



Diversity and

Equity in

Early

Childhood

Training in

Europe



Diversity and Equity in Early Childhood Training in Europe

Examples of training practices in the DECET network

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Diversity and Equity in Early Childhood Training in Europe

DECET Network

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Introduction

Anke van Keulen. Bureau MUTANT, The Netherlands

In all Western European countries there is a growing awareness that we live in a society marked by diversity where many people and groups live together and have different standards and values, as well as ideas about raising their children.

Diversity in families, standards and values within European society influences educational systems as well as early childhood education and services. Every day early childhood trainers and educators are confronted with new questions and challenge. How to deal with these different standards and values? How to communicate with the diversity of parents? What do we want for the children? Who decides how to raise the children in the early childhood education?

A group of trainers and researchers, associated in the European network DECET (Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training), have been working on these questions for two years, sharing their knowledge, resources and experiences. The guide is the result of their combined expertise and insights.

In this guide, DECET makes the case that the current context of our society calls for inclusion and respect for diversity and equity for all children and families. As a result, children should experience a socialisation process in which all identities are preserved and in which diversity is integrated. Such an educational approach in the early years will be a preventative measure to help combat social exclusion. Including diversity and equity issues requires changes in the role of the early childhood educator and as a consequence, changes in training approaches and courses.

The aim and the target group

This publication aims at being a contribution to bringing about these necessary changes by providing examples and experiences in many European countries. Through these guidelines and examples, we hope to inspire trainers eager to contribute to handling the issues of diversity and equity by preparing early childhood professionals for this task.

The aim is not to promote one particular training method or a curriculum, because we are convinced that every training method and teaching practice should be developed within or adapted to specific historical, social and cultural contexts.

Trainers who will find this guide useful are employed in institutions for initial training or provide all types of in service training. In addition, those indirectly participating early childhood training, such as managers of early childhood provisions, directors of initial training institutions, policy makers, and the like, will also gain useful insights from this publication.



For trainers with basic training skills and familiar with the required early childhood qualifications in his/her own context, the new knowledge and ideas in these pages will enable them to create tailor made programmes for their trainees.

This guide opens with an explanation of the vision and goals of the DECET network, upon which all training examples have been founded. For each example, the required trainee experience, knowledge and attitudes are also spelled out, so that participants are prepared before embarking on any of the projects described here.

Training in Respect for Diversity and Equity

The DECET network has existed since 1998 with associate members in 9 European countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, The Netherlands, Spain. See appendix x for member descriptions). The members are committed to the promotion of a 'diversity and equity approach' for the early childhood sector in their countries. The DECET mission statement, developed from the experience and knowledge of its members, establishes the existence of a real need to address diversity, equity and anti-discrimination issues in early childhood training.

Based on the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, DECET's 'Respect for Diversity and Equity' approach distinguishes itself from many other approaches on Diversity issues (multicultural, intercultural) because it addresses:

- children as well as adults,
- every single child, from minority groups as well as majority groups,
- all types of diversity and challenges all -isms: gender, ethnicity, religion, class, ability, etc.
- and also takes each individual's position in society and the underlying power relations into account.

DECET's mission is to benefit everyone, children and adults alike, notwithstanding their ethnic or cultural background, their religion, language, ability or gender. Crucial for its vision is the concept of "inclusivity" ('everyone belongs') and the appreciation for everybody's different backgrounds.

When it comes to training approaches there are three areas of focus:

- the individual development of the child and interaction with the immediate environment
- the cultural-historical background of the family
- the position of the family and families' community in society.

As Louise Derman-Sparks stated, 'In this process, heart, mind and behaviour are working together, moving back and forth between individual questions and questions of the larger society.'



DECET, in setting out its training mission, recognises that the Diversity issue cannot be addressed by 'objective' knowledge only. This theme touches everyone, both personally and professionally, because it involves one's political as well as personal convictions and may also provoke resistance and strong reactions among participants.



For this reason, subjective knowledge and experiences are an inevitable element in the training programme: for instance personal biographies, or insights into emotions and attitudes. The challenge is to create a training programme integrating both types of knowledge.



The training context can be nearly as important as the training content. Before developing a programme the crucial question needs to be answered: what makes it possible to provide a training course on 'Diversity and Equity'? It is clear that institutional support and involvement are needed to gain the commitment and co-operation of all early years' staff. Moreover, partners from the outside world (policy makers, community leaders) should also be involved in the project.



The following student comments illustrate some of the training approaches and subject areas embraced by the training. Clearly the training has made a difference to attitudes and openness:



'In our team, we are now prepared to discuss what we consider to be 'normal'.
'Once you have started on this road you can't stop'.
'Before I first saw what went wrong with parents. Now I first see what goes well'.
'Those who I believed to be bad parents, are in fact parents I did not understand.'
'Subtle messages are often the strongest and speak louder than direct statements.'
'This activity drew my attention to how little a minority is positively represented in the media.'
'I have learnt a lot of new information from different events, historical, national and international. It has made me feel that we are not at all as equal as we would like to think and there is still loads to be found out and to be done so that everyone can be treated fairly.'

Using this guide

This guide has been organised into two sections. The articles in Part I provide an introduction to the issue of Diversity and Equity in the European context and Part II consists of examples of successful training programmes.

Part I will be informative for anyone who has professional responsibilities in early childhood training. Part II allows the reader to select the chapters of greatest interest or suitability for his/her training or working context. The examples include both initial and in-service training as well as examples of training methods.

The guide also includes several appendices, including a glossary of terms, information on the political context and legislation, a list of resources and details of the DECET member institutions.



Summary of Part I – Training for Diversity and Equity in a European context

This section provides an introduction to the issue of Diversity and Equity in early childhood in the European context, explaining the DECET network and goals, outlining the optimum conditions for setting up a diversity training course and profiles for trainees.

Chapter I.1 - Reclaiming children. Challenging Early Childhood's Educational Constructions'

This chapter provides an overview of historical and societal changes in European countries and illustrates how our current context calls for inclusion, respect for diversity and equity. IN recent decades the European countries have developed a system of early childhood provision in which the main question has changed from 'is early childhood education harmful to children?' to "what is the purpose of the institutions we constructed for young children?" Who obtains leadership in these discussions, and who is excluded from taking part in these discussions and/or being admitted into early childhood education?'

As Europe becomes more diverse, this leads to changes in early childhood education provision, the profession itself and the training required. Early childhood institutions are situated on the boundary between private and public life. For many children this means the first step into a society which represents different standards and values from those they see in their families. As a consequence, educators are now becoming negotiators and mediators as well.

As early childhood education negotiates with parents, educators and local communities about more diverse values, early childhood services are literally being reconstructed from the ground up. In short, building basic democracy.

Chapter I.2 - The DECET Network

The background to and history and role of DECET is explained. In this network members from training centres, universities and voluntary organisations in nine European countries exchange information about projects and developments in their countries, often providing important inspiration and information for every day work. The members share training methods as well as resources for their mutual benefit. This development of new resources is rewarding for the network as well as for the national context. DECET also provides a strong basis for promoting the issue of diversity and equity in countries with little awareness of the concept. This publication is the result of transnational co-operation within one of the working groups in the network.

Chapter I.3 - The DECET mission statement and goals

Based on the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, the mission statement has been developed by DECET members through experiences with diversity and equity in early childhood services and through drawing on the analysis of a variety of theoretical approaches. In this chapter, five approaches to diversity and equity are outlined; approaches that have been developed and implemented internationally over the past decades (assimilation, integration, multicultural, intercultural, anti bias).



DECET goals are founded primarily on the intercultural and the anti bias approaches which not only encourage learning across boundaries but also observe power structures prevalent within society. The DECET vision has been influenced in particular by the anti bias approach developed by Louise Derman-Sparks in the USA.

