-held traditions about the separate culture and tradition of childcare and early education sectors, as well as political and corporatist reasons, may inhibit every effort towards integration, and highlight the need for a strong and principled rational for change.

During the session, participants will be informed about how aspects of professionalism in integrated systems may or may not differ from dichotomous systems and how ECEC workers’ professional groups may affect their attitudes towards integration.

Further, participants will learn how Greek ECEC professionals conceptualize ‘care’ and ‘education’, as well as how well-prepared professionals working in different settings are for implementing approaches that integrate education and care.

Discussion will focus on: ECEC workers' professional needs prior to integration; on essential qualifications and attributes of an ECEC professional working in integrated ECEC systems; on which aspects inherent to ECEC theory and practice may be characterized as solely ‘educational’ or ‘caring’ in nature, and which have a dual function; political, ideological and corporatist challenges to ECEC integration. The central role of governments will also be addressed.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 30 minutes

Jeanette Clarkin-Phillips, University of Waikato, New Zealand

Empowered rather than vulnerable – involving families in decision-making

The purpose of this presentation is to interrogate the discourse of vulnerability that positions people to require treatment. Reporting from research on a kindergarten in community categorised as vulnerable by the state, the presentation explores the discourses of a policy intervention targeting families at risk of poor outcomes. This presentation discusses findings from a doctoral thesis that explores the affordance networks of families involved with a kindergarten in a ‘vulnerable’ community in Aotearoa, New Zealand. As teachers began to transform the kindergarten’s reputation and work towards fulfilling their vision of the kindergarten as a community hub, they adopted a ‘strengths-based’ approach to involving families. Recognising that families had much to offer in finding solutions, the teachers handed over many aspects of decision-making in the planning and implementation of initiatives. The involvement of families at various levels of decision-making provided them with affordances as they grew in confidence, utilised their skills and gained new ones. Despite the cessation of targeted funding, the kindergarten has remained a pivotal part of the community and continues to empower families to realise their aspirations.

This session invites participants to explore a systems-model approach for teacher and family partnerships, and to identify enablers and constraints of the model within their own contexts. The session will also engage participants in a discussion that identifies how systems can best support opportunities for teachers' ongoing professional learning in exploring new perspectives and challenging ideological beliefs based on deficit theorising. Derrida’s (2003) notion of a ‘hospitality of visitation’ will provide a framework for the discussions.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: MUSEUM DIERICK
SESSION 6/4

Evelyne Pauwels, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium
Marijke Prieels, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium
Patrick Bauwens, City of Ghent Childcare Unit, Belgium

Children need nature and nature needs children – developing ‘green childcare’ in a city context

Awareness about climate change, along with the need to adopt environmentally sustainable practices, has grown in recent years. Implementing ‘green principles’ in childcare services is part of a broader sustainability movement, which seeks to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A number of childcare facilities of the City of Ghent have incorporated sustainability and ‘green principles’ in their pedagogical vision and daily practice. The focus is on ecological, social and economic sustainability, which includes respecting and sustaining natural resources, stimulating equality, embracing diversity, adapting the purchase and use of materials to real needs, and conserving available space and nature.

To set up a sustainable management plan in the facilities, we have developed an environmental focus, consulting all stakeholders, engaging children, parents, the community and care team. In our centers we have started observing children in the natural environment. Enquiring about families’ interest in and experience with
environmental conservation and nature and seeking input from the local community has proven to be useful. To make ‘green childcare’ work, childcare professionals are provided with the necessary resources, education and support. We look for different ways to bring children into contact with nature, and to put nature into our childcare: working with children, childcare professionals and parents from different backgrounds; bringing nature inside and taking children outside in a city context; discussing the unpredictability of nature, etc. Children who experience the natural world on a regular basis feel more connected to it, and show a more positive attitude and behaviour towards the environment. We have observed stronger emotional well-being, higher concentration levels, and the stimulation of motor development. Sleeping outside often means sleeping better. Nature offers a wide range of materials, stimulating children’s imagination, creativity and sensory development. Language development is also stimulated by telling and sharing stories of discoveries. In this workshop, we invite you into our ‘green salon’, to reflect on different ways to adopt ‘green principles’ and environmentally sustainable practices in childcare services. We introduce our ‘green childcare’ with a short presentation and original film material. By joining one of our field visits, you can see how this care works in practice.

**Interactive workshop on a specific topic**  
*Duration: 60 minutes*  

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**VIDEO ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR VERMEYLEN**  
**SESSION 6/5**

Nazarkhudo Dastambuev, Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation, Tajikistan  
Lola Boboeva, Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation, Tajikistan

**Children’s animation project in Tajikistan**

To date, only 12.4% of preschool-aged children have access to early learning in Tajikistan (EMIS, 2016). This access is mainly through preschools and early learning centers. Additional early childhood development materials and opportunities for children are bereft in the country. Consequently, the majority of children in Tajikistan enter the education system without the necessary knowledge and skills to achieve their full potential. In response to the need for an educational television program, Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation in Tajikistan and UNICEF Tajikistan in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science, national TV and private animation companies have collaborated to create an animated program called “Sandukchayi Zulbiyo” (Magic Box) to promote early childhood development.

At present, a series of 25 animated television shows of 15 minutes each have been produced. These will be aired on national television in 2017 and will be the first domestically produced programs for young children in the country in the Tajik language.

It is anticipated that children will learn about healthy nutrition, literacy and numeracy, equality, inclusiveness, tolerance, safety, creativity and many other early childhood development topics. The main characters of the animated series will help children learn basic preschool concepts as well as demonstrate the importance of respect, tolerance, and cooperation. Thematic areas of this animation program were based on the Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) and expertise of ECE decision makers and practitioners. The main approach of these films will be the integration of these movies into the curriculum and training programs for the ECD specialists at various levels in kindergartens, community-based ECD centers established by OSIAF Tajikistan, UNICEF and the AGA Khan Foundation and at teacher-training Institutions. The animated films will be shown to participants of this session.

Local animators and working group members were encouraged, through a five-day technical workshop, to develop their abilities in producing child-friendly educational programs.

**Film presentation**  
*Duration: 60 minutes*  

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**ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR GILIS**  
**SESSION 6/6**

Sandra Van der Mespel, Center for Innovation in the Early Years (VBJK), Belgium  
Jan Peeters, Center for Innovation in the Early Years (VBJK), Belgium  
Teresa Heney, Early Childhood Ireland  
Elaine Hynes, Early Childhood Ireland  
Lucia Balduzzi, Department of Education, Bologna University, Italy
Early childhood education and care in transition – strategies towards change

In many European countries, early childhood education and care (ECEC) is an important policy topic, focusing on quality and accessibility. Indeed, ECEC is subject to policy reform, which for example, concentrates on upgrading the qualifications of the workforce, the integration of ECEC systems, and increasing accessibility to services. Such reforms influence different layers of the ECEC system: practitioners, institutions, inter-institutional cooperation, and governance.

In this workshop, we explore strategies to deal with these reforms. We examine how collaboration between stakeholders – practitioners, researchers and policy makers – might take shape. Dr. Jan Peeters will introduce the workshop.

Next, two cases of ECEC systems under transition will be discussed. First, we focus on ECEC in Ireland, which is currently undergoing significant development. Since 2016, a minimum qualification requirement became mandatory for all staff working with children. Therefore, a range of national programs have been introduced to support educator professional learning and development.

Second we discuss the case of Italy, which shifted from a split ECEC system (where 0–3 and 3–6 services fell under different ministries) into an integrated system of ECEC services from birth to the beginning of compulsory school. In the light of these changes the role of pedagogical coordinators became crucial. A professional development pathway was carried out over one year with a group of 30 pedagogical coordinators working in several Italian regions and provinces.

Subsequently, the presenters will enter into dialogue with the participants on transitions in their countries. Which supporting conditions are important at different levels in order to translate policy reforms in high-quality, early-childhood services? Which strategies and actions have proven to be successful? How can one stimulate a fruitful dialogue between policymakers, researchers, practitioners and other stakeholders. And how can we encourage critical thinking about policy reforms?

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 90 minutes

Strand 3

ROOM: OUDE INFIRMERIE
SESSION 6/7

Christine Faure, Kind en Gezin, The Netherlands
Ankie Vandekerkhove, VBJK, Belgium
Lien Libin, VVSG, Belgium
Annelies Gryffroy, Kinderopvang in Brussel, Belgium
Barbara Devos, Vlaams Welzijnsverbond, Belgium

Policy strategies for increasing the accessibility of child-care services

Accessibility to early childhood education and care (ECEC) services is a major element of quality (see the European Quality Framework, principle 1). Being convinced that all children should have access to ECEC is one thing, but making it happen is quite another.

Research (CoRe Report a.o.) has shown that working on ECEC quality, including access, is not the responsibility of any single competent professional, but of a well-developed, competent system within the framework of a defined policy.

Kind and Gezin (Child and Family) is the public agency working on ECEC within the Flemish community. Over several years, it has supported the development of competent systems in the field of childcare (ages 0–3).

Within the legal framework, social policies in childcare are facilitated by this agency. This has been done not only through funding, but also by supporting a learning community on accessibility on the level of middle management.

The main lessons that can be learnt from this experience are:
• in order to provoke real change, interaction between policy and practice (bottom-up and top-down) is fundamental;
• creating a learning community and providing pedagogical support leads to peer motivation/support, and is an important source of inspiration;
• legislation must work towards mainstreaming accessibility and working on diversity as normal practice;
• allow ample time and effort – change doesn’t happen overnight;
• a feeling of co-ownership by professionals is vital.

In other countries, the strategy of having such a system has proven to be successful. An example is the IMPRES project in Serbia on improving accessibility of vulnerable groups in preschools. Work has been done in learning communities of teachers, and a manual has been published on the importance of ECEC and how to view and promote diversity as an asset.

Members of our learning community will illustrate the strategies they have designed to improve access, especially for more vulnerable groups.

Panel discussions
ROOM: DORMITORIUMZAAL
SESSION 6/8

Mihaela Ionescu and Zorica Trikic, International Step by Step Association (ISSA), The Netherlands

**Let’s discuss: How successful can bottom-up approaches be in building a competent system?**

Nurturing professionalism in early childhood services is at the heart of ISSA’s work. ISSA’s belief is that the sources of innovation and change lie in alert, responsive and reflexive professionals. However, the motor of change can only run faster within an environment that enables values, structures and practices which recognize the power of dialogue, peer learning, mutual support, innovation, critical thinking and respect for diversity. By supporting cultures of collegiality, inquiry and reflection on quality practices on the level of services, how much can we influence the system to get ‘closer’ to the child and families and celebrate the workforce? What are the key steps? Who are the key actors?

