



Working in an inclusive way with children and families across agencies and age groups

**This discussion paper is part of the cross European
programme Working for Inclusion and provides
background and contextual information for the study
visit to Poland from 10–14 May 2010**

Children in Scotland
every child - every childhood



WORKING FOR INCLUSION: the role of the early years workforce in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion

About the programme

Working for Inclusion is a cross-European programme to examine how improving the qualifications and skills of those working with our youngest children can help reduce poverty and improve social inclusion.

Taking place from February 2009–January 2011, the programme seeks to encourage and facilitate discussion and debate over the role of the early years workforce, enabling greater and more effective dialogue between local and national governments, education, services and practitioners.

The programme encompasses research to provide a clear picture of the qualification and skill levels in early years services and how these relate to levels of poverty and social inclusion. Research has taken place in Scotland and the UK, Poland, Norway, Italy, Slovenia, France, Denmark, Portugal, Sweden and Hungary and offers an overview of developments throughout the EU. The data will contribute towards policy development at an EU level as well as Scotland and the rest of the UK. The programme researchers are John Bennett and Peter Moss and this paper has been prepared with their support.

Programme partners

The programme is led by Children in Scotland in partnership with:

La Bottega Di Geppetto	Italy
Nordland Research Institute	Norway
Comenius Foundation for Child Development	Poland

Each country will provide the context for exploring particular key challenges within the early years workforce:

- working with the child as an active agent in their own learning (Italy)
- working with diversity, in particular ethnicity, language, disability and gender (Scotland)
- inclusive workforce models for rural and remote areas (Norway)
- working in an inclusive way with children and families, across agencies and age groups (Poland).

A discussion paper and report will be available on each of these themes. All papers, reports and publications can be accessed through www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi.

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1. INTRODUCTION: APPROACHES TO TACKLING EXCLUSION

In Europe the socioeconomic status of families depends mainly on a country's economic situation, type of government, parents' employment situation (correlated with education levels), and ethnic and immigrant status. Exclusion is related to low income but also accumulated handicaps that deny access to services and democratic participation.

Three approaches to promoting social inclusion predominate: a democratic egalitarian approach, which seeks to prevent poverty; a targeted anti-poverty approach; and a technical approach, generally based on education. A combined approach may be adopted.

The preventive approach is found mainly in Nordic countries, based on valuing second and third generation human rights (essentially, the rights to education, employment, housing and health care, as well as social security and unemployment benefits). It understands government policy accounts for most of the variation in child poverty levels among OECD countries, and is characterised by strong redistribution policies and support for families through services, which may be supplemented by local government and non-governmental initiatives.

Targeted approaches are more common, often sponsored by national governments, the EU and/or voluntary bodies. Anti-poverty policies may be embedded in larger structures and policies that influence poverty (Esping-Andersen *et al.*, 2002). To a great extent, the national democratic model in place defines how social and educational services are understood, organised and financed.

A third approach concentrates on technical factors, particularly education, with economic arguments used to justify starting education early and focusing on school readiness. This may be naïve and ineffective: a well-educated workforce can help economic competitiveness, but there are many other contributory factors for which government and employers are responsible (including monetary policy, financial markets, investment in research and job creation).

What is needed is not so much a new technique as a more democratic vision for societies and education systems. The outstanding European systems are "founded on culture and values, in which management and technical practices have a recognised place but one that is subservient to politics and ethics" (Moss, 2009).

Democracy is central to working inclusively. Targeting and technical approaches can be helpful, but multiple dimensions of exclusion cannot be tackled effectively by these alone. Democracies based on human rights and committed to prevention, fairness and citizen entitlement are likely to be more successful.

2. WORKING IN AN INCLUSIVE WAY: A RATIONALE

Working inclusively, particularly with disadvantaged children and their families, is vital to strategies addressing variations in social equality and child poverty across EU member states. Variations also exist within countries, with poverty levels significantly higher in unemployed and lone parent families, isolated rural settlements or among ethnic groups and immigrants. Government investments to alleviate poverty and exclusion differ between countries (Moss & Bennett, 2010).