Chapter I.4 - The training, the trainer and the trainees

Perspectives and necessary knowledge in training on diversity and equity are highlighted. The necessary knowledge should take into account: the individual development of children, the cultural-historical background of the families and the position of the families in society.

Educators need to use and to integrate these three areas when creating a training programme on ‘Respect for Diversity and Equity’. Course content should consist of ‘objective’ knowledge (facts, theories, academic knowledge) combined with ‘subjective’ knowledge (biographies, personal experiences, lifestyles, standards and values). Programmes focus on relations with children and parents, awareness raising, insights into the educator’s own background, and relations within society.

Trainers should be able to use the information in this guide within their own training contexts and provide students with clear examples of how to create a tailor-made programme to suit their unique early years set-up. When the training is complete, DECET's aim is that early childhood educators will be integrating ‘respect on Diversity and Equity’ into all their professional activities and be well equipped with the appropriate skills, knowledge and outlook.

Chapter I.5 - Making training possible. Structuring the context of the training

This chapter sets out the conditions to implement ‘Respect for Diversity and Equity’ in an institution or service, taking each country’s context into account. The author describes the historical context of social educational services in France and the origins of secularity in the educational system which has created a distance between professionals and parents. The professionals were legitimised to work directly with the children and to ‘exclude ‘ parents from the institutions.

Current changes in society, including diversity among families, now challenge professionals' views: should they deny the differences among the families, for the sake of egalitarianism or should they welcome diversity among the families and acknowledge the different identities, standards and values?

ESSSE in Lyon, an institution for initial training in the social-educational sector and for future early childhood educators, has structured the implementation of the ‘respect for Diversity and Equity’ approach into the curriculum. Within any early years institution, all partners should be involved at all levels; the Board of Directors, management team, early childhood sector, trainers’ team and students.

Partners outside the institution should also participate, be policy makers, politicians, public authorities, local as well as regional, so that they remain well-informed on Diversity and can take responsibility in decision making.



Summary of Part II - Examples from Practice

Part II gives a variety of training examples: experiences with long term in-service training and training-action-research, examples of initial training and train-the-trainer courses. In addition a variety of training methods are explained. For each, we outline: the goals of the method, the position of this method within a particular training course or curriculum and the experiences and evaluation process. Every training example in Part II is in keeping with the DECET mission statement. All also share a common format, starting with the DECET goals and the specific goals of the training example, listing the required knowledge, skills and attitudes and describing the process -the method, activities and evaluation of the trainees and trainer.

Part II starts with two examples of long term in-service training, of initial training and train-the-trainer courses. Further, a small selection of training methods is provided based on experiences of all DECET members. Some methods require a specific resource, such as a video or CD-Rom, and provide feedback from using this resource.

Long-term in-service training.

Two examples are described, both of them action-research training approaches.

Chapter II.1 - Mentoring within childcare centres in three cities in Belgium (Brussels, Liège, Antwerp).

A joint project between the Universities of Liège and Gent which fits into the framework of Quality Improvement in Early Childhood, its aim is to address educational practices to include diversity issues as well as access to child care centres and disseminate its approach to other centres in the city or region. During the process, all staff of the centres are involved, educators and managers as well as stakeholders (policy makers, etc).

The project centres around two questions: 'who does and does not have access to the centre?' and 'how is the issue of Diversity dealt with in daily educational practice?' Key elements in this training approach are: the co-operation of the staff at all levels, the development of child care centre networks and the ongoing mentoring which ensures effective early childhood education quality.

Chapter II.2 The action-research-training of ACEPP

ACEPP is a national association of parental childcare centres in France. Goals of this training are to improve access to the centres and implement 'respect for diversity'. Three types of interconnected interventions take place: coaching of the centres, diversity-training sessions with a number of centres, and encouraging participation and co-operation of parents, educators and institutional partners alike. Intercultural communication plays an important role.

The strength of this approach is that each participant can learn to go beyond his/her prejudices, discover alternatives and respect the parents' culture and values. One result has been that the parents' capacity to take the initiative was strongly reinforced.



Chapter II.3 - Initial Training.

The example of Initial training within ESSSE shows how the Diversity issue has been integrated within the new regulations for Early Years Educators. An Early Years Educator must be able to interact with all parties: children, parents and institutional partners. The profession can be described as early childhood social work.

To implement Diversity, ESSSE has adapted documentary resources and required knowledge in specific disciplines (for instance anthropology). The curriculum and the assessment activities have also been changed to incorporate Diversity. For example, students can work with photo language (see Chapter II.7) and prepare a paper based on a question raised from practice in which different values in child raising are illustrated.

Train-the-trainer courses

Chapter II.4 - The post academic course

Organised by the Department of Social Welfare studies at the University of Gent, the course is open to trainers of early childhood educators or policy makers. Participants write a paper in which they develop a personal training course for the public they work with. In doing so, they examine general views on diversity, learning concepts and compare models concerning diversity. They also get involved in discussions and building a curriculum or programme on diversity. After completing the course, three trainers in different colleges have co-operated to rewrite their curriculum in terms of diversity.

Chapter II.5 - 'I am I and You are You'

Carried out by MUTANT, an independent agency in the Netherlands promoting diversity and equity in educational and health care institutions, the goal of the course is to implement the DECET goals into early childhood centres and colleges for initial training. Participants are trainers, mentors and college teachers in early childhood who, after the training course, are able to develop and execute a course, coaching process or programme in their own institution.

The training course is based on the Dutch programme and publication 'I am I and You are You. Education without prejudices'. The programme contains three types of activities: observation by the educators, awareness raising and team discussion, and interactions and activities with children. One activity example is provided: educators share positive elements and values in their personal backgrounds, discovering diversity among the group and respect differing cultures and values.

Over the years many trained in this method have been confronted with challenges in promoting diversity and equity issues in their institutions. For this reason a national network has been founded to discuss experiences and results and provide mutual support.

Training methods from all the DECET partners.

All are founded upon the DECET goals are set into their own institutional and/or national context.



Chapter II.6 - Naming my world. Starting the process of creating change by clarifying the issue

A German group of trainers and practitioners has developed a method based on the 'Praxis circle' of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. This 3-step method is useful when issues arise for a group, for example 'Language and identity' or 'co-operation with parents'. Steps are: 'Naming my world', collecting individual experiences from participants, Finding similarities and differences, classifying experiences in themes, and Analysis, connecting individual experiences with social realities. In this final step, knowledge levels are increased and linked to social mechanisms of power, inclusion and exclusion.



Chapter II.7 - The training pack for talking about families

Developed and evaluated by the Belgium partner VBJK and the French institution ESSSE, the pack facilitates discussing family diversity, specifically the construction of our representations of families. In doing so, it builds awareness of prejudices towards certain families and fosters empathy.



Materials consist of pictures representing 10 different families, like a single mother feeding an adopted child, a stepfamily with children on an outing, a Somali family, etc. Participants choose a picture that resembles their idea of an ideal family or a family they have questions about. Evaluations have shown that this tool is a relevant support in highlighting questions concerning values and visions and in exploring attitudes.



Chapter II.8 - Persona Dolls. An Early Childhood method on respect for diversity.

Persona Dolls are used as an educational method in the USA and have been developed further by DECET partners in UK, Denmark and the Netherlands. Persona Dolls allow children to identify, empathise, think up creative solutions to help or comfort the doll, to give and to share. Dolls are also a means to solve problems.

The use of Persona Dolls stimulates educators to help children communicate and to discuss challenging themes with children. In addition, educators can reduce teasing and inclusion and in the process, learn more about his/her own stereotypes and prejudices.



The method begins by observing the diversity and related issues within a group of children. Educators then select and develop a doll suitable for work with their children. After introductory sessions in which children come to identify with the doll, the storytelling starts. Possible themes include: pride in background and family; skin-colour and body; similarities and differences between individuals and social groups; collaboration and sharing; respect for each other, with all results reported. During evaluation sessions, educators have stated that the doll has become a friend and many now feel comfortable to raise difficult issues with young children via the dolls.