We will share some of our thoughts by building on the findings from a documentation study conducted by ISSA in 2016 regarding its work with members on Quality Improvement over the past six years. By using the resources on Quality.

You are invited to embark on this joint quest and contribute to the following discussion points:

- How can we utilize the potential of empowered professionals, different types of networks (international, national, professional, etc.) and well-designed tools to create changes at different levels of the early childhood systems in different countries and settings, in order to lead towards competent systems?
- What are the roles of key stakeholders at different levels in the system (from children and parents to managers, researchers, supervisors, and policy makers and to national and international agencies)?
- Are we underestimating the power of practice and relying too much on policy decisions based on research, which in some cases are far from practice and the everyday reality of early childhood services? Where is the meeting point, in which can synergies be found, and where would they have to be created?

Discussion Forum
90 minutes

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ROOM: UYTENHOVE
SESSION 6/9

Marie-Laure Bonnabesse, Villes d’Echirolles, Institut de formation en travail social (IFTS), France

**What does it take for children to succeed? Let’s consult parents!**

This presentation proposes the restoration of a research program conducted by the city of Echirolles with parents and professionals as a result of findings regarding young children with language difficulties. All the contributors chose to think about what has facilitated the success of children and to highlight the words of parents coming from ‘undesirable’ neighborhoods.

The Institut de Formation en Travail Social (IFTS) Echirolles was in charge of coordinating this project over three years. The teaching methods used are based on co-building tools with participants (including posters, games built by parents as an investigative approach, resource material boxes). 20 parents were directly involved in this research program and at least 300 parents are indirectly affected by the approach. We have also worked with the Association des Collectifs Enfants Parents (ACEPP).

This presentation will discuss how, in a neighbourhood of the city of Echirolles in France, children, parents, professionals, institutions and researchers join together to understand and promote the success of young children. We will discuss the results of part of the survey: how the parents of this neighbourhood define success, what values underlie this definition, and finally, what concrete practices seem to parents to help their children to succeed.

An existing contact between IFTS and a Japanese researcher-teacher (Yumiko Kinoshita) has enabled an experimental game with some Japanese parents. The idea was to understand the Japanese parent’s representation of their children’s success and compare this with the views of parents in Echirolles.

We propose that participants play the game in order to understand how it contribute to their own children’s success (the game is in seven languages). Then, we will present our approach and our results.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 90 minutes
ISSA CONFERENCE 2017

Field Visits: 14:00-16:00

Meeting point by the entrance of Het Pand.

CHILD CARE: Duimelotje - Daycare for children aged 18 months to 3 years; Out-of-school care for children aged 2.5 to 6 years

Community oriented daycare center for children aged 18 months to 3 years and out-of-school care for children aged 2.5 to 6 years. However, this is not just about the children. We build a place where meetings take place and relationships grow. Where children and their educators find and involve each other. Where we help to build a positive self-image. A place where cohabitation and the sense of community are stimulated. An environment characterized by equivalence and respect for diversity. All actors are involved: the children, the parents, the team and the neighborhood.

This field visit offers you the chance to get to know our daycare as well as out-of-school care. The visit will focus on 2 aspects: a project stimulating a fluent, ‘seamless’ transfer between daycare and (out-of-) school and the community-oriented aspect of the childcare.

To ensure a continuum of care and connection with the child’s network, our daycare and out-of-school care teams collaborate actively with each other, as well as with the families, schools and neighborhood. Children explore the neighborhood, shop locally and use public spaces. The childcare is part of the local community and tries to mirror its values in its daily practice. Parents are always welcome and stimulated to participate in decision-making.

CHILD CARE: Bijendans - Daycare center for babies and toddlers from 0 to 3 years

The Bijendans is a “ZigZag” child care center. ZigZag is a pedagogical profile inspiring a number of childcare centers in Ghent. This is based on the insights of Loris Malaguzzi (from Reggio Emilia), combined with the vision on childcare of the City of Ghent, focusing on total wellbeing, diversity, participation and involvement of children and their environment.

Our day care center provides childcare for 28 children from 0 to 3 years, in 2 vertical living groups.

In this field visit we focus on the three educators who are the building blocks of the ZigZag profile: the children, the adults and the environment.

Children are approached as the first educators: each child is a strong, capable and resilient person, driven by inborn curiosity and acting from an investigative learning attitude, relating to others and the environment. Our childcare practitioners work with the ‘pedagogy of listening’: not leading, but following; not knowing, but investigating; not telling but listening. They observe children in each action and interaction and make children’s learning processes visible through documentation.

Based on the documented interests, the care team creates situations and play environments in which children can learn from each other, play and communicate in groups, triggering curiosity and appealing to the children’s drive to explore.

We’ll show how this ‘pedagogy of listening’ is being translated into practice and how the environment can trigger the children’s learning process by working with open ended materials and offering children rich experiences.

EDUCATION: De Oogappel - School for children aged 2.5 to 12 years

“Life school”, organized by the Flemish Community, offering kindergarten for children aged 2.5 to 6 and primary school from 6 to 12. The schools starts from 6 principles: experience- and environment-oriented oriented education, democracy (involving children, parents and team), equality, development chances for every child and diversity.

Our school is a place where children can live, learn and work.

The learning and work processes start from the ideas and experiences of the children. They take responsibility and initiatives to achieve their goals. Learning to live in a group and taking others into account is essential. There are no teachers, but “supporters” whose task is to accompany the children rather than manage a class.
**Concurrent Sessions 7: 16:00-17:00**

**ROOM: REFTER  
SESSION 7/1**

Lisandre Bergeron-Morin, Université Laval, Canada  
Justin Markussen-Brown, Sprogklar, Denmark  
Christelle Maillart, Université de Liège, Belgium

**Supporting language-rich interactions in early childhood education and care – understanding which key components to include in a professional development initiative**

Although the importance of daily interactions of young children with early childhood educators to support language development is well documented, it appears that specific language scaffolding practices are scarcely used (e.g. Piasta et al., 2012). Recent research in professional development (PD) orients us towards collaborative and reflective modalities to strengthen those practices (Markusson-Brown et al., 2017; Peeters et al., 2015). However, developers and researchers still lack clear guidelines with regards to the components of such PD initiatives (Schachter, 2015).

The aim of this workshop is to elicit discussions about how we select the components of PD initiatives supporting language development through the presentation of three different projects, featuring different PD modalities: respectively in Belgium, Denmark and Canada.

Christelle Maillart will introduce SOLEM, an observation tool for kindergarten teachers, designed by speech-language therapists (SLT) from the Université de Liège, Belgium. SOLEM goes a step further than common screening tools: it aims to fine-tune teachers’ observations of language development in order to identify adapted supporting strategies.

Justin Markusson-Brown will speak about a PD program currently being implemented across the city of Aarhus, Denmark. The PD aims to improve language practices in Danish child-care centers following research which indicates the low quality in this domain across the entire nation. The PD consists of a number of “active ingredients” identified by a recent meta-analysis on the effects of language-based PD for educators’ language practices.

Lisandre Bergeron-Morin will present the development and implementation of a co-intervention between an SLT and early childhood educators in Québec, Canada. This collaboration stimulates exchanges on preventive language supporting practices in their groups, beyond the simple remediation of language delay.

Based on these presentations and the experience of the participants, a 30-minute discussion will address the potential of PD components to induce changes in language-supporting practices used in ECEC, particularly those that support more vulnerable and/or multilingual children.

*Panel discussion  
Duration: 60 minutes*  
Strand 1

**ROOM: PRIORZAAL  
SESSION 7/2**

Maxime Locqueneux, Artevelde University College, Belgium

**Outside play = childplay – more than a tool**

Playing outside: everyone likes it, everyone thinks it’s important and everybody knows that it has many advantages. More than ever, the importance of playing outside is being identified. But how do we manage to go outside, play and discover with babies and toddlers in a structured way? In practice, it doesn’t seem to be obviously easy.

Xzekoo, a subsidized (by the Flemish Government) educational support service of the Artevelde University College for early childhood services, supports 200 childcare services in Flanders with regards to high-quality services. Working on demand, Xzekoo also develops tools and stimulates ECEC in different ways. Sometimes, the barriers to playing outside seem too high. Xzekoo has developed an attractive and employable
tool to support, motivate, inspire and activate professionals in childcare centers to go outside. The tool can be used for coaching, or independently in the organization. On the one hand, it can be used as an inspiration for activities, a reflection guide to form/enforce a vision and values supporting outside play, or it can offer hands-on tips and tricks to go outside with a group of children. On the other hand, the instrument can be used in coaching moments, where the coach can work with different perspectives (that of the child, parent or professional). Achievable goals turn into a plan of action, with the support of the coach. The coach has a key role in this whole process. The aim of the tool is to think outside the box: working on the well-being and involvement of children in a wider context than inside four walls. How can we use the whole space we have and how can we integrate this way of thinking through our daily work? The process needs to be documented and reflections on the process are guided by the coach. Visualizing the goals helps to realize them. During this session, the tool, the process and the experience will be explained practically by a coach working in the field. Each participant gets an outside play = childplay tool so that they can apply it in their work with the help of a concrete plan.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: NOVICENGANG
SESSION 7/3

Sally Pearse, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom
Lynne Truelove, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

Developing a shared vision for early years education and care

Within a university context, we identified a paradox between early years policy and practice values. This was raised during discussions and tutorials with students on placements and practice-based students. In response to this challenge, the 0–5 team identified the need to develop a mechanism to empower our students and partners to deliver high-quality practice in a time of austerity and cuts to funding for early-years services. Collaborative discussions within the team of staff, partners and students strongly indicated the need to develop a shared set of values for the early years. Central to the solution was the team’s decision to establish a community of practice that would co-construct this shared vision and make explicit the underlying implicit values that could strengthen and unify the sector. The team of students, staff and practitioners worked to develop this powerful process together. The final framework was launched as a Vision and Values document at a continuing professional development event in April 2016. This collaborative process has been the catalyst for a range of developments that has put our partnerships at the heart of curriculum development and has initiated a quality network that brings together representatives from the whole sector. This session will outline the process we undertook to produce the framework, and through discussion, explore if this is replicable in the contexts that you, as participants, work in.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: MUSEUM DIERICK
SESSION 7/4