In Table 1, 10 countries are grouped according to their type of welfare system, namely universalist (the Nordic social democratic economies); social insurance (most of the continental European economies); and residual (liberal economy regimes, for example the UK). These definitions relate to how social welfare is allocated between state, market and households (definitions from Esping-Andersen, 1990) with the additional category of post-Communist. The extent of government investment in social protection expenditure is indicated by three outcomes: the extent of social inequality, the percentage of poor households and the level of child wellbeing.

A clear contrast exists between universalist countries and the others (except Slovenia, discussed separately). The apparent difference between Norwegian and other Nordic investment in social inclusion is illusory: higher national income in Norway means investment devoted to social welfare is a smaller percentage than Denmark or Sweden, but equivalent in real terms. In Nordic countries government investment in children and families is high, inequality and child poverty relatively low and child wellbeing high. The work of social inclusion is achieved at macro-level, reducing the need for targeted and/or downstream inclusion work at municipal or civic society levels.

Table 1. The impact of social welfare models on child wellbeing

Type of social welfare system	Country	Social protection expenditure %GDP	Social inequality – SS20/80	Poor households %	Child wellbeing
Universalist	Denmark	30.1	3.4	11.5	6th
	Norway	23.9	4.6	6.7	3rd
	Sweden	32	3.5	9.3	2nd
Social insurance	France	31.5	4.0	13.1	15th
	Italy	26.4	5.5	21.1	19th
	Portugal	24.7	6.8	21	21st
Residual	UK	26.8	5.4	22.6	24th
Post-communist	Hungary	21.9	5.5	19.6	22nd
	Poland	19.6	5.6	25	20th
	Slovenia	23.4	3.4	10.9	7th

Notes to Table 1

Figures are from Eurydice unless otherwise stated.

a) Social inequality is measured by the SS20:80 ratio, that is, the range between the top 20% of incomes and the bottom 80%. A ratio of 4 (France) means the top 20% are 4 times greater for rich people than the rest of the population. Ratios above 5 suggest a large gap between rich and poor.

b) Social protection expenditure is the total spent by government on social services and protection, including family and other benefits. Expenditure below 20% suggests a significant part of the population does not have access to basic services.

c) Family benefits expenditure include cash benefits, services and tax advantages for families with children. Figures are taken from the OECD family database.

d) The rate of "poor households" is the number of poor households as a percentage of all households with children in a country. A household in poverty lives on less than 60% of the average median income of a national family of two adults and two children.

e) The rankings in the column on child wellbeing are taken from Social Protection Committee Child Poverty and Well-Being in the EU (2008). Six dimensions of child wellbeing are measured: health, subjective wellbeing, children's relationships, material resources, behaviour and risk, education, and housing and environment.

3. FACTORS INFLUENCING EXCLUSION

Much depends on a country's economic situation, type of government, employment situation for families (strongly correlated with parents' education levels), and ethnic and immigrant status. It is clear, for example, that central and eastern European countries have significantly lower gross domestic products (GDP) than western European countries.

3.1 High levels of inequality and child poverty

Poland has a per capita income about half the EU average, with high levels of inequality and child poverty. Around 1 in 4 children live in poverty (rising to nearly half in lone-parent households), and income inequality is well above the EU average (Children in Scotland, 2009). Poland is one of eight member states where child poverty is above (or equal to) the EU average and the risk of children being in poverty is significantly higher than for the overall population (Social Protection Committee, 2008): it is ranked 20th among EU member states for child wellbeing and 49th in the world on the Gender Gap Index.

3.2 The type of government in place

This is an important factor in explaining the gap between rich and poor. In Table 1, Slovenia appears like a Nordic country: GDP is less than western countries, but the gap between rich and poor is relatively small and levels of family and child wellbeing are among the highest in Europe. Unlike other post-communist countries, Slovenia has opted for governments committed to redistribution of wealth to the less fortunate and to effective social welfare policies, for example universal education and health systems that are enacted statutorily for all citizens and permanent residents.

3.3 Ethnic/immigrant status

Another strong predictor of poverty and exclusion is membership of certain ethnic and/or immigrant groups. In the EU the largest ethnic minority is the Roma population, with more than 10 million members across all member states and a concentration in the former Balkan countries. Roma groups in most countries experience persistent racism, discrimination and far-reaching social exclusion. Among all European populations, Roma are at greatest risk of being poor, uneducated and unemployed. In several countries disproportionate numbers of Roma children are deemed intellectually impaired and segregated into special schools and Roma parents can have great difficulty enrolling children in mainstream kindergartens.