Chapter II.9 - Intercultural communication between parents and professionals

ACCEP supports parent-professional relationships by building respect for each other's educational values. With parental involvement, the childcare centre offers a space for intercultural encounter where all partners can learn.

Professionals, facing parental educational practices far removed from their own, can experience 'cultural shock' and may judge parents or impose their own standards. A



three-step method addresses this problem: 1) working on the cultural shock and stepping back from one's values and emotions. 2) exploring the other's frame of reference; 3) negotiation.



This training module based on intercultural communication is integrated within a longer training process, as described in the Action-research-training, Chapter II. 2. Through this programme, professionals can understand cultural differences without comparing and judging them based on their own values; every behaviour has a particular meaning for its actor. As one educator said: 'Before, I felt attacked by the different practices of the parents. Not anymore. There are as many parents as there are ways to raise a child.'



Chapter II.10 - Art and Drama

Creative expression, as a means of promoting respect for diversity is the aim of the sensitisation workshop developed by Schedia, a Centre of Artistic and Educational Training In Greece. Educators discover that artistic activities ensure the vivid interest and participation of all children, using children's experiences. Moreover, the activities show various means of expression and creativity and give opportunities to present diverse cultural elements in the class set-up. Through artistic activity, educators can also work on group dynamics to counter stereotypes or cliques. Art and drama strengthens a positive attitude towards life, and thus secures children's successful social integration.

In the first phase artistic workshops are provided on theatre, painting and music focusing on identity issues and collaboration In the second phase these issues are intensified by discussion and role play based on: how do our own identity and prejudices influence our educational work? The workshop has been provided to educators in many municipalities in Greece and may participants have pursued longer, follow-up courses regarding diversity issues.



Chapter II.11 - 'How good it is to be you! An Anti Bias journey'

This chapter provides guidelines for viewing and discussing the video of the same title. As an introduction to the Anti Bias approach, the video is a forum for Louise Derman-Sparks and early years education colleagues to explain their views and experiences in the Californian practice.

This method is designed to unlock the insights the video provides through structured group discussions and allow viewers to apply the knowledge to their own contexts. The video can also serve as a framework for further self-reflection, addressing questions such as: 'what do you know about the children's identity development? How do you understand individual and group identity? What does it mean for you to be proud of your own background? Other questions concern the physical environment reflecting diversity and the Anti Bias approach with all children, minority and majority. It is an ideal starting point for groups of educators who have little or no knowledge on diversity issues.



Chapter II.12 - The Dominant Walk

This activity, developed by the Irish 'Éist' project of Pavee Point, explores the representation of all children and families in society. The goal is awareness raising about



what is 'normalised' in society, highlighting issues on identity and testing the physical environment in early childhood settings: do all children have a sense of belonging? Are prejudices and stereotypes evident in the environment?

The activity can be carried out at pre-service as well as in-service training sessions, as introductory workshops, or as a part of more in depth coursework. Participants are asked about a child's persona, about whom they have received a short description (examples: 4 year old black boy, 5 year old white girl with well educated parents, 3 year old adopted Vietnamese, bilingual boy, etc). They then go for a walk using the child's persona. The walk leads along an exhibition of images from newspapers, magazines, travel brochures, greeting cards.

Questions arising from the walk include: what images of you and your life are reflected here? What do these images tell you about yourself? What do you feel? In the following discussion themes such as majority culture, travellers, black families, disabilities, family types, languages are highlighted.

During evaluation one of the participants said: 'I realised that many children from different backgrounds are not represented as they should be. It made me think of ways to include children'.

Chapter II.13 - Using the CD Rom 'Respect for diversity in early childhood care and education'

The CD-ROM was developed by a group of DECET members and is available in English, French and Dutch. A useful tool for individual study as well as in training courses and team meetings, the CD-ROM provides a theoretical and practical framework for Anti Bias work which is demonstrated with texts, interviews and examples of good practice.

Evaluation shows that many educators and trainers need concrete guidelines in using this medium. A questionnaire provides guidance for surfing through the interactive CD-Rom. For example: find and then listen to the lullabies, what are your impressions? Look up the term 'colour blindness'; do you agree with the text, why? Look up the anti bias goals and listen to the explanation of Louise Derman-Sparks..

Chapter II.14 - The Target Game

Effectively raises awareness on systematic yet covert discrimination concerning access to early childhood centres. The game was developed in the Belgian context of Flanders, where access policy to Flemish centres is often implicit, with the result that many families from ethnic minorities or marginalised groups do not find access easy. Easy access lies within the competence of the directors, but they are seldom aware of the discriminating effect of their policies.

The Target Game is a fun way to introduce a debate on access and discrimination of different groups and can be used as a starting point for discussion or reflection on access criteria. As they negotiate their way around a playing board, at the mercy at the throw of the dice or baffling question cards, players experience the frustration of being rejected and the effect of random exclusion.



Some examples of questions: 'how many hours do 2-year olds sleep per day?'. 'İli sabahlar idiniz ne? If you don't understand this, you have to go back to the starting point.' 'Where does the light go when it gets dark?', 'This question is only for men. If you are not a man, go back to the starting point.' The games master 'judges' all the answers and decides if a player can move on. After the game a round-table discussion takes place. The Target Game has already opened the eyes of many participants, many of whom are decision-makers for childcare institutions now willing to explore ways of changing in their own practice.



Chapter II.15 - Diversity and Equity: Historical and Legislative Timeline

Also developed by the Irish 'Eíst' project, this activity outlines the historical context and legislative response to diversity in Ireland. The timeline can be modified to suit different national contexts and -isms, and provides a creative, interactive alternative to a traditional lecture style on historical background.



The aim is to raise awareness that diversity is not new and to outline international and national conventions and legislation concerning diversity and equity. Participants improve their critical thinking and are able to reflect on their Irish identity.

Each receives cards with historical facts, with facts on national and international legislation regarding discrimination, children's rights etc. Participants must guess when the events took place, setting out the cards on a timeline and indicating the dates. The trainer, who holds the correct information, then views each timeline and helps participants set up the correct sequence of events and dates.

During the follow-up discussion, participants recognised their limited knowledge: 'Most of the policies were new to me, particularly those regarding the travellers and racism and discrimination.' I have learnt that Ireland has had a mixed community for much longer than I had imagined. That Ireland has been extremely slow in passing legislation protecting human rights. I am more aware and reflective.'



Chapter II.16 - Culture and Education

This research project is aimed at early-years education students at the ESSSE College. Based on their internship experience, the project allows each student to identify the links between culture and education in the educational practices in the child care centre as well as in the children's' families. Students must consider in-depth the approach of the parents as well as of the child care centre, always abstaining from value judgements and preconceived interpretations.



Each student selects a child from a family background different from his/her own (different culture, ethnicity, class, etc) and describes a topic in the educational practice in the family context as well as in the context of the child care centre. For optimal exploration of the issue, direct observation and interviews are used as well as readings, articles, films etc. Students then consider questions which result from the interface of these two educational approaches and analyse the theoretical reflections from several angles. The student produces a paper outlining his/her findings, observations and theories.



Appendices

Glossary of terms

Appendix 1 provides a full list and definition of the terms used in this book. Although different terms are used in different countries, we have aimed to provide identical definitions wherever possible.

The political and legal context

Much national and international legislation and many conventions are available to support this Diversity work. Besides UN Conventions, the European Union has drawn up treaties with specific articles calling for non-discrimination and respect for home cultures and religions. Furthermore each nation/state also has its own diversity legislation. Appendix 2 provides a list of this legislation for each country to adapt to its own context.

Description of DECET partners

Appendix 3 shows a description of all DECET partners.