Kaat Verhaeghe, Erasmus University College Brussels, Belgium
Joke Den Haese, Erasmus University College Brussels, Belgium
Geert De Raedemaeker, Erasmus University College Brussels, Belgium

Narrative coaching as a way to enhance professional development, cultural awareness and pedagogical quality from within

The research aims to design a new and durable way to enhance pedagogical quality in early childhood education and care (ECEC) starting from the narrative of the early-childhood professional. Ideals about education, the role of the educator, the image of the child and professional image influence pedagogical professionals in their intentions and actions (Golombek, 2015). A clear understanding of meaning and values helps clarify the goals that govern these actions (Stelter & Law, 2010). Narrative coaching focuses on a holistic approach, using life stories to changes beliefs and attitudes. Individuals act on the basis of implicit knowledge. We can make this knowledge available through conversation (Stelter, 2007). This creates a cultural awareness which can be a point of departure for the creation of alternative narratives. Narrative coaching facilitates the development of a reflective space during dialogue by focusing on values,
meaning-making and space for the unfolding of narratives. In the first phase, ‘the telling the story’ is central in
the coaching dialogue. The process deepens the trainee’s cultural awareness and creates a conscious
professional identity. In the second phase, ‘bringing the story in the here-and-now’, the trainee discovers other
possible narratives and co-creates (with the coach) new ways of engaging in pedagogical practice.
We present a tool for narrative coaching in which we explore the role of the coach and the creation of a narrative
space. We will present narrative coaching as a new perspective to foster professional development. Using
examples from practical research, we will reflect on the possibilities of this new form of coaching in ECEC.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

VIDEO ROOM: ZAAAL RECTOR VERMEYLEN
SESSION 7/5
Katrien Reynaert, Tierlantuin, City of Ghent Childcare Center, Belgium
Els Meiresonne, Tierlantuin, City of Ghent Childcare Center, Belgium

Raising children in and for an inclusive and democratic society
Raising children in and for an inclusive and democratic society can be a challenging and rewarding experience.
This film gives you a glimpse into the ways Tierlantuin, a City of Ghent childcare center for ages 0 to 3, makes
this happen every day.
In Tierlantuin, children, parents, the community and care teams are engaged as valuable partners. Caregivers are
supported by pedagogical coaches and offered a continuing education program.
Tierlantuin was awarded the 2015 Evens Prize for Peace Education for its efforts in stimulating social skills in
babies and toddlers. This gave us the opportunity to make a film to share the good practices and ideas that
made Tierlantuin the great place it is today.
Childcare is part of society. A daycare center is not an island, it has a certain context that can and should not be
denied. At Tierlantuin, we found ways to anchor our center in the local community. The staff continuously looks
for ways to offer a warm, vivid and authentic welcome, making parents and children feel at home.
Diversity is a daily reality in Tierlantuin. The team strives to connect children with one another, during play,
nursing, mealtimes ... actually at any time. The staff is trained to react in a sensory responsive way to what
happens in the group, while connecting with the children.
In a democratic society, childcare centers have to implement and demonstrate a number of quality standards.
The film offers insight into how Tierlantuin plans and ensures those standards in their daily work.
In an inclusive society, everyone counts. The last part of the film focuses on the whole community surrounding
the childcare center: children, parents, team and the community. The team takes care of each component
by looking positively towards diversity, paying extra attention to accessibility and ensuring participation in
everything they do.
The original film will be introduced by a short presentation, followed by a discussion in which you can ask all
your questions concerning the vision and practices shown in the film. Enjoy this movie and get to know the
community-oriented childcare center of Tierlantuin!

Film presentation
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: ZAAAL RECTOR GILIS
SESSION 7/6
Jean Gordon, Learning for Wellbeing Foundation, The Netherlands
Mihaela Ionescu, International Step by Step Association (ISSA), The Netherlands
Mateja Režek, Step by Step Centre for Quality Education, Slovenia
Ankie Vandekerckhove, VBJK, Belgium
Marzia Sica, Social Policies Department, Foundation Compagnia di San Paolo, Italy

Final destination – integration of early childhood services
How far are we? Experiences from four countries: Italy, Belgium, Portugal and Slovenia
There is a growing interest in, and intensive discourse around the integration of early childhood services across
sectors, services and ages (especially from birth to 6/7 years) with some good examples from several countries.
However, although there have been some lessons learned, the pathways to reaching integration are not carved in
stone, there is no set procedure, and they very much depend on the specific context of the country. In addition,
the complexity of challenges that young children and their families encounter in fulfilling their rights in many
societies today, asks for a systemic approach and a re-assessment of how systems operate in order to provide children and families with quality opportunities and services. The INTESYS project funded under the Erasmus+ Programme is pioneering various pathways towards integration in four countries (Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia) with the goal of influencing policy changes through tested experiences. Informed by a literature review, a European and local survey, and inspired by a toolkit proposing various avenues for working with various stakeholders, piloting aims to develop the integration agenda in the four countries, by focusing on two aspects: workforce and governance. How promising are the pathways in the piloting? How difficult it is? What factors contribute the most? What can we learn from each other across countries, and how we can contribute to a greater knowledge about how to promote and attain concrete actions for integration? How much do families and communities participate in and benefit from this, especially the most vulnerable? These are only a few of the questions that will be addressed during the panel discussions, and we welcome many more from participants in this session.

Panel discussion
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: OUDE INFIRMERIE
SESSION 7/7
Kaveri G, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore

Collaborative efforts and a quest for environmental sustainability

Environmental challenges are an immense threat to all countries in the global society, and Singapore is no exception. Alongside population growth, the city-state experiences an increase in domestic waste generation, a risk to both the environment and life span of its single landfill site. The country’s unceasing efforts to become a zero-waste nation are reflected in its educational initiatives and include the very young. It is in this context that we present the findings of a qualitative case study which showcases the nature of an inter-institutional partnership that existed between a kindergarten and the National Environment Agency (NEA) of Singapore. Inter-institutional partnerships are critical for educators, given the context of both global and local environmental challenges. Taking several forms, they serve as useful tools in planning meaningful curriculum experiences for young children, and thus have implications for their learning and meaning making. The findings of the study reveal how the collaborative efforts, coupled with teacher philosophy and enriching classroom experiences, facilitated young children’s construction of anthropocentric and biocentric meanings in relation to the environment. The discussion that follows the presentation will focus on exploring partnership possibilities with stakeholders towards providing environmental sustainability experiences for very young children. In addition, part of the data that showcased the enriched learning experiences of the very young through the use of the NEA’s resources will also be shared.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: DORMITORIUMZAAL
SESSION 7/8
Batjargal Batkhuyag, Mongolian Education Alliance, Mongolia
Munkhtsatsral Terbish, School No. 38, Mongolia

School-wide collaboration on reading

Reading is one of the most important foundation skills for developing a child’s learning, development and critical thinking. Nurturing reading skills is essential at the earliest possible time. The challenge for the current information and technology-heavy society is that new technologies are distracting children away from books and reading, in general. In the case of Mongolia, schools have become almost the only place where children read textbooks and tales and stories, just because teachers ask them to. At the same time, presenters have observed over the years that there are number of issues that lead to this situation, including lack of appropriate reading materials in schools and teachers generally lacking methodology to support and promote reading. Therefore, School No38 in Ulaanbaatar, facilitated by an experienced Step by Step program teacher and mentor serving as the deputy principal, is working with the Mongolian Education Alliance, ISSA member in Mongolia, to experiment with ways of learning about student reading levels, ways of
improving reading skills, and developing appropriate reading materials for children to read. Empowered by teachers working in smaller teams, this initiative has become a new way for teachers to collaborate in professional development within their school, as well as learning together to individualize their teaching by identifying each student’s reading level and adjusting their teaching to help students improve. In doing so, the school is required to leave its comfort zone and rearrange their syllabus and schedules. Confident that they can succeed, they aspire to be a model for other public schools not only in the city, but also in the whole country, contributing to promoting competent and professional teachers in the school system. Discussion following the presentation will cover the ideas and experiences for building and nurturing professional learning communities and teacher leadership in change-making at the school level.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: UYTENHOVE
SESSION 7/9
Ronan Mangan, SOS Children's Villages International, Belgium
Fouzy Mathey, SOS Villages d'Enfants, France

Children's rights in alternative care – promising practices from training-care professionals in applying a child-rights approach to daily work

Training should be provided to all care professionals on the rights of children without parental care and on the specific vulnerability of children in particularly difficult situations, such as emergency placements or placements outside their area of habitual residence (Art. 15, UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children). Answering this call, SOS Children’s Villages International, along with the Council of Europe and Eurochild, and the eight European countries of Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia and Romania, set out to implement the two year EU co-funded project “Training Professionals Working with Children in Care”. A handbook was developed by an international team which compiled child-rights input and practice-based interactive methodology, which enabled care professionals to apply a child rights-based approach in their daily work with children and young people in care. The handbook follows the four guiding principles of the UNCRC (participation, non-discrimination, survival and development and the best interests of the child) and allocates time for personal reflection and group discussions on how such an approach can benefit care professionals as well as children and young people. Participants in this workshop will have the possibility to participate in some exercises within the handbook, as well as to gain insights into the evaluative results of the training sessions conducted with 881 care professionals in the partner countries. Furthermore, we aim to have a dialogue on the impact of such training and on the value of national adaptation and replication. We would also like to explore the value of such an approach for the ongoing or planned reforms of the child-care sector (de-institutionalisation in Europe, and globally).

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR BLANQUAERT
SESSION 7/10
Ine Hostyn, Artevelde University College, Bachelor in Early Childhood Education, Belgium

Sustainable development goals and professionals' competencies – an inspiring discussion

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) encourage us to “ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development” (UN, 2015). In this panel discussion, we focus on the competences that professionals in ECE need to make this happen. The following questions will be addressed.
- What do professionals need to grow in working on the SDGs?
- How can we introduce such themes as climate change, peace, migration, democracy, sustainability, in their professional world?
- What is important in the professionalization of professionals and teams?
- How can we facilitate the process to take responsibility and act upon it?
- What is necessary when young professionals are starting their careers?
ISSA CONFERENCE 2017

- What can professionals learn across generations?
- How can we provide tools and skills to pass these attitudes on to children and the adults surrounding them?