Child poverty is therefore more than belonging to a low income group. Roma and other poor children can accumulate social and individual handicaps, such as being born into large, unemployed families; low education levels; and families with handicaps and/or chronic ill health. Another factor may be living in isolated rural communities where little employment and few education opportunities exist.

4. APPROACHES TO WORKING FOR INCLUSION IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Three approaches to promoting social inclusion predominate: a democratic egalitarian approach, which seeks to prevent poverty; a targeted anti-poverty approach; and a technical approach, generally based on education.

These approaches are not exclusive: most countries combine targeting with education in an effort to include at-risk children and to ensure all children achieve identified educational levels. Democratic, egalitarian countries may also employ targeting and compensatory education, but within universal services that maintaining support for mainstream parents and avoid stigmatising particular groups.

4.1 The democratic egalitarian approach based on the recognition of second and third generation rights

4.1.1 *Prevention through creating more equal societies*

Valuing equality throughout society can prevent poverty. In *The Spirit Level: why more equal societies almost always do better*, Wilkinson & Pickett (2009) show social equity and social justice are not just ideals but practical roads to greater individual happiness and social harmony. Large inequalities of income are divisive and generate costly social problems including high rates of teenage pregnancy; mental illness; obesity; higher prison populations; more murders; and lower numeracy and literacy. For sections of the population inequality means less security (not least job security), lack of adequate housing and health care, and a reduction in time to recover from work or develop personal interests.

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

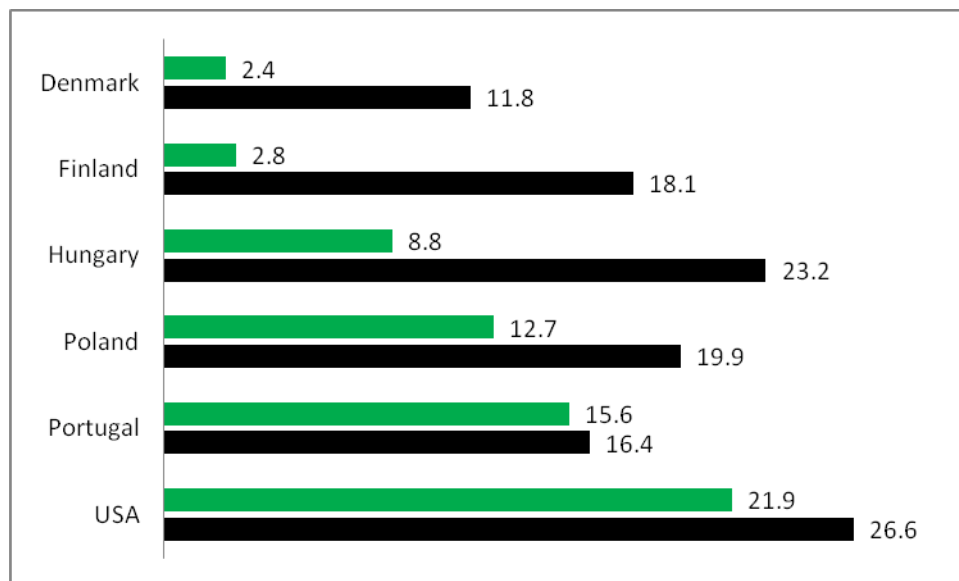
Research from other sources suggests it is ineffective to tackle exclusion only through education, or through piecemeal health and social interventions. No matter how good the early childhood service, it cannot “inoculate children in one year against the ravages of a life of deprivation” (Zigler, 2003).

To be effective, the underlying causes of inequality must also be addressed. Excluded neighbourhoods and parents need, in addition to early childhood programmes, income support, improved housing, social welfare, job creation programmes, and often special health and rehabilitation services.