Framework for training approaches

	Framework for training
Professional objectives on Diversity and Equity	<p>The objectives refer to :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the DECET mission statement and goals, 2. the institutional goals referring to diversity, 3. specific goals in this training example
Knowledge, Skills, Attitude	Goals of the training session in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude
Context in which the training takes place	Information about the specific training set-up; type of environment, numbers, about target group of the participants/students, etc.
Required training: the process	How the training exercise or session fits into the overall plan of work or in the curriculum, plus a rationale for this choice of approach.
Required training: Activities	<p>Examples of training activities and teaching methods used to meet the goal in this session. Why did the trainer choose this particular activity? What happens during the activity, what kind of discussion took place?</p> <p>A more detailed description of some of the activities is described as ‘methods’ later in the document. The elaborated version will give information for the trainer on how to execute the activity.</p>
Evaluation, Experiences, Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The evaluation process and procedures: forms, round table discussions, papers. etc. 2. Results of the evaluation: examples of questions and reactions of students.(positive and negative) 3. Results of the evaluation: reactions and remarks from the trainer.

Reclaiming the children: Challenging Early Childhoods' Educational Constructions

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In this introductory article I will look at recent social and societal evolutions that challenge services for young children. Therefore I will draw on the observations made by the German sociologist Ulrich Beck, as well as some critical scholars in Anglo-American literature. I will especially focus on one of the topics that is of major concern for the DECET network, namely how power relations operate to include or exclude certain groups from these services for young children and their families. The societal evolutions present us with as well new challenges and threats as new opportunities. Of course, no one can predict the future our children will live in. However a glance at history and at actual societal changes provides us with some insights in major educational challenges for the coming years in the upbringing of young children. All West European countries have known considerable developments in what we came to call "the welfare state". Since the second world war and especially during the golden sixties West European States invested an ever growing part of their national budgets in social security, health and other welfare provisions such as education and early child care. Even during the economically difficult late seventies and eighties, all European countries increased their welfare budgets, as well under social-democratic as under conservative governments (Deleeck, 2001). During this period all West European countries developed a network of Early Childhood Education. Some countries, as the Nordic ones, did so rather early in this period and very extensively, others, like The Netherlands tried to get even in a later stage. Although considerable differences persist among European countries as far as the provisions for families and young children are concerned, a very important evolution can be observed and it is generally accepted to present that States have a role to play in early years provisions. However, many questions on "what kind of care" and "for who" remain unanswered.

A quick look back at history

From the sixties onto today this question is predominantly discussed by developmental psychologists. The quality question was analysed in the view of attachment theories and developmental outcomes. In a first research faze, child care was suspect of damaging the mother-child relationship. Later research and expert advice focused on types of care and quality of care that looked at the educator-child relation; still, of course, with the mother-child relation as the benchmark. The upcoming of compensatory programmes for underprivileged families (such as High Scope and Head Start) and especially the rather negative results coming out of these programmes in the seventies, draw even more attention to the early years (Singer, 1993). Up to today, the concern of this vein of research is on developmental outcomes, such as later academic achievement,



maladjustment or the impact of early child care on mother-child attachment (Belsky, 2001). The question that remains dominant all over this period is still the old question: is day care harmful to children? (Mc Gurck et al, 1993). Moreover, regarding the question of "who the ECE is for", we have seen an increasing link between female employment and child care, followed in many countries by regulations that facilitated the access to child care for single mothers as well as for two income families, but often excluding no income families or marginal groups that want child care for other than employment reasons (Vandenbroeck, 2003).

The complexity and heterogeneity of actual society gave rise to still another type of questions, such as: Who determines what the child should be? Who determines what the successful or harmful outcome could be? Who defines what quality is? Why and in what context are these constructions of children, families and ideal types of care made? In brief: who obtains the power to dominate the discussions (discourse) on childcare and how does this power include or exclude certain groups? These are questions emerging from a quite different angle, namely from critical theory since a few years. It are challenging questions because they talk about power (Foucault, 1975), about how "public opinion" is shaped (dominant discursive regimes, as Dahlberg et al (1999) call them). They question the relation between children, families and the State (Moss, 2000). These new and challenging questions come up, following a series of critiques from 'forgotten groups' in the history of child care: feminist groups and ethnic minorities for instance. Indeed, most of the common sense ideas about childcare and the "expert knowledge" at hand, draws upon research that is built on typically middle class, white male values and norms. Children and their mothers are traditionally decontextualized. By this, we mean that social, cultural or economical backgrounds are all too often forgotten, covered or "statistically neutralized". What remains is an image of the average, the typical child, that becomes the norm. Developmental psychology has always been the science of the average, more than a science of variation or diversity (Burman, 1994). Just one example: there is a tremendous amount of anthropological data showing that early years practices around the world vary considerably and that the monomatric child (that is exclusively raised by his or her mother during the first years of life) is far from being universal but is on the contrary quite exceptional (Mc Gurck et al, 1993). In spite of this, research still tends to ignore the wider (informal) networks in which children are growing up and puts the mother child dyad forward as the norm. This "normalizing" science has produced (and is produced by) an image of a weak, fragile child, a needing child and a childcare in need of expert advice on quality and development, as well as the image of the "needy parent" (Vandenbroeck, 2001). Cross-cultural research however has since long clearly showed that what is understood as quality care can be very different in different social, cultural or economical contexts (Tobin et al, 1989). There is no doubt that psychological research in child care has made a major contribution to the well being of children in care, by challenging the hygienic discourse that was dominant in the fifties and sixties. But at the same time, the "expert knowledge" has devaluated the expertise of parents, the parental ethnotheories or "folk pedagogy" (Bruner, 1996). This evolution can be compared to what happened with our ideas on ecology and health. Since Tsjernobyl, we can not trust our senses anymore. The sandpit for the children did not look different after the explosion of the nuclear reactor at the end of the eighties and neither did the lettuce in the garden. But



it was said to be harmful to our health and to our children's. One of the dramatic aspects of this impact is that since Tsjernoby1 we became dependent on the advice of experts, on the media information, to guide our management of risks in life (Beck, 1998). In the same vein, we can say that the focus psychological experts lay on later developmental outcomes of early years interventions, deprive parents and local communities from their senses and their knowledge about what is best for their children.

Weaker states, stronger citizens?

Since late twentieth century there is a growing awareness that we live in a complex society, marked by diversity, where many different groups with distinctive norms, values, and ideas about 'the good life' for children mingle. At the same time we can observe that central policies have less impact on major questions that have direct impact on peoples lives. Ecological danger can not be prevented. At the very moment we write this text, fisherman and volunteers from all over Europe work to clean the Spanish costs from the oil escaped from the wreck of the Prestige, an oil tanker. Neither can employment be guaranteed, since the globalisation of economy has produced weak states in the face of transnational companies, that chose to invest (and create employment) where they decide, and not necessarily where States would wish them to. We can observe daily examples of this globalisation. At the time we write this, Philips, a major employer in the Belgian province of Limburg, decides to close its factory and move it to Taiwan. These are just two examples among many others, such as the struggle from West European governments to deal with the growing migration pressure on its borders. Exactly in this growing impotency of modern States and their institutions lies a major challenge for the years to come, in the sense of what Ulrich Beck (1994) calls "reflexive modernization" and the "reinvention of politics". Indeed we can observe that all over Europe small formal or informal groups begin to take over and put their wishes on the political agenda. A famous example of course is the Greenpeace actions that forced a coalition of experts and politicians to change their plan to sink an abandoned oil platform in the ocean. It is particularly interesting to see what happens with this kind of sub-politics (Beck, 1998) in early childhood educational institutions. Indeed, these institutions are situated right on the border between private and public life. For a growing group of children (and their parents) they represent a first step into society that asks for negotiations between the parents values, the educators' and the communities' interests.