Sofie De Backer (Artevelde University College, Ghent) and Sylvia Tast (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki) are passionate and ready to share their opinions on these matters. The facilitator will broaden their reflections to a group discussion.

We will work with statements as an introduction and afterwards facilitate the group discussion. As a participant in this session, you will be prompted to consider issues with the panel members. You will also gain a better understanding of what is necessary to support professionals in working on the SDGs and most probably, you will be eager to take action yourself/in your team. In addition, you will return to your organization with concrete statements to initiate discussion with your team on important SDGs and develop possible answers/professional programs.

Panel discussion
Duration: 60 minutes

Concurrent Sessions 8: 17:30-18:30

ROOM: REFTER
SESSION 8/1

Eva Lloyd, University of East London, United Kingdom

Nurturing dialogue between early childhood professionals and policymakers: an English case study

This paper analyses the author's involvement in a participatory governance initiative by the English Departments of Education (DFE) and Health (DH) during the 2010–2015 UK coalition government. This initiative centred on ‘coproducing’ this government’s first early childhood policy document together with early childhood practitioners, including local government officers, childcare business leaders, early education-related professional association members and academics. In a previous publication (Lloyd, 2014), I located this experience within the context of Skelcher and Torfing’s (2010) institutional taxonomy of this concept.

My presentation aims to generate a lively audience discussion leading to an exchange of diverse experiences and expertise of similar instances of close dialogue between early childhood practitioners and policymakers. In this way, this session intends to contribute evidence for the third conference strand: ‘Towards competent early childhood governance and policies’.

At the start of the previous decade, both the EU (EU, 2001) and OECD (Gramberger, 2001) acknowledged that producing more effective and relevant policies required being informed by the direct knowledge and expertise of citizens and civil society organisations. The 1997–2010 UK Labour government promoted participatory governance as a means to enhance ‘democratic governance’, but in respect of early childhood policy formation, this concept only really gained traction in the early years of the coalition government. However, only its first early childhood policy document (DFE and DH, 2011) was co-produced. Two years after the initiative’s inception, and after the appointment of a new early-years minister at the DFE, the co-production process was terminated in favour of policy documents being produced by her own professional team (DFE, 2013a and b). This experience suggests a need to explore new ways to prevent politics trumping policy in the interest of quality participatory policymaking for early childhood and beyond.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: PRIORZAAL
SESSION 8/2

Tina Hyder, Open Society Foundations Early Childhood Program, United Kingdom
Nektarios Stellakis, World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP), University of Patras, Greece
Zarlasft Halaimzai, Refugee Trauma Initiative, United Kingdom and Greece

Have we respected the rights and met the needs of the youngest refugee and migrant children and their families in Greece?

Europe is facing the largest influx of migration since World War II, and Greece is the main gateway, both through the land border with Turkey in the north and through the maritime border with Turkey in the Aegean. During 2015, about a million refugees and immigrants arrived in Greece, seeing the country as the first step on their way towards Western Europe.

According to Han, the UNICEF coordinator on the crisis, although there has been a significant reduction in the number of children trying to reach Europe, there has been an increase in the threats and risks they are exposed
to. Most of the 21,000 refugee and migrant children in Greece suffer deep psychosocial distress as a result of their troubled experiences on their journey, tough living conditions in refugee sites, and lingering uncertainty that they and their families are facing on daily basis. In spite of the efforts and substantial funds invested, the youngest are still “forgotten” and they and their families are treated in ways which do not lead to their integration in Greek society, which jeopardizes their wellbeing. Moreover, the high number of refugees and migrants has been accompanied by an economic crisis, which has exacerbated tensions in society.

During this session, experts from Greece will share lessons learned from different types of educational, advocacy and psychosocial interventions targeting young children up to this point. Participants will also hear about new initiatives aiming to coordinate activities of different agencies in order to make them more efficient, and about creating non-formal programs in state nurseries aiming to promote social cohesion while providing children with learning and play opportunities. Short presentations will serve as a starting point for discussion and professional exchange.

**Strand 1**

**SESSION 8/3**

**ROOM: NOVICENGANG**

Elona Limaj, Albanian University, Albania

**How can competent policies address the difficult integration of migrants’ children into the early childhood system?**

The Eurozone crisis has forced Albanian emigrants living and working abroad to return home due to difficulties in their residence countries. This is also a problem for families moving abroad. They need to enroll their children, aged 5–8 in the local pre-school system, but this is not as simple as it seems, because everything is new to them. There are many problems that such children face during their integration into Albania’s early childhood system, especially in the transition period between pre-school and first grade.

Based on data from the Albanian Ministry of Education and Education and Institute of Statistics, as well as information offered by the International Organization for Migration, it seems that thousands of children born abroad are going to kindergartens and pre-school education in different Albanian institutions. Their main difficulty is with the Albanian language and adapting to a new environment, teachers and classmates.

The scope of the presentation is to offer recommendations for making integration easier. We will also suggest joint programs between our schools and host countries of these migrants. Measures must be taken to provide appropriate education for these children. The Ministry of Education should draft study programs which include the way in which they are taught (e.g. including extra teaching hours). The teachers dealing with these children should have additional programs for them. This intermediate period – the pre-school years – is crucial for a child’s education.

The problem is also present in countries involved in migration movements arising from conflict. Children of families fleeing war-torn areas have the right to go to school regularly. Participants are invited to offer their experiences and share solutions which can be applicable in different countries.

**Strand 3**

**SESSION 8/4**

**ROOM: MUSEUM DIERICK**

Karolien Huylebroek, Artevelde University College, Belgium

**From data to action to documenting – working towards high-quality services**

This presentation is a sample workshop that is based on in-service training within a community of learning (5 days) offered by the Flemish Federation for Cities, Municipalities and Public-centers (VVSU) for their affiliated childcare centers. This course is organized by Artevelde University College (Bachelor of Early Childhood Education) and Cego (Research Centre for Experiential Education – KU Leuven). The purpose of this session is to work together towards high-quality services in early childhood education and care (ECEC) in a sustainable way. On one side, through this course, we support the use of a self-evaluation tool (launched in April 2017 by the Flemish Government). On the other side, we offer a course of action, on the basis of a model (6D), to develop ECEC organizations in a sustainable way.

The session provides guidance to participants in two different days: to experience process aspects of working towards quality within the training meetings itself; and to shape and develop the same process in their own
Boonstra and Jepma's model (2014) of working towards quality in four phases was taken as a starting point, but was elaborated upon with two extra phases.

- Dreams: a wish/dream to work together
- Data: collecting data
- Describe: giving meaning to the data
- Goals (in Dutch = D): formulating goals
- Do: acting
- Documenting: documenting, sharing and celebrating

The exchanges in various stages in the training process empower participants and give them the confidence to establish a process of change within their own organization. The training is organized over 1.5 years, making the results of their operations visible. Participants act as critical supporters for each other during the whole process. During this workshop, you will experience the training program, so you will be able to use it further.

**Interactive workshop on a specific topic**
**Duration: 60 minutes**

**ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR GILIS**
**SESSION 8/6**

Marie Palecková, Open Society Foundation Prague, Czech Republic

**Breaking through the kindergarten walls – the Czech experience of including Roma pupils**

In any international comparison, the Czech Republic exhibits a relatively high level of educational inequality. One of the examples of this phenomenon is a low involvement in pre-primary education of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially Roma children. As a consequence of this, Roma children are less prepared for mainstream education than non-Roma children and therefore, the probability of their school failure is much higher.

The aim of this session is to acquaint listeners with the experiences of two kindergartens based in the Czech Republic that coordinate projects focused on the integration of socially disadvantaged children into mainstream preschool education. These projects, supported by Open Society Fund Prague, propose a number of key methods that could provide better access to kindergartens for these children.

Some of these are:

- schools employ Roma assistants to engage with families in the community;
- educating the school teaching and support staff in inclusive education and specific methods for working with minority children; and
- attempts to diminish reciprocal prejudice, both in school staff and parents.

How successful have these methods been? What are the main obstacles kindergartens encounter? Which unexpected problems have there been? This presentation gives a comprehensive overview and includes the possibility to share experiences from working with the early childhood workforce in order to create a path towards the inclusion of all children.

**Presentation followed by discussions**
**Duration: 60 minutes**

**ROOM: OUDE INFIRMERIE**
**SESSION 8/7**

Jill McFarren Aviles, McFarren Aviles & Associates, USA

**Strength-based coaching – a framework for building quality professional-development early-childhood systems**

The first three years of a child’s life are the most significant, as it lays the foundations and builds the architecture for brain development, problem solving, communication, and overall well-being. It is during this sensitive stage, and during every moment of the day, that growth and development is affected by seemingly mundane, yet fundamental, interactions.

As an infant is lulled to sleep by the caregiver’s soft voice describing the movement of their hands and engaging with her smile, the infant develops a sense of security and his or her language and communication skills are expanded. Similarly, during meal times, as children eat around a table, serve themselves, pass the food, and...
engage in conversation, their eye–hand coordination, social, and language skills are developed. Throughout these transformative early years, a close relationship is built between families, children, and early-childhood professionals.

However, early-childhood professionals working in childcare settings do not always realize that these apparently simple acts are so significant in a child’s life. They have engaged in these interactions so often that they don’t know how intentional they can be. Thus, it is essential that adults who are responsible for a child’s care, development, and overall well-being become aware, understand, and have the knowledge and self-assuredness that their interactions have a tremendous impact on children’s lives, particularly that of infants and toddlers.

A supported, empowered, and competent early-childhood workforce requires an ongoing process of building relationships and connections with professionals, children, and families. This interactive session will present a strength-based coaching framework and engage participants to share, learn, and enhance their toolkit to support professional development through ongoing coaching strategies.

Participants will explore a strength-based coaching model implemented alongside early-childhood caregivers with diverse skills and backgrounds working in home-based settings. Participants will build connections with others and share tools/experiences from their own practices.

**Interactive workshop on a specific topic**
**Duration:** 60 minutes

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**ROOM: DORMITORIUMZAAL**
**SESSION 8/8**

Anna-Riitta Mäkitalo, MUAS Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland
Liselotte Vandenbussche, Artevelde University College Ghent, Belgium

**ProuD! How to have pride in your work by sharing pedagogical knowledge across organizations**

This presentation is based on the ProuD! research project by the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki (Anna-Riitta Makitalo & Sylvia Tast) and Artevelde University College Ghent (Ine Hostyn & Liselotte Vandenbussche).