The most egalitarian government model seems to be the democratic welfare state, based on equity, solidarity (wealth distribution), participation and universal access to vital services, such as health and lifelong education. This approach is closely linked with attention to ‘second generation’ or ‘positive’ human rights, essentially the rights to education, employment, housing and health care, as well as social security and unemployment benefits. These produce the conditions that allow individuals to exercise first generation rights, dealing with individual liberties and participation and including freedom of speech, the right to a fair trial, freedom of religion and voting rights. Second generation rights are enshrined in the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). They imply a ‘duty’ to care for the vulnerable and excluded and, in the Nordic interpretation, to prevent poverty and exclusion from taking place. For a number of reasons, the approach is underplayed in the literature on exclusion, but preventative effects of governmental action on children are real and decisive. In its child poverty work, UNICEF shows the impact of governmental social transfers on outcomes for young children (Table 2).

In 2007 UNICEF underlined that higher government spending on family and social benefits is associated with lower child poverty rates. Variation in government policy therefore appears to account for most variation in child poverty levels among OECD countries.

Table 2. Percentage of children in poverty before and after governmental social transfers



Source: UNICEF, 2005

Note: the black bars show the percentage of children born into poor families before government has made available such support as grants for parenthood, birth grants, child benefits and entitlements to services; the green bars show the reduced percentage of children in poverty after these are available.

4.1.2 National employment levels, gender and ethnicity count less than government protection measures

Correlation between the national level of employment and levels of child poverty appears to be weak. According to UNICEF the distribution of employment, the proportion of those in work on low pay, and the level of state benefits for the unemployed and low paid contribute most to differences in child poverty rates between countries.

Being female or belonging to an excluded group (for example by ethnicity) has an impact on earnings, but differentials are much greater across social groups within these variables. The overall difference in salaries between women and men performing the same work in Europe is about 15%. By contrast, the mean difference between the top 20% and the remaining 80% is far greater, from 3.4 times greater in Denmark to 6.8 times greater in Portugal (see Table 1). The variation is also greater between the top 10% and bottom 10%: in some countries the top 5% receive 100 times more than the lowest income group. When the poor have little social protection their situation becomes a vicious circle of deprivation and exclusion.

It is similar in education. Young Roma children perform poorly, both in academic achievement and duration of education, but the difference between their performance and the lowest performing mainstream group is less than between the highest and lowest performers within the mainstream group.

“... differences in social class (in the sense of an objective economic position) is a much more powerful determinant of life chances than any other variable, including gender and ethnicity” (Collini, 2010).

Gender and ethnic non-discrimination should still be energetically promoted. Non-discrimination forms part of the ‘third generation’ of human rights that seek to protect excluded groups and future generations: many European countries recognise these, encouraged by the EU, which has a Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000); established agencies for women and for sustainable development; and is active in combating the exclusion of Roma. Differences in social class are generated by individual effort and interest group solidarity, but also by a lack of government redistribution policies. Weak social protection is often linked to a narrow idea of democracy, focused only on individual rights.

4.1.3 Joined up policies that engage communities and practitioners are the most effective

Experience shows local governments generally follow social models adopted by national governments. If these are democratic and inclusive, local authorities have autonomy and funding to establish services to suit local traditions and needs, resulting in a wide variety of services that give childhood due importance and equal access of all groups – as in Nordic countries.

If the central model is highly controlling or based on economic criteria without social awareness, local authorities may be bypassed or given responsibility for local services without the necessary funding. The results can be disastrous for small communities, particularly in isolated regions where only essential infrastructure can be maintained.

Because of their long tradition of local independence and participatory democracy, the cities of Northern Italy often stand as an exception to this rule. Despite the incoherence of central policies, cities like San Miniato near Florence refuse to “renounce a future in which all people have opportunities for growth, and in which local communities are the promoters of sustainable development” (Fortunati, 2009).

San Miniato

San Miniato has a tradition of local independence and participatory democracy that is a feature of north-central Italy. Its people and administration do not assume families and/or the market will provide, but take responsibility for families and younger children.

Aldo Fortunati, the child psychologist leading services in San Miniato, proposes three values as the main cornerstones of the *nidi* or nurseries: the protagonism of the child; the open and collegial nature of educational work; and the centrality of family participation. These values transform pedagogical practice and provide feelings of family/community ownership for the project.

San Miniato’s approach to early years stands out because of its strong belief that very young children are highly competent individuals; the high value given to family participation; and the striking impact of this on day to day practice in early years settings.

Take-up of services is high, but more than simply surpassing Barcelona targets, San Miniato is an example of community responsibility for children and originality in how services are understood.

Source: Fortunati, A. (2009) The education of young children as a community project: the experience of San Miniato.