In a context of high complexity and diversity of societies, this negotiation is not an easy thing, but it provides a challenging forum for civil society tot build democracy.

Equity and radical reciprocity

Since we know that power works by an whole series of infinite details (Foucault, 1975), we also know that the reconstruction of equity and democracy works through a series of very little, infinite aspects of daily life. In many European countries we can observe day care centres that build basic democracy by negotiating with parents, families,



educators and local communities about ‘the good life’ for all of them. Probably Reggio Emilia is one of the most famous examples (Dahlberg et al, 1999), where local communities have reclaimed the early years education after the fascist regime and where the construction of this education is a co-construction of children, parents and educators. But it is far from being the sole example: In France a network of over 2000 parental day care centres have a long established tradition of negotiating all educational practices with all parents. In Belgium and Holland pilot centres take up the challenge to replace expert discourse by a discussion on educational philosophy that takes into account the different perspectives of parents from ethnic minorities. In Ireland grassroots organizations give a voice to the Travellers in order to empower their participation in ECE and in deprived areas of Athens children and parents are encouraged through art to take up their role as citizens (Houndoumadi, 2002). These are many diverse examples of a countermovement in early childhood education that challenges universalised quality concepts and try to reconstruct these services from below. They are certainly not examples to disseminate and implement as such in other contexts. But at the very least, they show that it is both feasible and important to adopt a critical and self-aware approach to policies and practices concerning children, childhood and families (Moss, 2000).

A shifting profession: the educator as mediator

These approaches also show that we need to rethink the professional status of the educator. The image of the needy child and its needy family constructed an image of a powerful educator who "knew" what was good for "the child". The complexity of society and the need for democratic grass root organizations in turn produces the need for another professional. This time the educator is not the expert, trained to have all the technical knowledge on children's needs. Quite on the contrary, this educator will in the first place be a negotiator, a mediator, able to take different points of view into account, able to raise questions rather than to answer them, able to mobilize expertise from children, parents and communities, rather than to provide this expertise. This means that tolerance will be high on the agenda, but not tolerance that means permissiveness. Being permissive is like having no values, while tolerance is precisely having very strong values. The educator in this sense will less be concerned by negotiating an agreement, but rather in dealing with disagreements, valuing complexity, heterogeneity and diversity as a richness. The profession then shifts from that of an architect of human development towards the co-constructor that not only builds relationships with families, but also enhances the dialogue between families. This shifting profession calls for shifting training approaches where relational attitudes and skills and self-reflective knowledge will be of major importance.

It is the merit of this publication to contribute to this shift of training approaches, by a series of examples of training methods in this vein. Again, not because we think that a particular training method, that was elaborated in a specific historical, social and cultural context can or should be replaced as such in another. But because we can hope that these examples can be inspiring for trainers who are committed to work with the actual and the next generation of educators. Furthermore, this publication is in itself an



example of co-construction, since it was constructed starting from the daily experience of trainers in many different countries, from mutual visits and in depth discussions, not focusing on the sole didactical aspects but also on their historical, social and cultural contexts.

Rowing up the stream of political discourse

Of course, we must realise that this work has much to do with rowing up the stream. Indeed, the political tendency in Europe is not favouring this work. The fact that states are less powerful to handle major existential problems, as we described, gives rise to a growing feeling of insecurity. Paradoxically this insecurity favours a political movement towards a nineteenth century image of the nation state, protecting its identity against foreign influences. In the last decade many European countries have seen an upraise of xenophobe discourses that often are politically translated either by far right parties or by more traditional conservative parties. We can observe this tendency to tribalization in dominant cultures as well as in minority groups. In my country, Flanders-Belgium, a far right and racist party holds 17 % of the votes and in the major city of Flanders even 30%. Under the pressure of this evolution, the Belgian government took a series of xenophobe decisions, such as refusing any allowances to newcomers, except material allowances (such as food vouchers), bringing back these newcomers in an early nineteenth century dependency. In France the racist and far right leader Jean Marie Le Pen ran for president and was quite successful. In the Netherlands the rise of Pim Fortuyn lead to legislation with major cut downs in welfare, to the tightening up of regulations for asylumseekers as the closing down of most of the asylumseekers camps and the opening of the detention centres for illegal asylumseekers. In Austria a second government with the extreme nationalists of the FPÖ is formed.

In Denmark extremely nationalistic measures are taken by the Rasmussen government : legal migrants become lower social benefits then Danish citizens, the age to be able to marry a non-Danish citizen has raised up till 25 years, and a divorce of a non-Danish couple can taken place only after 7 years of residence, which highly raises the risks on domestic violence.

The events of September 11th 2001 have clearly contributed to this insecurity, xenophobia and stereotypical thinking. The tensions around the "war on Irak" will certainly add to this. It is through events like this, that we can clearly experience that major societal changes affect our daily work with children and families. Again, the answer to these evolutions may well be a rethinking of this basic question regarding early childhood education of all times: what do we want for our children? And: What is the purpose of the institutions we construct for them?

A conclusive remark

In this introductory article we have tried to argue that the actual and future societal context calls for inclusion, diversity and equity and that we understand this as parts, as building stones for basic democracy. We also have argued that equity (just as the power



issue) is a matter of infinite details, such as the history of this particular mother, that was new in the neighbourhood and had difficulties in expressing herself in the dominant language. When the day care centre proposed her to participate in the daily activities she withdrew, expressing that she did not feel capable of adding anything of value to the current practice in that centre. Through many daily contacts and little negotiations about what she wanted for her child and through networking with other parents, she took up the role of serving tea at parents meetings and a little later she actively interfered in the meeting, complaining that her daughter was not given enough time to finish her meals at noon. Following her input an in-depth discussion followed on the traditional practice of the educators who strongly wished to teach each child to eat with a spoon and a fork before they reached the age of 2 and a half. The discussion on the importance of table manners and the cultural and ethical constructions that underpin the opinions enabled the centre to question its practices on different aspects of their work. The mother enjoyed the discussions and later took up an important role in welcoming new parents. When her daughter left the centre for kindergarten, she continued to be a bridging person between parents of her community who felt excluded on the one hand and the school on the other hand.

Organizing and facilitating such series of infinite details, these examples of shared power, valuing the social and cultural diversity, is a clear challenge, that helps parents and communities to reclaim early childhood education. It may even contribute to reclaiming the public domain in more general terms.



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Presentation of the DECET Network

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The following chapter is dedicated to the DECET Network; its origins, the members of the network, its goals and aims, the mutual work basis, the projects and the planning of the network. It will give an overview on the history of the network and the ideas that were connected to the foundation of the DECET network. It will provide a description of the structures of the network or, more precisely, the development of structures and the reasoning behind the development of these structures. It will also provide an insight into the strategic planning of the network. The chapter is rounded off by a short description of "who" the network is. A more detailed description of the partners and the organisations that are represented in the network -- and where the focus of their work lies -- can be found in the appendix of this manual.

The Network Approach

"Network has become part of common parlance. Rarely is the word used with intended precision, but rather as a label reflecting the obvious fact that each person has a wide array of relationships, the bases of which can vary in the extreme. Each of us knows, has met, and has had commerce with countless people, but what the label network ordinarily suggests is that, with a portion of these people, we have a relationship permitting us to "approach" them. And we may approach them with the deliberate aim of asking them to help us establish a similar relationship with a person we do not know. We are usually unaware both of the extent and basis of these relationships until events force that knowledge on us." (SARASON et al. 1977, p. 3)

If we extend this definition to relationships (or the establishing of relationships) among members of organisations working on -- or interested in -- the issue of diversity, the decision to establish a Network which promotes the diversity concept in Europe seems more than logical.