In the ProuD! project, practitioners working with young children (0–6 years) are encouraged to achieve a deeper awareness of their professional growth in providing high-quality, early childhood education and care (ECEC). The advantages of pedagogical documentation were taken as a starting point (Burrington & Sortino, 2004; Giudici et al., 2001). To advance the understanding of professional development in ECEC (Sheridan et al., 2009) and the professionalization of ECEC staff, which is an important European objective (European Commission, 2014; Urban et al., 2011), we have developed a tool for collegial learning based on pedagogical documentation. It was tested in two countries: Belgium and Finland.

During the third phase, we investigated how the international exchange of pedagogical documents among partner organizations in ECEC stimulates professional group reflection and individual pedagogical growth. Professionals in ECEC from Belgium and Finland exchanged pedagogical documentation and experiments using a tool developed in the second phase of the research. The exchange of pedagogical documentation across countries enhanced the demonstration of practice among professionals and provoked further consideration, thus benefitting reflective group learning.

In our session, participants will be asked to think about their work, and to document a past experience through a particular image, quote or piece of text. They will be offered the opportunity to play the ProuD! game in pairs. By reflecting on their past experiences and by giving feedback to their peers by means of the ProuD! tool, it is hoped that their professional growth will be strengthened, and their collective learning enhanced. In this way, the delegates will experience both the result of our study and the modalities of the ProuD! tool in the process of their own professionalization.

**Presentation followed by discussions**
**Duration:** 60 minutes

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**ROOM: UYTENHOVE**
**SESSION 8/9**

Suna Hanoz, Mother Child Education Foundation (ACEV), Turkey
Duygu Yasar, Mother Child Education Foundation (ACEV), Turkey

**No missed opportunities: education for all Syrian refugee children**

From our understanding of the current situation of Syrian refugee children, as an early childhood refugee response, ACEV has adapted its program to address their needs. The nine-week program aims to ensure six-
year-old refugee children continue their educational path within the formal Turkish primary school system, developmentally prepared and culturally able to adapt. This intensive preschool program was implemented in Istanbul and in the South Eastern provinces of Turkey between July-September, in collaboration with the Southeastern Anatolia Project-Regional Development Administration, Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education, and international organizations such as Siemens, Plan International and UNICEF. Although it is highly costly to build ECE teaching capacity, employing and training local teachers has proven imperative to ensure they are well informed about the program. In each program delivery cycle, it was observed that significant and sustained investment in trainers’ development to enhance technical competencies and to increase program fidelity is vital for best child-development outcomes. Teachers’ attitudes towards working with this target group of Syrian refugee children was developed within the framework of: (a) adaptation in social life and cultural identity; (b) feeling instrumental towards helping refugees in great need; (c) parental care and attention towards their children’s school experience; and (d) refugee children’s motivation towards learning. Several issues shaped teachers’ attitude towards the preschool program implementation: (a) challenges and gains associated with the use of a structured program; and (b) an on-going capacity-building and supervision system. Aiming for successful and sustainable outcomes, this interactive session will encourage attendees to highlight key principles and processes in order to successfully design new activities for young refugee children, through small and large group discussions, putting participants in the role of implementer.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR BLANCQUAERT
SESSION 8/10
Eric Bloemkolk, SOFT Tulip, The Netherlands
Anna Kukuruza, Charity Fund Early Intervention Institute (CFEI), Ukraine

Building an early childhood intervention system in Ukraine — from good NGO practices to national policy

• How can we overcome a post-Soviet system of care which is geared towards the institutionalization of children?
• How can we build a system of Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) where such a system is unknown and resistance to change is strong?
• How can we overcome resistance and ignorance from policy makers and representatives from the ‘old system’?
• How can non-governmental ECI service providers and parents join forces?
• What are the key factors of success and what are the main challenges?

These questions will be addressed in the presentation of a fascinating Ukraine experience where collaboration between international and Ukrainian partners has led to a national governmental plan on developing ECI services in the country. Four Ukrainian non-governmental ECI service providers from Kharkiv, Lviv, Odessa and the Trans Carpathian region worked together with the National Assembly of Disabled People of Ukraine and the SOFT tulip foundation, Netherlands for more than 10 years to create the conditions for the development of ECI in Ukraine. International partners (HealthProm, Eurlyaid, UNICEF) also joined this work, to which the Open Society Foundation has provided its crucial support. The experience will be shared with participants by SOFT tulip, the Charity Fund Early Intervention Institute of Kharkiv, and a leader in the development of Early Childhood intervention in Ukraine. You are invited to join the discussion about the strategies used on how to overcome resistance and to share your experiences in the development of competent early childhood governance and policies.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes
DAY THREE: October 6th, Friday

Field Visits: 8:30-10:15

Meeting point by the entrance of Het Pand.

**CHILDCARE: Kinderpaleis - Daycare center for babies and toddlers from 0 to 3**

“ZigZag” child care center, located in an old industrial district with a high level of diversity. ZigZag is a pedagogical profile inspiring a number of childcare centers in Ghent. This is based on the insights of Loris Malaguzzi (from Reggio Emilia), combined with the vision on childcare of the City of Ghent, focusing on total wellbeing, diversity, participation and involvement of children and their environment. 28 children between 2 months and 3 years old are cared for in 2 vertical living groups.

In this field visit we focus on the three educators who are the building blocks of the ZigZag profile: the children, the adults and the environment. Children are approached to be the first educators: each child is a strong, capable and resilient person, driven by inborn curiosity and acting from an investigative learning attitude, relating to others and the environment. Our team work with the ‘pedagogy of listening’: not leading, but following; not knowing, but investigating; not telling but listening. We observe children in each action and interaction and make children’s learning processes visible through documentation. Based on the documented interests, the care team creates situations and play environments in which children can learn from each other, play and communicate in groups, triggering curiosity and appealing to the children’s drive to explore. We’ll show how this ‘pedagogy of listening’ is being translated into practice and how the environment can trigger the children’s learning process by working with open ended materials and offering children rich experiences.

**EDUCATION: Mandala - School for children aged 2,5 to 12 years**

Public school organized by the City of Ghent, offering education for children aged 2,5 to 12. De Harp is one of the 12 Freinet primary schools in the city. The school has a specific pedagogic and social project, focusing on intercultural, community-oriented and multilingual education and active participation of children and parents. Learning is based on the Freinet pedagogy and community oriented principles. Reading, writing and maths are developed in a natural and creative way, starting from the interests and initiative of the child and the children’s own texts. The home language of each child is used to learn Dutch (the official language). Parents are involved in decision making and networking is stimulated by regular ‘coffee moments’. The neighborhood plays a major role in the pedagogical project. The children go out in the neighborhood and neighborhood organizations work together with the school.

**EDUCATION: Piramide - School for children aged 2,5 to 12 years**

Public school organized by the City of Ghent, offering education for children aged 2,5 to 12 years. The school is located in an old industrial district with a high level of diversity. The school is part of the Broad School project, where schools and community work together to offer optimal chances for a broad development and free time to children in vulnerable neighborhoods.

Some characteristics of their education are:
- Increasing the language skills of our students.
- The pursuit of total personality development with a broad focus on social skills in a multicultural context.
**Concurrent Sessions 9: 9:00-10:00**

**ROOM: REFTER**

**SESSION 9/1**

Karen Burvenich, Artevelde University College, Belgium  
Laure Evers, Artevelde University College, Belgium  
Veerle Martens, Artevelde University College, Bachelor of Preschool Education, Belgium  
Geertrui Van den Berghe, Artevelde University College, Bachelor of Preschool Education, Belgium

**Diversity education and cultural sensitivity in teacher-training programs**

For over 15 years, our pre-school teacher-training program has been providing a curriculum that helps trainees to become aware of their own views on diversity and to become more skillful in dealing with diverse family and children’s contexts. We do so by offering a diversified course in which students are challenged to reflect upon their own upbringing and context, on the way they interact with others, and upon their views on themselves, other people and society as a whole. During this course, students not only study theoretical concepts and different approaches to cultural and language diversity in classrooms all over Flanders (Belgium), but more importantly, they go out into the world to visit organizations, meet people, and experience the diversity of society for themselves. Students also visit children’s homes regularly (by reading children’s stories), which has proven to be a unique and intense experience. As we are evolving towards a new and updated curriculum for our teacher training, we feel a need to thoroughly rethink our own teacher-training practice. We have been reading up on the latest views on dealing with diversity in young children’s classrooms and are designing a new program, based on literature by J. A. Banks, P. W. Vogt and others. We would like to present a testimonial of our own experiences and insights from the last five years. We look forward to sharing our future plans for the teacher-training curriculum. Meanwhile, you will be invited to join group conversations and discuss how to deal with the topic of diversity within teacher or child-practitioner training.

*Presentation followed by discussions*  
*Duration: 60 minutes*  

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**ROOM: PRIORZAAL**

**SESSION 9/2**

Elmina Kazimzade, Center for Innovations in Education, Azerbaijan  
Ulviyya Mikayilova, Center for Innovations in Education, Azerbaijan

**If school provides preschool education**

This session will reflect on the findings of a study on the attitude of teachers, school principals and parents towards preschool education in Azerbaijan. The government has made a strong commitment to the implementation of necessary short-term and part-time school readiness programs within schools as a way to improve accessibility to early childhood services. Traditionally, preschool education is considered part of the early childhood programs provided by kindergartens. In 2015–2016, the government piloted a new short-term program on preschool education to ensure the quality of a child’s school readiness. During 2010—2015, four consequent nationally representative studies were implemented in order to learn about stakeholders’ opinions towards compulsory preschool education for five-year-old children. In all four studies, the majority of respondents indicated a positive attitude toward the school-readiness compulsory preschool program. Most respondents considered preschool education within schools as one of the main factors leading to the successful education of children in primary grades.
However, respondents reported several obstacles to the implementation of school-readiness programs within schools, including shortages of staff, space, and equipment.

Since the program started, the following concerns have been revealed by early childhood experts: the school-readiness curriculum echoes the first-grade primary school curriculum; teachers consider the school-readiness child group as regular primary school students, and do not employ any methodology related to learning through play. Children admitted after such a school-readiness year might be less motivated as learners due to the repetitive content of taught subjects.

These concerns related to the compulsory school-readiness program within the school will be discussed during this session to identify possible policy solutions to the school-readiness program based in primary school as an extension of compulsory education.