4.1.4 The work of non-governmental organisations

There is a wealth of programmes for and approaches to inclusion initiated by voluntary and non-governmental organisations. For a visit to Poland, it is useful to know about the contribution made by the Comenius Foundation for Child Development to early childhood services, and particularly its programme *Where there are no preschools*.

Where there are no preschools

Early childhood services in Poland operate on a split system, with government responsibility, types of provision (mainly municipal nurseries and kindergartens), regulation and workforce different for services aimed at under 3 years, and services for 3–6-year-olds. Attendance rates for both groups are the lowest in the EU, with 2% of children under three and 23% of 3–6-year-olds attending 30 hours a week or more (EUROSTAT).

Services are distributed unequally, with fewer kindergarten places in regions most affected by unemployment. Attendance varies between urban areas, where 70% of children aged 3–5 years attended kindergarten in 2008, and rural areas, where kindergarten attendance was 30% (source: Central Statistical Office), and attendance levels are particularly low in eastern and north-eastern Poland. In 20% of Polish municipalities (484 municipalities) there is no kindergarten provision or “other forms of kindergarten education”.

Non-governmental organisations play an important role in raising demand and diversifying preschool services. The *Where there are no preschools* programme provides equal educational opportunities for children aged 3–5 years, especially in rural areas with high unemployment. The programme uses itinerant teachers, and helps communities create preschool centres for groups of 10–15 children offering activities for 3–4 hours a day, 3–4 days a week. There is no care component. It follows the early childhood education core curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of National Education, with less hours than regular kindergartens, smaller groups, mixed-age grouping, and active parent participation.

The programme is flexible and can be adjusted to local needs and financial budgets. It consolidates alternative early education services by strengthening training in child observation skills, working with mixed age groups, and creating stimulating classroom environments as well as cooperating with parents. External evaluation shows children from preschool centres perform very well at primary school, and the Ministry of National Education has included these “other forms of kindergarten education” into education law. *Source: Poland Country Profile (Children in Scotland, 2009)*

4.2 Targeted approaches

Targeted approaches to combat exclusion are often sponsored by governments, the EU and/or voluntary bodies: for example, the European Commission designated 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and many European governments have formulated national anti-poverty plans in response. Voluntary bodies are also active. Eurochild points out that:

“Children are at higher risk of poverty than the population as a whole (20% compared to 16%). Poverty in childhood has a long-term impact on Europe’s economic prosperity. Investment in children is therefore essential to break the cycle of deprivation and to give every child full chances in life. Eurochild calls on Heads of State to adopt a

specific target to reduce child poverty by 50% by 2020, as a first step towards its full eradication.” (Eurochild, March 2010)

The policy roundtable on early childhood development convened by the International Social Security Association in Bucharest in October 2009 writes in its conclusions:

“The CEE/CIS region [central eastern Europe/commonwealth of independent states] is currently facing major challenges to social investment due to multiple impacts of the global economic crisis. In many countries, essential human services, including ECD [early childhood development], are losing key financial and material support. The negative impact on young children is already becoming apparent. Families with young children are increasingly slipping invisibly from middle-income status into poverty, and as a consequence, parents are stressed and depressed, and their children are becoming undernourished, frequently ill and developmentally delayed.” (ISSA Communiqué from ISSA Roundtable on ECD Policy, 2009)

Multiple efforts are being made to alleviate the effects of poverty on young children and provide support to vulnerable groups. Anti-poverty policies are often embedded in larger socioeconomic structures and policies that influence poverty (Esping-Andersen *et al.*, 2002), and different models of democracy have a strong influence on the number of people in poverty and the type and extent of social protection offered.

Esping-Andersen *et al.* use their identified categories of universalist, social insurance and liberal democratic models (see section 2 and Table 1), to explain why some countries produce greater levels of inequality: briefly, governments faced with new social inclusion challenges propose solutions according to their welfare traditions, resulting in differences in treatment of child poverty or organisation of early childhood services, for example between liberal economies and social democratic regimes. The anti-poverty rhetoric and action in the liberal economies contrasts with the Nordic countries, which through strong taxation and redistribution policies prevent child poverty and have far fewer social challenges downstream.