One of the assets of a network -- as opposed to an organisation -- is seen to be its flexibility: the capacity to react quickly to changes and new situations. Networks are associated with the potential to gather forces from different areas to develop and achieve common aims. It is connected to a feeling of "common sense" to bring together projects and organisations working in similar fields and with similar aims to stimulate the exchange of knowledge, experience and resources and to use this potential to work together to promote a common quest.

The benefits of networking on a European level are clearly recognised by all partners in the DECET Network. Exchanging information about projects and developments in each country often provides important inspiration and facts for everyday work (in the professional field as well as in policy work) in one's own country. Exchanging training methods and resources is another important factor of mutual benefit. Partners see the mutual development of new resources within the framework of the network as equally rewarding for the national context. Multilateral projects among network partners



strengthen the aspect of trans-national exchange and learning. The network also provides a strong basis for promoting the issue of diversity in countries where there is, as yet, little awareness of this concept. Inviting network partners to national conferences and meetings with professionals and policy makers -- thus broadening the national perspective towards a European context -- is a highly valued feature of the European network. The network further aims to connect its annual meetings to national conferences (the meeting venue rotates annually from partner country to partner country), thus strengthening the position of the partner organisation hosting the meeting. And yet, networking also means facing particular challenges. In the context of the European DECET network, this means overcoming language barriers and making special efforts to include partners who are not completely at ease with the network languages (mainly English, with French in second place). It also includes learning to understand different communication cultures and keeping these in mind.

The size -- and especially the degree -- of commitment of the organisations involved in the network creates another challenge. Some organisations are well on the way towards integrating diversity as a major issue in the mission and practice of the organisation. Others are at quite different points in this development. One challenge resulting from these differences in the status-quo is the perception of the speed and strength in which the network itself can work towards its stated goals.

Correspondingly, the people representing the organisation in the network are faced with a wide range of challenges on a national level, which is reflected in the capacity they are able to mobilise for network issues. Time is, consequently, an important factor.

Integrating and promoting network issues, as well as the feeling of commitment and responsibility, are closely related to personal engagement, the engagement of the organisation (i.e. the importance that the partner organisation places on the issue of diversity) and the degree to which the organisation is willing and able to contribute human and material resources towards realizing the aims of the network. NGO's dependant on acquiring projects to finance their organisational structures face different challenges than organisations with a stable funding basis. The tensions between daily work and supplementary work for the network cannot be denied, even if the long-term aim is to integrate the issues of the network into daily practice.

Nonetheless, the special focus of the DECET network, which emphasises (alongside of the exchange of knowledge, information and resources) the transnational cooperation to produce transnational resources --for example, materials, videos or training approaches and theory development -- gives the network a special strength and stability.

The Evolution of the DECET Network

The origin of the DECET Network is mainly the result of cooperation at the European level in three major projects. The key players who promoted the evolution of the DECET Network were involved in these projects. The common denominator in all projects and participating organisations was the Bernard van Leer Foundation, which funded all three projects, connected the organisations with each other and played the major role in promoting and financing the development of the DECET Network.

The first project -- a cooperation between The Netherlands and Great Britain -- resulted in a training manual adapting the Anti-Bias-Approach to the European context and a



conference. It was a cooperation between organisations in The Netherlands, Great Britain and Denmark and took place in The Hague in 1997, where the manual and examples of training methods were presented to a broader audience.

The second project "Training, Local Development and Childcare" based its transnational cooperation mainly on the exchange of knowledge at the conference level and the exchange of information about the various approaches applied in the national projects (see PETERS, 2000). The third project, MEQ, -- Milestones Towards Quality Through Equality-- was established by nearly the same set of actors as the second project and profited from the common experiences. The focus here was on a joint project at a transnational level, instead of a 'mere' exchange of experience and information. Working on a joint project "turned out to be an excellent way of getting to know each other [...] by sharing different work methods used in intercultural education and drawing inspiration from one another's experiences." (PEETERS, 2000, p. 2) Jan Peeters further points out the importance of working together at a single action point, thus increasing the focus and motivation of the members. "In summary, we can state that transnational cooperation within the MEQ project was characterised by a cooperative approach, bringing to the forefront the strong points of each project. All the partners were given the opportunity to learn from/make use of the best aspects of each others' work." (PEETERS, 2000, p. 3)

From these three projects, three major themes were identified that made a major impact on the development of the DECET network: a) the importance of focusing on how a project is developed and implemented (i.e. top-down, bottom-up approaches or an integration of both approaches); b) the importance of establishing national networks -- also when working at a transnational level -- to disseminate as well as to develop and discuss approaches and provide feedback to the national work groups. These national networks should ideally include actors from all relevant organisations working at municipal and national levels; c) the importance of focusing on concrete joint aims, when working at a transnational level, to maximize the above-mentioned gains from this type of resource exchange.

"In the DECET project, an attempt was made in the European context to make transnational collaboration even better than it had been in the MEQ project. It had been the intention from the outset to form a European network of different projects -- operating in their own countries -- on the theme of diversity." (PEETERS, 2000, p. 4) The project started in 1998 and was supported with a two-year grant (1998 – 2000) by the Dutch Bernard van Leer Foundation. The founding members were ACEPP (Association Collectifs Enfants Parents et Professionnels) based in France, EYTARN (Early Years Trainers Anti Racism Network) based in the UK, the Kent Childcare Network (KCCN) also from the UK, Pavee Point based in Ireland, MUTANT based in The Netherlands and VBJK based in Belgium.

The focus was set, as mentioned above, on joint activities. In this spirit, the following goals were formulated. They aimed at:

- identifying and sensitising practitioners, trainers and policy makers on anti-bias principles in different European countries to build a European Network
- the development of a European Network through a website linking the resource centres of the different partner organisations; and
- organising a trainers' week for professionals from different European countries, in the first two years of the project's work.



After the first two years of the DECET Network, the network had succeeded in creating a basis for future work. Funding was assured for another three years by the Bernard van Leer Foundation in The Hague. New partners were won for the next networking phase, the internet web-site had been developed and showed a high hit frequency, even if it was not yet being used, as initially planned, for the communication and discussion among the partners. The contact between projects in the network and other projects was strengthened.

Recent Development and Planning

The next networking phase (2000-2003) marked yet another important milestone in the development of the network. In accordance with promoting outcome-orientated transnational cooperation in the network, three work packs evolved.

Work pack 1 ("Training Approach Diversity and Equity in Early Childhood") set its aims at developing a European Training Approach on Diversity and Equity in Early Childhood based on the knowledge, experience and resources already available in the DECET network. Work pack 2 -- entitled "Best Practice" -- aimed at stimulating the internal discussion in the DECET network about its philosophy, common goals, practices, etc. This was done in order to gain better understanding of the diversity of practices in the anti-bias field and of how practices can be adapted to different social, political and educational contexts. The goal was to produce a video which could be used for training purposes, showing good anti-bias practices in different countries and explaining why practices can vary according to the contexts. Finally, Work pack 3 -- entitled "Dissemination" -- aimed at promoting and valorising the existing materials (books, videos, articles etc.) which were the results of actions or research by the network members. The product resulting from this work pack will be a databank supplying information concerning various publications on diversity in theory and practice and the translation of selected publications to make them available in a broader European context. All partners in the network were engaged in at least one of the three work packs.

Parallel to the involvement in the work packs, the partners worked -- and are still working -- towards developing the contours and structures of the network. The strategic plans of the network include:

- (1) sharing responsibilities in the network to heighten the commitment of the partners;
- (2) looking for and inviting new partners into the network;
- (3) strengthening the national networks in each partner country (to promote its aim to be a network of networks);
- (4) cooperating with international networks active in Early Childhood and Diversity issues;
- (5) supporting each other on a national basis (to promote the development within the partner organisations towards including diversity in the mission of the organisation);
- (6) working on policy (e.g. inviting policy makers to network conferences, to national conferences on diversity; establishing exchange groups between policy makers and professionals);

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- (7) working towards establishing a European Training School focused on the issues of diversity;
 - (8) heightening the exchange and development of theories in Europe that focus on or touch diversity issues (the results will be a compendium of international research and projects, a conference with leading researchers and the exchange between researchers and the network partners);
 - (9) strengthening the exchange and development of training methods that promote diversity issues in Europe (between trainers and Early Childhood educators).