**Presentation followed by discussions**

**Duration: 60 minutes**

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**ROOM: NOVICENGANG**

**SESSION 9/3**

Angela Fowler, Town Square Erikson Institute, USA

**Creating an online learning community for home-based provider**

Town Square is a new online learning community, resource, and professional development system for home-based early educators. It was created at the Erikson Institute in the United States. Home-based early educators care for children in home settings and may be paid care providers, or family, friend, and neighbour care providers. In the United States, the proportion of early childhood caregivers/educators accounts for more than a third of the overall care in the US and is even higher for infants and toddlers.

The Town Square site was designed specifically to address the needs of these educators who are isolated, work extremely long hours, and need mobile learning options. The site encourages connections with both original and curated resources and professional development content in order to create the richest experience possible. It also helps home-based educators in developing themselves as professionals in the early childhood workforce. In addition, it helps educators navigate the complicated systems within the field of early childhood in order to achieve their personal goals. It is the goal of Town Square to support a systemic change toward quality improvement and professionalism in the workforce. In this session, we will discuss the development of the site, some of the learning components, and share some aspects of professional development.

Participants will have the opportunity to physically engage with the site, discuss how it was developed, and learn how new online learning communities can support systemic change. This presentation will focus on Town Square and how it can be used as an international resource to support home-based early educators. Participants will also develop an understanding of how an online learning community can be created.

**Presentation followed by discussions**

**Duration: 60 minutes**

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**ROOM: MUSEUM DIERICK**

**SESSION 9/4**

Carolin Wäldchen and Ceren Gures, UNICEF, Germany

**UNICEF´s response to the refugee and migrant crisis in Germany**

In 2015 and 2016, Germany received the highest number of refugees and migrants entering Europe: almost 1.2 million people arrived seeking protection and asylum. Of these, an estimated 400,000 (34%) were children coming first and foremost from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Eritrea.

While numbers have since been declining, the influx of refugees and migrants has left German resources over-
stretched. Many children have been living in initial reception centres for up to two years, often in conditions that pose significant safety risks, hinder their full development and prevent them from accessing services that are essential for their well being and social inclusion. Access to day-care or pre-school, and quality childcare and CFS services in refugee centres are also extremely limited.

Evidence confirms significant inequities in entitlements and access to services between refugee children and their German peers. There are further inequities amongst refugee children, depending on which federal state they have been allocated to, their country of origin and their prospects of permanent residence in Germany. UNICEF’s refugee and migrant response is focused on providing technical guidance and expertise to meet the specific protection, education and social inclusion needs of refugee and migrant children and families living in refugee centres. Core strategies of the response include establishing and fostering partnerships, defining standards, building capacity (with a focus on education/ECD and child protection), child-rights monitoring, and managing knowledge, advocacy and communications.

In this session, we will present UNICEF’s response to the refugee and migrant crisis in Germany. We will discuss the context of the crisis and the challenges of meeting the needs of refugee children in a high-income country. We will review UNICEF’s initial assumptions and approach, and will focus on the capacity-building component of our response, sharing the strategies and resources we developed.

Presentation followed by discussions
60 minutes

Strand 1

VIDEO ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR VERMEYLEN
SESSION 9/5

Janice Cotton, OneSky, USA

Training a workforce to reach China’s economic orphans

With the massive movement of young adults from China’s rural villages to factory towns, China now boasts the largest amount migration in human history. This has been key to China’s economic boom, but what about the worker’s offspring who are left behind and remain in danger of becoming a lost generation sacrificed to the country’s economic growth? How do we reach China’s estimated 9 million “economic orphans” with quality early childhood education opportunities?

OneSky has launched a program called “Model for Children in Rural Villages” to recruit and train local women to become early-education teachers and mentors for this generation of left-behind children. With the assistance of local partners, we have recruited, hired and trained 392 local women to be Preschool Teachers and Family Mentors; roughly 50% are mothers that can now work closer to home.

OneSky staff benefit from an ongoing training component that includes two-week pre-service training, monthly training sessions for family mentors and bi-annual training sessions for preschool teachers. Field staff regularly observe the village programs to identify strengths and areas for improvement, and provide coaching and modeling to improve practices. Remote staff are connected via the OneSky website where they can exchange information and ideas and solve common problems together. We have also established a OneSky Model Training Center in central Henan province to train parents, grandparents, village leaders, government officials, teachers, and family mentors in how to deliver best practices in early education.

Join Janice Cotton, Chief Program Officer for OneSky, to view “First Year in the Village,” a retrospective of OneSky’s initial success working to support China’s economic orphans. She will introduce the OneSky Model for Children in Rural Villages, and its three integrated programs: Early Learning Centers; Family Skills Training; and Community Engagement Activities.

Following the film, Janice Cotton will discuss the elements that have contributed to OneSky’s 20-years of success in recruiting and training teachers to support the most vulnerable children in this rapidly changing country. She will focus on OneSky’s training efforts to provide the necessary competencies and support for teachers and caregivers delivering high-quality early childhood education opportunities for communities in flux.

Film presentation
Duration: 60 minutes

Strand 2
What do we know about child protection and very young children?

Violence against children (VAC) includes all forms of physical and sexual violence, emotional abuse, neglect, negligent treatment, and exploitation perpetrated against minors aged 18 years and under. VAC transcends all social, economic, geographic, and cultural boundaries, affecting over 1.5 billion children globally – more than half of all children in the world. Violence against children is associated with negative and life-long effects, including impacts on physical, mental, and reproductive health, as well as social and cognitive development. Scientific evidence confirms that the age 0–3 is the time during which adverse exposure exerts the greatest harm, and effective intervention is the greatest solution. The estimated economic damage of physical, psychological and sexual violence alone is in the magnitude of $7 trillion, up to 8 percent of global GDP, making VAC one of the leading burdens on the global economy.

This session will explore what is known and unknown about child protection prevention and response, specifically for violence against children under five years old, and what this means for strengthening the inter-institutional environment for early childhood development (ECD). Participants will review studies of the process that ChildFund International and its partners have undertaken to better understand the global research, as well as the specific situation of child protection for young children in Western Kenya. Studies have taken place through qualitative assessment, validation, and action planning with community health, early learning, and child protection actors as well as local leadership and government partners.

Participants will use this information to reflect in small groups about:

a) what is known and unknown about the situation of child protection in their context, including how the inter-institutional environment currently supports children’s protection and well-being by involving parents, ECD teachers, healthcare providers, the child-protection system, local government, and other actors; and

b) what are the opportunities/entry points within the inter-institutional environment to better understand the situation of child protection and jointly prioritize actions towards the improved protection and well-being of young children.

In the last part of the session, participants will share their reflections and discuss how we can better understand child-protection issues for this age group.

Discussion forum
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR GILIS
SESSION 9/6

Melissa Kelly, ChildFund International, USA

What do we know about child protection and very young children?

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Discussion forum
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: OUDE INFIRMERIE
SESSION 9/7

Elise ijthoff, Fysio Educatief, The Netherlands

What lies beyond what we can see? Nurturing children’s natural investigative competences

A common culture and a shared image of a competent and active child is what ISSA urges for an early childhood, inter-institutional environment. How can we showcase the competences of diverse young children, at the same time that we foster their various competences and activities?

Fysio Educatief – a small publisher with a huge focus on children’s rights and well-being – is currently mobilising an international association of the world’s youngest journalists, based on the belief that every child is an investigative journalist from his or her early years and that each child’s competences to ‘find out’ has to be nurtured in an integrative way at home, at school and in the community.

This interactive workshop will involve participants in ‘hands-on’ experiences with everyday materials that capture the worldview of a young child as she/he moves through multiple environments in the home, school and community – materials that encourage young children to expand their worldviews as they encounter new realities.

Complementing the focus on children, the workshop will explore how communities of practice can support
the workforce in: (1) enabling children to become investigators; and (2) bringing services together as children navigate their multiple environments.

Join us, to share experiences and to simulate the everyday realities of different children in specific environments (including your familiar environment)!

Follow this link to read a short lively account of a related initiative that builds on children’s natural curiosity – the Children’s International Press Centre. www.l4wb-magazine.org/mag03-art05

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 60 minutes  Strand 2

ROOM: DORMITORIUMZAAL
SESSION 9/8

Sandrine Amaré, Collège Coopératif Auvergne Rhône Alpes, France
Marielle Valran, Collège Coopératif Auvergne Rhône Alpes, France

‘Social and family intervention technicians’ – supporting parents to ensure the protection and development of children

Many women experience psycho-social complications during the perinatal period, which has adverse effects on family-life balance and child development: retarded infant development, cognitive difficulties; and attachment insecurity.

Against this background, Technicienne d’Intervention Sociale et Familiale (TISF - Social and Family Intervention Technicians) has carried out a preventive, educational and social intervention aimed at fostering personal autonomy and integration into their environment, in order to create or restore a restorative social bond. They contribute to the improvement of the quality of relationship between mother and child, but also to the resolution of the difficulties encountered by parents, to guarantee a better chance of development for the concerned children. Therefore, their actions assume a true professional posture backed by specific professional knowledge.

Our intervention is based on the results of a research project, co-financed by five major actors (FNAAFP, Fondation de France, Mustela Foundation, CNAF, CNAM), entitled “Perinatal TISF: supporting parents to ensure the protection of children”. It aims to highlight the specific skills of TISFs in perinatal care in the context of multi-professional collaboration, as well as the different dimensions regarding their professional practice and the implications of their intervention, in response to the various needs of parents and children, within the context of complex life situations. The results can be used in the training or coaching of professional working with perinatal issues. On the basis of concrete examples from action research and a presentation of multimedia content, we will stimulate debate with the participants.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes  Strand 1

ROOM: UYTENHOVE
SESSION 9/9

Lola Boboeva, Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation, Tajikistan
Gulchikhra Kabilova, Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation, Tajikistan

Implementation of early childhood development and inclusive education programs in Tajikistan

This session presents a new and more effective approach to the development of inclusive education and early intervention models in Tajikistan. The Education Programs of OSI-Tajikistan has launched several new initiatives on early childhood intervention from birth to six years and inclusive education for the provision of effective education and care for all children and those with special needs.

Establishing the partnership between NGOs, associations of parents of children with disabilities (35 APCDs)
and government structures towards sustainable inclusive society began with a partnership project. The main outcomes achieved include the set-up and equipping of four Early Intervention Rooms in city health centers, the development and piloting of the module “From early support to inclusion” which targeted the staff of the four health centers, four pre-schools, and students of two universities and two colleges.