4.3 Technical approaches

A third approach to reducing exclusion concentrates on technical approaches, particularly education. From the 1980s industrialised countries redirected their economies to expand services and knowledge-based industries, and to meet the challenge departments of education proposed an earlier start to education and higher learning requirements in core subjects.

The new educational reforms are strongly supported and even formulated by business, which considers them urgent faced by the impact of China and India on world trade. In the US, president of the Committee for Economic Development in Washington CEM Kolb noted in 2008: “Business is probably

the largest consumer of American education”. The priority is “having people in the workforce who are capable and have the skills you need in the workforce today” (Kolb, 2008). For OECD countries to remain competitive they need more young people to gain qualifications than in competing economies.

Education has become linked to national economic advancement, developing human capital and reducing school dropout. A key strategy is to promote an ‘early start’, with increased investment in early childhood services. Nobel prizewinner James Heckman argues the highest returns on human capital investment at different stages of life result from investment in early years:

“The most cost-effective strategy for strengthening the future American workforce is to invest greater human and financial resources in the social and cognitive environments of children who are disadvantaged, beginning as early as possible” (Cunha *et al.*, 2005).

4.3.1 Early education as the silver bullet

Early education has become the preferred technique to combat exclusion, especially in liberal economies in Europe and North America. Programmes are generally compensatory, organised on a large scale for disadvantaged children and funded from the public purse. At first view, they are practical, investing money and resources in children that need them most. However, because they are targeted, they may separate disadvantaged children from their mainstream peers, which has negative effects on social learning, vocabulary and attitudes to diversity.

These programmes underestimate the influence of family environment and culture. Without services and redistributive fiscal measures, families and neighbourhoods can remain poor with little interest in education beyond basic literacy. Schools for all social classes together sensitise parents to exclusion issues and the importance of education. A consensus seems to be forming that supporting poorer children within universal services is more effective educationally than targeting certain groups (for example, the European Commission EACEA publications of 2009).

American research also indicates targeting is costly and inefficient (Barnett *et al.*, 2004), with programmes like Head Start missing most poor children, and excluding low income families above eligibility for subsidised services. It makes better economic sense to fund a universal programme covering all children, with a flexible allocation of funds to accommodate local need, rather than rely on targeting.

Another weakness in targeted programmes, and early education services in many rich countries, is the failure to adopt an integrated vision of early childhood services. Programmes generally overlook the gap that has widened by the age of 3 years between children from low income backgrounds and their mainstream peers, in language acquisition, general knowledge, socioemotional development and basic health. For example, a 13% difference in cognitive development exists at 22 months of age between British children

from high and low socioeconomic status backgrounds. By the age of 10 an average gap of 28% is recorded in cognitive development (Feinstein, 2003).

The gap is smaller where there are integrated early childhood care and education services, with entitlement to a preschool or kindergarten place from the age of around 1 year. Vulnerable or excluded groups may still be targeted, but within universal services, in contact with the mainstream population and cared for by well-educated professionals in secure and healthy surroundings.

The level of attention and investment for children from low income backgrounds is positive, but results in the US indicate the strategy may be naïve and ineffective: a well-educated workforce helps economic competitiveness, but there are many other factors for which government and employers are responsible (including monetary policy, financial markets, investment in research and job creation).

According to evaluations, education levels among low income children and achievement levels later have not significantly improved. A study of Head Start for Congress in 2009 found though participation had positive effects on children's learning whilst in the programme, most of that advantage disappeared by the end of first grade.

Many early childhood specialists voice concerns about the new culture of learning for young children, with its emphasis on performance rather than meaning-making and knowledge rather than traditional tools of early childhood learning such as play, personal choice and the agency of the child (see previous Working for Inclusion discussion paper *The Child as Protagonist*).

This narrow approach is a missed opportunity. Early childhood is a chance to build positive ideas about inclusion, tolerance and respect for diversity (Connolly, 2009), which suggests it is both practical and essential to encourage robust policy frameworks that are inclusive (accessible to all children), responsive to diverse ethnic and racial groups, and that help children respect diversity.

5. WORKING INCLUSIVELY WITH CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Many agencies are involved in working in an inclusive way and the range and type of work is enormous, covering for example working with ethnicity; working to support majority language acquisition; working with children in need of additional learning supports; and working on gender issues. Knowledge and training required is distinctive in each different field (Bennett & Moss, 2009).