The issues (1) to (5) indicate aims that have been part of the network's support strategy ever since it was founded. Issue (6) is a long-term goal on which the network works simultaneously at the national and the European levels. Issues (7) to (9) reflect the planning for the following network phase from 2003 to 2006.

Structures

All the organisations make up the DECET network and, at the same time, the members of the annual plenary meeting. In order to work, jointly, towards creating concrete products that promote diversity issues, the partners decided to establish three projects for the network phase 2000 – 2003 (work pack 1 to 3 – described above) which are entitled "wp1-3" in the figure. Each partner participates in at least one of the three work packs. Smaller thematic work groups are formed to prepare topics for internet discussions or plenary meetings (theory discussions, etc.). Each work pack is coordinated by a work pack manager (limited to the period set for the work pack) who, through this function, is also a member of the steering group. The work pack managers have the budget responsibility for the work pack and coordinate all actions within the work pack. One organisation within the network is asked to undertake the task of the overall coordination. The time period is limited to two or three years (this corresponds approximately to one working phase of the network) after which the overall coordination rotates to the next partner organisation. The overall coordination is responsible for all the administrative and so-called overhead tasks of the network. This includes the budget responsibility for the network, the annual and final reports (budget and task oriented) to the foundation, communication, information (between partners as well as to the foundation and to the publicity / newsletter, internet site), the chairmanship of the plenary and steering group meetings and the protocol of these meetings. The overall coordinators and the work pack managers work together in the steering group, where they prepare meetings and develop and plan strategies to be presented and discussed at the plenary sessions.

The DECET Network is funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BVLFF). The network also aims at attaining supplementary funding (e.g. European Social Fund or other EU programmes, grants from other foundations) to support project work in the network and work packs. Each member organisation contributes to the network according to its means (this contribution generally consists of the time each member puts into the network and travel and accommodation costs). The role of the Bernard van Leer Foundation includes more than simply supplying funding for the network. It has promoted the founding of the network by bringing potential partners together and it actively supports the development of the network. Many partners in the network run

projects funded by the BVLF. There is a close cooperation between the BVLF programme specialist and the network. The BVLF promotes international and national networks concerned with issues of Respect for Diversity and has given diversity issues a prominent place in the foundation's planning.

The Partners

At the moment (September 2004), seven European countries are represented in the DECET network: Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, and The Netherlands. Most countries are represented by one organisation.

ACEPP (Association of Children-Parents-Professional Collectives), Paris – France; ESSSE, Ecole de Service Social du Sud Est (School of Social services of the South East), Lyon – France; ISTA (Institut für den Situationsansatz - Institute for the contextual and developmental approach in Early Childhood Education), Free University Berlin – Germany; CAF, Glasgow, Scotland; MUTANT, Utrecht, The Netherlands; Pavee Point, Dublin, Ireland; SCHEDIA, (RAFT) – Centre of Artistic and Pedagogical Training, Athens – Greece; VBJK (Vormingscentrum voor de Begeleiding van het Jonge Kind), Gent, Belgium.

The organisations in the network represent the diverse occupational fields in Early Childhood Education. Some are organisations connected to Universities or institutions in the University structure itself, others are private agencies working as NGO's in the field of ECD, schools for Teacher Training, organisations representing the issues of parents and educators and / or minorities. A detailed description of each organisation is included in the appendix to this manual.





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DECET Mission statement and goals

All children and adults have the right to develop in a context in which there is equity and respect for diversity and have the right to participate actively in quality early childhood education services, free from any -- overt or covert -- form of individual or structural discrimination due to their race, colour, gender, language religion, political or other persuasion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, ability, economic or other situation.

The DECET Network will empower knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable children and adults to construct – together -- early childhood education services and communities where everyone:

- feels that he/she belongs
- has all aspects of his/her identity affirmed and valued
- can learn from each other across cultural and other boundaries
- can participate as active citizens
- actively addresses bias through open communication and a willingness to grow
- works together to challenge institutional forms of prejudice and discrimination

Goals

The European DECET Network promotes equity and celebrates diversity in early childhood education services and training, in the spirit of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by:

1. Networking with trainers, practitioners, researchers and policy makers throughout Europe;
2. Actively and critically promoting quality in early childhood education services, which include equity, accessibility and respect for diversity.
 - For parents, this means empowering them to participate fully in early childhood services and in their community as democratic citizens;
 - For educators, this means addressing stereotypical thinking and institutional discrimination;
 - For policy makers, this means working towards equal access and challenging discrimination and unequal power relations in early childhood educational services;
 - Developing new knowledge and insights in this field;
 - Working in collaboration with other networks in and outside Europe.

Approach

The DECET mission statement has developed from the experience and knowledge of its members that there was a need to address diversity, equity and anti-discrimination issues in the early childhood training, both at the institutional and the individual levels. Members have -- and are engaged in the promotion of -- a diversity and equity approach for the early childhood sector in their individual countries. It was through this experience, and drawing on the analysis of a variety of theoretical approaches, that the



DECET mission statement was formulated. All members work to implement the mission statement and goals of DECET in their individual social and political contexts.

Theoretical Approaches Outlined

There are five theoretical approaches to diversity and equity education that have been developed and implemented internationally over the past decades. Some have been discredited and the others have influenced the DECET vision. In particular, the anti-bias approach developed by

Integration

The 'Integration' educational approach acknowledges the need for economic and social support for minorities in order for them to integrate into society. However, the emphasis is on the integration of minorities into the dominant culture in order to create a homogeneous society. The assumption is that it is up to minorities to change and adapt in order to succeed within the system. There is no real demand for change in the educational system itself, apart from the need for more awareness and tolerance. It has been criticised as being patronising and dismissive of other cultures and as being racist.

Multicultural

The 'Multicultural' educational approach celebrates difference. It focuses on the minority cultures and, specifically, on the 'exotic' aspects of these cultures, glossing over issues of racism and unequal power relations. It does, however, acknowledge the need for broadening the content of the curriculum and for addressing the specific needs of minorities. It sets out to change the negative attitudes and practices of the majority population and holds the belief that, if children are exposed to other cultures at an early stage, they are unlikely to develop prejudicial ideas because prejudice is often based on ignorance. Multicultural education has tended to be implemented in settings where there are only children from minorities and has been criticised for failing to adequately address issues of power and discrimination.

Intercultural

The 'Intercultural' education approach holds the belief that culture and equity are not solely minority issues. They are also majority issues. It acknowledges the importance of assisting all people in becoming aware of their own cultures and removing the blinders which hinder their ability to reflect on diversity issues. It promotes the necessity for diversity to be incorporated across all areas of the curriculum. Most importantly, it includes acknowledging the need for critiquing racism and power relations and for challenging stereotyping and racism.

Anti-Bias

The 'Anti-Bias Approach' is similar to the intercultural approach. Its focus is on addressing inequalities and the sources of stereotypes within society. It places the focus on both majority and minority children and has four goals which build on each other. They encompass the building of each child's confident self-identity and group identity, fostering empathy, encouraging critical thinking and developing the skills to stand up for oneself and others in difficult situations. This approach is aimed at empowering all children and assisting them in their paths towards self-determination. The goals are

applicable to both adults and children. The approach also can also be broadened to include all areas of difference. It addresses the need to deal with power relations, both institutionally and personally.