A partnership with the Ministries of Health and Education, and the city health and educational departments was established. A trans-disciplinary team provided consultation opportunities to more than 500 families. A strong emphasis was placed on training and family-centered service provision in day care centers established at APCD facilities and health centers.

Currently, 45 community-based centers provide services to improve early-learning education opportunities and preparation for preschool-aged children in regions where kindergartens do not yet exist. Teachers and educators, in collaboration with APCDs, provide educational programs for teachers and parents in order to enhance their skills and confidence to be able to communicate effectively and work collaboratively with schools and other stakeholders, and to advocate and actively participate in children’s education. Children with disabilities participate in all early-learning programs, along with their peers.

During the session, we will share and discuss the successful experiences of participants/countries in the development of inclusive ECD, especially where there were limited resources. We will outline the integration of ECD and inclusive education programs in pre-service/in-service teacher-training institutions. We will also describe the collaboration of NGOs with state educational institutions which aimed to support and institutionalize successful models and practices.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

Strand 1

ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR BLANQUAERT
SESSION 9/10

Justin Markussen-Brown, Kompan Play Institute, Denmark

Outdoor play as a context for language acquisition – implications for pedagogical practice

Decades of research demonstrate the relationship between language and pre-literacy development and later academic outcomes in children. Since the late 1980s, when Whitehurst et al. (1988) quantitatively demonstrated the effects of a dialogic reading on receptive vocabulary, scores of scientists and educators have devised and researched pedagogical approaches to language and pre-literacy support, and the accompanying methods of implementing these via pedagogical education and professional development.

Although these approaches have demonstrated an ability to improve the practices of educators and the language and literacy outcomes of children (Markussen-Brown et al., 2017), it is noteworthy that the context of these interventions is overwhelmingly the indoor preschool classroom, and often during structured, non-play activities. This is despite other research indicating that children also develop their language skills in contexts such as during private speech (Manfra, et al., 2016), peer interactions (Justice et al., 2011), and various forms of play (Weisberg et al., 2013).

Furthermore, little research has examined children’s language development and educators’ language practices in the context of outdoor play (Norling & Sandberg, 2015), even though the context is theoretically supportive of language. To address this, in a pilot study, we investigated children’s language use during playground play and found many examples of child-initiated language uses and interactions. This suggests that outdoor play carries a high value for language development. We also observed supportive adult-child interactions that had the same value for language outdoors as they have indoors – but they were few in number.

This presentation and ensuing discussion thus focuses on outdoor play as a locus for supporting children’s language and pre-literacy development. Following the initial presentation, participants will be engaged in a number of questions regarding outdoor practices, beliefs and knowledge in their own countries, and we will focus on cross-cultural exchange to learn as much from each other as possible.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes
**Concurrent Sessions 10: 10:15-11:15**

**ROOM: REFTER**

**SESSION 10/1**

Emma Byrne-MacNamee, Preparing for Life, Northside Partnership, Ireland
Nóirín Hayes, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
Triona Rooney, Health Service Executive, Ireland

**Strengthening the foundations of learning – building pedagogical understanding to improve practice among early childhood educators**

Located within a bio-ecological frame (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998/2006), informed by a ‘rights’ perspective (Hayes, 2008; Hayes and Bradley, 2009), and recognising that early years professionals are critical to the provision and realisation of children’s early learning experiences, the stages of the Strengthening Foundations of Learning (SFL) project have been built iteratively, to inform a responsive Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program. The SFL project works directly with early year’s practitioners, to enrich their pedagogical understanding and enhance their practices.

The initiative has been designed to enhance the quality of early years practices and build professional capacity in key areas, such as creating enriching environments, documenting and assessing children’s learning, and facilitating oral language development within settings in urban areas of socio-economic disadvantage. The program has integrated a number of practice-based strategies to support early years professionals, including on-site mentoring, workshops and cluster groups.

This presentation will review a number of phases of engagement with early years educators, beginning with an ‘induction’ process, which set out to increase understanding of relevant concepts relating to the curriculum, in order to underpin further quality improvement but has had unintended positive impacts on individual and collective professional identity and discourse.

The presenters have found that engaging in a process of curriculum discourse has positive effects on both pedagogical understanding and professional identity, while coaching methodologies create valuable opportunities for self-assessment and reflective practice.

Discussions will be built around the following.
- The role of on-site, responsive professional development in building the competency and confidence of the early childhood workforce.
- Is it fair to expect ECEC workers who are not being paid for their time, to attend ‘out of hours’ professional development?
- Is it realistic to expect to build pedagogical knowledge and skills among a work force whose initial training may be at a basic level of education and professional development?
- How important is ‘leadership’ to sustain the impact of professional development on practice?
- In the context of building professional development and identity, what can be learned from early childhood education and care systems in which the role and status of the ‘worker’ is recognised and valued?

*Presentation followed by discussions*

*Duration: 60 minutes*

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**ROOM: PRIORZAAAL**

**SESSION 10/2**

Lesleann Whiteman, The University of the West Indies, Open Campus, St. Augustine Trinidad and Tobago

**To what extent do online courses ensure the preparation of a competent workforce?**

Quality Matters. The online Early Childhood Development & Family Studies programs seek to answer the question of the extent to which the four practicum courses in an online degree program preparing students to become competent early childhood educators.

The placement and monitoring of practicum students within each Caribbean Island requires a stringent planning process supported by Collaboration, Communication, and Contribution by a variety of stakeholders. This planning process has resulted in the use of diverse quality assurance strategies to ensure the quality of the
student’s practicum experiences and the relevance of the practicum courses. However, data obtained from student evaluations/surveys indicate that some of the students with no prior teaching experience struggle with the practicum courses, as they try to connect theory to practice. In addition, feedback received from administrators and practicum supervisors indicate that some students (with and without teaching experience) are having connectivity issues in translating theory to practice. This presentation summarises the lessons learnt from managing the online practicum courses and the processes and procedures that have provided the best delivery outcomes for early childhood students. During the session, discussions will be dedicated to online preparation courses for teacher, and issues related to: the similarities and differences in the planning processes (partnerships established, challenges encountered and benefits gained) used in face-to-face and online practicum courses; quality assurance mechanisms (collaboration, communication and contribution) used to manage and monitor online practicum courses; lessons learned; and identifying possible implications for online practicum courses related to early childhood teacher education.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: NOVICENGANG
SESSION 10/3

Graziella Lippolis, Handicap International, Belgium

Screening newborn impairment in developing countries

The delays in identifying and creating referral pathways for newborns and children with impairments, as well as the lack of accessible rehabilitation services, are contributing factors to the increasing number of children who go on to develop long-term disabilities. To an extent, such delays are due to the lack of knowledge of health professionals (nurses, midwives, doctors, traditional practitioners) about promptly identifying any impairments, and about the role of rehabilitation in reducing the levels of impairment and/or improving the level of a child’s functionality.

To answer to this challenge, Handicap International in Congo has developed a project that combines primary, secondary and tertiary prevention programs with professional health and rehabilitation teams of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, nutritionists, orthopedic technicians and community leaders. Primary prevention includes awareness of best practices to prevent diseases and impairment and providing training to health community agents, nurses and midwives about the risk factors of impairment. Secondary prevention includes the introduction of impairment screening tools in two hospitals and health centers, and identifying risks of developmental delay or impairment in newborn and young children and referring them to appropriate rehabilitation services. Tertiary prevention includes providing mobility aids through mobile clinics. Rehabilitation needs to be included in health strategies and policies in order to promote a continuum of care. Part of this strategy could be to ensure that all health workforces have a sufficient notion of disability and rehabilitation. This can be done either by introducing a module in the initial professional curriculum of medical staff, or through continuous professional education for health professionals already in place. Participants will be asked to share their experiences of involving health workforces from low- and middle-income countries in disability identification and referral mechanisms. Successes and difficulties will be shared, and proposals to mainstream disability training in early childhood interventions of health professionals may be identified.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: MUSEUM DIERICK
SESSION 10/4
More than coffee and cookies – developing a competent system for parental interaction and network strengthening

The City of Ghent provides daycare and out-of-school care for more than 6,500 children from birth to 6 years old. We are committed to offering them a warm and welcoming environment, where every child is given an equal chance to develop, feel good, participate and relate with people and society. We organize care in an urban, and often vulnerable context, characterized by high diversity and low social cohesion. In our community-oriented childcare centers, we look for ways to facilitate parental networks, beyond offering ‘coffee and cookies’. As part of the community, the centers take up their role as a facilitating partner.

Our daycare centers are places in which parents feel themselves to be welcomed and valuable partners, where they can meet and interact with each other. Research and our own observations show that small interactions and informal networks offer social support to parents. We may leave these interactions to chance, but in Ghent, we like to give fate a helping hand. We examine our own role as care professionals and examine how we can organize our daily work in order to facilitate interaction and strengthen parental networks. Our teams were guided in this process by Naomi Geens, who studied interactions amongst the parents and between care teams and parents, as part of her research.

In this workshop, we would like to share our experiences and observations of this process, and introduce the practices of two of our childcare centers which made special efforts to stimulate parental interaction. We will discuss:

- ways to facilitate this in your own childcare organization, based on well-developed frameworks and collaborative learning;
- whether or not parents experience support;
- possible pitfalls and barriers;
- whether there are any unwritten rules in our daycare which might obstruct parental interaction;
- how to organize a space in such a way that it facilitates meetings;
- how a team can develop a common vision on this subject.

Simple tools and tips, complemented by our experiences, will help you to reflect on how you can further improve social support for parents by developing a competent system for parental interaction and network strengthening.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 60 minutes

Strand 1

Supporting and strengthening the early childhood workforce at scale

Mounting evidence on the strong, positive impact of early childhood development (ECD) services has culminated in interest on the part of governments and other institutions to invest more in the early years. Despite a growing body of knowledge on the benefits of ECD and greater experience in implementing ECD programs, many well-intentioned initiatives struggle with providing quality services and moving beyond the pilot or project stage. Although we know that one of the most crucial factors influencing the quality of ECD services at scale is the workforce, key questions remain unanswered. What do early childhood professionals and paraprofessionals need to know and be able to do in order to perform effectively? How do the requisite knowledge and skills vary across contexts? What types of training and support do staff receive? In this panel,
we propose a discussion of these questions by presenting findings from a set of recently completed global landscape analyses on competences and standards and training and professional development for the early childhood workforce carried out under the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative (ECWI). Using the findings from these landscape analyses as a starting point, the panel will then use examples of programs targeting children aged from birth to eight and their families to further address questions of how programs can support and strengthen the workforce. These programs include the Cuna Más Home Visiting program in Peru and preschool programs in Ukraine, the focus of two recent country studies carried out under ECWI. In presenting the findings from these studies, this panel will explore approaches to training, mentoring, and professionalizing the early childhood workforce, along with enhancing their job satisfaction, as programs look to scale.