However there is a risk of separating 'working for inclusion' from the work of pedagogy, that is, making 'working inclusively' a professional approach that will produce predefined results and overlooking the complexity and potential of education.

Diversity can be treated as a negative, minority issue, when in practice diversity applies to every child and family. A strength of Fortunati's *The education of young children as a community project: the experience of San Miniato* is that it rarely refers to disadvantaged or special needs children (Fortunati, 2009): based on an inclusive, democratic view of community, the San Miniato project speaks simply of the diverse needs of children and families and does not corral off particular groups.

Dahlberg *et al.* argue respect for the Other has profound implications for working with diversity: "to think another whom I cannot grasp is an important shift and it challenges the whole scene of pedagogy" (Dahlberg *et al.*, 2007). Fortunati expresses this another way, considering the child's protagonism of the child which "demands greater resources and opportunities and a higher and more complex relational culture on the part of adults."

If ways and means of working for inclusion in early childhood are not governed by deeper understandings of democracy and the pedagogical relationship they become techniques, to be overtaken by bureaucracy and new forms of control. As Moss remarks:

"It is, I think, very typical of the best local experiences of early childhood education in Italy that they understand what they have achieved is founded on culture and values; management and technical practices have a recognised place but one that is subservient to politics and ethics." (Fortunati, 2009: Preface).

Elsewhere Moss identifies five principles for bringing democratic politics into the nursery, engaging educators, parents and children:

- Involving all protagonists in decision making, for example nurseries run as cooperatives by staff or parent groups (Broadhead *et al.*, 2008) or elected boards of parents involved in pedagogical, budgetary and staffing issues (Hansen, 2002).
- Seeing children as "active constructors of their own learning and producers of original points of view concerning the world" leading to new understandings of 'learning'.
- Evaluating early childhood work allowing reflection, dialogue and discussion (Dahlberg *et al.*, 2007).
- Contesting discussions that shape viewpoints and practices.
- Developing a critical approach to what exists, and finding new ways of implementing ideas (Giroux, 2003).

These provide opportunities for democratic enquiry and dialogue, producing a collective view of the child and their relationship to the community from which local policy, practice and knowledge can develop. This approach is open to democratic evaluation and new thinking: by understanding the role, new or traditional profiles for workforce roles, qualifications and development can be evaluated.

Scotland: the pedagogue debate

Scotland is an example of a country involved in a major public debate on how to proceed with workforce reform in this area. There is now agreement in Scotland that whilst the education of those in the children's sector must adapt to the skills emphasised by the reform agenda, there has to be a focus on those in the often undervalued and more marginalised areas of the sector, including early years services, residential care, play and family work and alongside teachers in schools. Often these practitioners are working with the youngest and most vulnerable children.

These groups comprise around half of the children's sector workforce in Scotland, making staff development a huge challenge. But 'upskilling' also provides an opportunity to simplify the structure of educational qualifications and provide common values and understandings across all who work in the sector.

In seeking models on which to base future workforce development, Scotland can look to her European neighbours, taking forward elements that fit the Scottish reform agenda and developing coherent education and training for children's sector workers. But Scotland has much to offer in return: new ideas, fresh perspectives and a willingness to move forward.

For more information on the workforce debate in Scotland, visit www.childreninScotland.org.uk/workforce

6. CONCLUSION

Democracy is central to working inclusively for young children and other groups. Targeting and technical approaches can be helpful, but the multiple dimensions of exclusion cannot be tackled effectively by techniques.

Without the necessities of health care, childcare, good housing, sufficient income, child rearing environments free of drugs and violence, support for parents in all their roles, and equal education for all students in school, problems of exclusion will not be addressed (Zigler, 2003).

Working in inclusive ways with children and families calls for:

- Democracies based on first, second and third generation human rights and committed to prevention, fairness and citizen entitlement.
- Democracies that maximise opportunities for sharing, exchanging and negotiating perspectives and have rigorous monitoring systems.
- A welfare state with social protection and inclusion policies to reduce inequality and ensure universal entitlement to services;
- Education systems (from nursery to university) based on diversity and plurality, and strongly committed to democratic values; and
- An education workforce that is well educated and willing to work with democracy, diversity and reflection.

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