Panel discussion
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR GILIS
SESSION 10/6

Hana Zylfiu-Haziri, Kosovo Education Center, Kosovo

The road to competent governance and policies in Kosovo – a bottom-up and participatory approach, starting by empowering competent educators

In this session, you will have the chance to hear about a journey that was undertaken in which educators were empowered to assess, reflect upon and discuss quality practices in learning communities in preschools in Kosovo and policy changes.

The process, led by the Kosovo Education Center (KEC), involved supervisors, practitioners and representatives from the Faculty of Education and Ministry of Education who discussed teachers' professional competences in Kosovo.

The ISSA Quality Resource Pack (QRP) was piloted by the Step by step Program, part of KEC, in kindergartens with children aged 3–5. These kindergartens had to go through necessary training and monitoring phases in order to achieve changes to their pedagogical practices. During this pilot phase, kindergartens created learning communities in which they used QRP tools and had the chance to reflect on and discuss quality practices guided by the tools.

The Early Childhood Program at Open Society Foundations conducted an external evaluation on the use of QRP tools in Kosovo and changes they determined, and came to the conclusion that they impacted significantly on the quality of preschool services.

A joint working group from the Ministry of Education, the Education inspectorate and KEC analyzed the QRP tools and concluded that they are appropriate for the Kosovo context.

The working group requested that the Ministry approve the tools and institutionalize them so they can be used in all kindergartens. After numerous meetings, the Ministry officially approved the use of the tools.

The next stage comprised trainings on using the tools for municipal inspectorate teams and other local education officials. This ongoing process brought about an improvement in the quality of preschool education. In this session, you will learn about this success story, as well as about the path that was taken in order to bring about change. You are welcome to participate in the discussion about this journey, its challenges and ways of taking and keeping new policy records, mechanisms for quality improvement and the use of new tools.

Presentation followed by discussions
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: OUDE INFIRMERIE
SESSION 10/7

Siska Van Daele, Karel de Grote University College, Belgium
Gunilla de Graef, Karel de Grote University College, Belgium
The INDY Game, an innovative and interactive approach to cultural diversity in early childhood settings

In this interactive workshop, we will acquaint participants with the INDY game, a pedagogical board game devised to elicit team reflection about INtercultural DYnamics in childhood services and schools. During the session, participants in the workshop will be invited to play an abbreviated version of the INDY game. They will tackle some quiz questions, participate in interactive case discussions and will briefly be presented with the underlying theoretical framework.

The INDY game builds on the work of De Graef, De Jaegher & Tondeur (2012) and draws from integration studies (Doyen et al, 2002), organizational psychology (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2006) and educational theory (Kolb et al, 1974). The game intends to raise awareness about intercultural diversity in early-childhood settings and can be considered a playful type of in-service training. Under the guidance of a pedagogical coach, a group of early-childhood practitioners discuss different cases and quiz questions regarding religion, intercultural upbringing and multilingualism.

The cases are real-life situations that have no clear-cut answers but do require team members to make certain choices relevant to their work environment. The case discussions are intended to explore different strategies in dealing with difference, and to seek a balance between equity and equality. The quiz questions contain clear-cut answers and are intended to contribute to a factual understanding of cultural diversity. We believe that this type of semi-guided team reflection can contribute to forming a competent workforce and will benefit children, parents and practitioners alike from different backgrounds.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: DORMITORIUMZAAL
SESSION 10/8

Karine Abelyan, World Vision Armenia
Hana Rabadi, World Vision Palestine

A mosaic of contexts – diverse approaches for ECD systems strengthening in Armenia and Palestine

Decades of scientific research indicate that security and safety, combined with loving, responsive and nurturing caregiving are linked to positive brain development and function throughout the life course. World Vision (WV) partners with government providers to strengthen the systems in diverse settings (middle-income, fragile) to enable nurturing care in the early years.

Armenia: Despite the functional health systems, most healthcare providers (HCPs) in Armenia still address the physical needs of children. This is further exacerbated by high rates of anemia, poor parenting for children under five (CU5).

Palestine: Violence, poverty, inadequate health services contribute to women’s and infants’ poor health and development outcomes. Many CU5 suffer from stunted development and anemia, while mental disorders among women are highly prevalent.

The common issues across these different contexts are: health and education systems providing poor-quality services due to a lack of knowledge, skills and resources to provide quality ECD screening and counseling. WV in Armenia applied the Go Baby Go (GBG) model by strengthening the capacity and functionality of primary health-care providers (PHCPs) and community facilitators in ECD. The research findings revealed that children under three had 83% greater odds of meeting developmental milestones compared to children with no GBG. In collaboration with the current government, we are scaling up the approach.

In Palestine, together with district/national level health authorities, WV supports pregnant women from the third trimester up to their child’s first birthday using the Enhanced Timed, Targeted Counseling (EttC) model. WV strengthens community health workers’ capacity in EttC that holistically meets physical, mental, cognitive, socio-emotional newborns’ and mothers’ needs. A research study will test the effectiveness of EttC to inform policymakers on model feasibility.

During this panel, the issues proposed for discussions are:
1) quality child-development screening and counseling; and
2) parental education programs, particularly on the successes and challenges related to delivery platforms, tools, capacity building, supportive supervision mechanisms, resources, data collection/management, and referrals.

Panel discussion
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: UYTENHOVE
SESSION 10/9

Akvile Motiejunaite, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), Belgium
Marie-Pascale Balcon, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), Belgium

Developing comparative policy data for competent early childhood education systems

Our knowledge about the key structural aspects for providing access to quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) for every child is increasing. An international political consensus on which policies should be fostered is emerging. But what is the role of internationally comparative data in this process? And how does the evidence base support policy development?

The workshop will be introduced by a short presentation of available comparative data on ECEC systems and policies. It will explore the behind-the-scenes development of meaningful comparisons between diverse and complex ECEC systems.

Various examples will be presented:
- how to deal with situations when the same words convey different meanings (e.g. ECEC curriculum, disadvantaged children);
- how to adopt definitions without exceptions (e.g. universal legal entitlement);
- how to represent countries that categorise children differently than under 3 years and over 3 years;
- how to highlight those countries with integrated ECEC systems.

These examples aim to demonstrate how ‘technical’ choices regarding data presentation shape perception and create meaning.

Currently, we are designing a new survey of data on various structural characteristics of ECEC systems in 42 European education systems. In the second part of the workshop, participants will be invited to discuss those aspects of data that should be developed further to provide relevant evidence for policy makers, researchers and ECEC stakeholders. By enriching comparative policy data, we can contribute to the growing competence of early childhood education systems in Europe and beyond.

Interactive workshop on a specific topic
Duration: 60 minutes

ROOM: ZAAL RECTOR BLANCUAERT
SESSION 10/10

Gerda Sula, Qendra Hap pas Hapi, Albania

Using information technology for ongoing professional development – the way to do it (or is it?)

One of the main components of quality in early years is teacher quality. Research has shown, time and again that for teachers to improve their quality, they need continuous professional development. This is easier said than done, as professional development requires resources not always easy to find, in terms of financial, time, human and other resources. A trend that facilitates such activities is using technology for remote online learning and growth.

It seems that we have found the solution. Or have we? Can technology truly be used for improving teachers’ knowledge, skills, practice and beliefs? Does it really deliver what it promises? What are the minimal necessary
skills and knowledge required from teachers, institutions, and from the system in general for the technology of information to be fully useful in producing the proposed change? What kind of motivation pushes people to continue their path for the ongoing improvement of their professional practice? Such issues will be discussed and debated in the session.

Co-author: Anila Sulstarova, Faculty of Social Science, Albania.

Debate on a controversial issue
Duration: 60 minutes

Strand 1
ISSA CONFERENCE 2017

CITY OF GHENT
Ghent is a historic city and yet a contemporary one. The modern daily life of the city’s active inhabitants plays itself out against a gorgeous historical backdrop. The event will allow participants to learn more about Ghent and Belgium, where vibrant developments have taken place in the field of early childhood education and care.

CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN THE EARLY YEARS
VBJK is all about Innovation in the Early Years. Innovation for VBJK means continuously working on quality. They keep track of evolution in the work place and in research, follow-up on national and international changes and keep moving so that basic provision for young children can keep on growing. VBJK is committed to support, improve, deepen and fine-tune the daily work of so many professionals. They do this by connecting all involved parties: children, parents, practitioners, researchers, policymakers and all possible relevant organizations. They also do this in their coaching projects, product development and research. VBJK always looks to work at the crossroads between practice, policy and research.

UNIVERSITY OF GHENT
Ghent University is a top 100 university and one of the major universities in Belgium. We are pleased that the Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy of Ghent University is partnering the ISSA Conference 2017. Interestingly, the Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy is currently conducting state of the art research in early childhood education as well as in migration studies. They also offer a Master of Science in Social Work and Social Welfare Studies.

ARTEVELDE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GHENT
Artevelde University College Ghent, member of the Ghent University Association (AU GENT), offers study programs in business management, teacher training, communications, graphic design, health care and social work. Artevelde University College Ghent is a knowledge center for education, research and services, where students, staff and strategic partners cooperate and develop their talents in a stimulating and internationally oriented environment.

Students graduating with a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and the Bachelor of Preschool Education have expertise in high-quality education and care for children and young people, but also in supporting organizations and (future) professionals working with children and their families.

Students participate in practice-oriented research to develop knowledge and expertise on pedagogical settings and the ECEC-field. Creating mutually inspiring connections between research, practice and the educational program is the goal.

ISSA - INTERNATIONAL STEP BY STEP ASSOCIATION
ISSA is a membership association, which serves as learning community and a champion for quality and equity for all children and their families. The ISSA network embodies over 70 members from across Europe and Central Asia and is a dynamic mix of NGO’s, schools and kindergartens, higher education and academic institutions. All ISSA members work to ensure the best quality care and education for young children, especially the most vulnerable.

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