Comparing Approaches

Approaches	Cultures	Dominant Culture	Other isms	Societal Power	Adult Reflection
Assimilation					
Integration					
Multicultural	✓	x	x	x	x
Intercultural	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Anti-bias	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Trainer and Trainees

Anke van Keulen, Bureau Mutant, The Netherlands

Introduction

This manual provides training support, guidelines and useful examples, all based around the field of diversity in the early years. Combining the informative and the practical, it is specifically designed to be a resource for trainers and tutors, teaching professionals and students working in pre-school and day care centres. In addition, teachers at institutes for professional child education, trainers providing in-service training, professionals themselves and assistants to teams working in the field will also find the ideas presented valuable.

DECET's objectives and work can be summed up by the phrase "working with diversity in early childhood centres". European society today is multi-cultural, therefore everyone involved in this area, whether directly or indirectly, must be prepared to work with the concept of diversity.

Although the settings for training may differ considerably, from in-service training to professional institutes to informal team assistance, this manual will be of benefit. The primary target groups who will gain most from its examples and insights are students and professionals ready to put their new skills and understanding into practice in their work with children, parents and other team members. Secondary target groups are trainers, teachers, tutors and managers working with future professionals.

The aim: "working with diversity in early childhood centres" forms the cornerstone of the objectives and mission of the European network DECET, as described in Chapter 3. All training methods and activities mentioned in this book are based upon the targets set out by DECET. Each of the training routes is outlined with reference to the relevant DECET targets they are designed to achieve.

The training is set within the European context and addresses the many changes taking place in the field of childcare, as well within our multicultural society. Political discussions and developments regarding the function and quality of childcare and the integration or social exclusion of ethnic minorities are taking place throughout Europe. Chapter 1 "Reclaiming the children" discusses these issues in depth.

Countering stereotypes

When it comes to diversity and the young child, what should professional training and support aim for? In view of current developments in society, it is clear that the role of the professional in early childhood must be reviewed and redefined, particularly with regard to the pressing issue of handling diversity.



In Chapter 1 Vandenbroeck refers to "a shifting profession and of rethinking the professional status of the educator. The educator is not the expert, trained to have all the technical knowledge on children's needs. Quite on the contrary, this educator will, in the first place, be a negotiator, a mediator, able to take different points of view into account, able to raise questions rather than to answer them, able to mobilise expertise from children, parents and communities, rather than to provide this expertise. The educator in this sense will less be concerned by negotiating an agreement, but rather in dealing with disagreements, valuing complexity and diversity as a rich asset. The profession then shifts from that of an architect of human development towards the co-constructor that not only builds relationships with families, but also enhances the dialogue between families. This shifting profession calls for shifting training approaches where relational attitudes and skills and self-reflective knowledge will be of major importance."

When handling diversity, the future professional will be dealing with families, parents and children of largely different backgrounds. This requires good professional skills and attitudes. Moreover, the professional him/herself forms part of that very diversity; he/she carries his/her own professional and personal values, standards and outlook on education. Of course, this means that contacts with different groups of parents and children may raise questions or new points of view, but professionals may also be confronted by their own attitudes. (Van Keulen 2002).

Images and stereotypes can be a minefield when working with different groups. General statements about a group often lead to stereotypes and prejudice. Or differences within a group are not taken into consideration (e.g. urban and rural, men and women, social classes). The same goes for individual differences from one family to another. Stereotypes and prejudice promote "them - us" thinking. Sometimes even small differences within groups are regarded as greater than the similarities. For instance, developments in society after the 9 -11 attacks in the United States have had a negative influence on relations between Muslims and Non-Islamic peoples. Recent world events have reinforced stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination.

The professional must always bear in mind that he/she may be reflecting his/her own attitudes in daily practice with parents and children, which may cause conflict and dilemmas. Checking one's own presuppositions in advance is vital. As a Somalian father put it: "look upon a child as a child. Don't just look at its colour, which might make it depressed or aggressive. Approach a child gently, and accept it".

Drawing up comparisons with the ethnic group to which the professional belongs can highlight the danger of generalising. Within our own group, we are aware of differences in class, religion, gender relations and raising habits, and it is easier to place an individual family into this social context. With an unknown group, the focus may be on knowledge gained (from books, wider society or other sources). This could be a starting point for generalising or forming stereotypes about a family, which do not do justice to the unique situation of that family - their individual mix of cultural, social-economic, psychological and educational factors. Indeed stereotypes can exercise a considerable and negative influence on communication and co-operation.

All the practical methods outlined in Part II of this manual emphasise the know-how,

skills and attitudes professionals need to develop in order to overcome prejudices and reflect on their own values in their daily work with children and families.

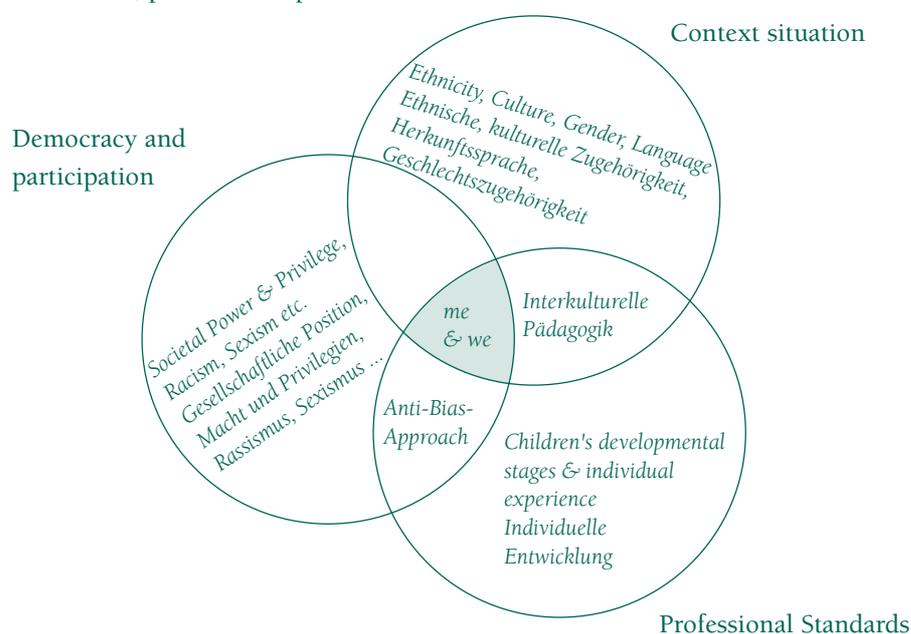
Necessary Know-how

Specialised training in handling diversity is not new. Over the years several more or less successful approaches have been tried. The multicultural approach, the tourist approach and the intercultural method are all well-known in Western Europe and have been applied in childcare, school education and general assistance. Chapter 3 DECET Mission and Goals describes these approaches and their strengths and weaknesses. DECET's preferred approach brings together the best features of a number of these methods. The explanation by Louise Derman-Sparks in Scheme 1 outlines the specific reasons (Derman-Sparks 2001).

The intercultural pedagogical approach places the cultural historical background of the group and the individual in centre stage, acknowledging ethnic-cultural background, gender, religion and language and recognising how these factors influence or determine the attitude and actions of the individual. Thus, intercultural pedagogics integrate the individual development of the child (experience, development phases) and the place of the individual within its group(s).

The Anti-Bias approach emphasises a combination of the cultural and the power relationship; a factor often neglected with the intercultural approach. Special focus on the power issue ensures that the influence of power on the education of children is closely monitored. Living conditions and privileges go hand in hand with social background, gender, ethnic-cultural background and greatly influence the upbringing of children. Therefore, when it comes to providing training and support, we must take into account teaching targets in the areas of:

- individual development of children
- cultural-historic background and group identity
- social, political and power relations





A Holistic Approach to Training

Student, professional and trainer are very much part of this cultural and power interplay: their own social and cultural background and current social position will influence their personal professional attitude.

As a result, training which takes the DECET targets for a starting point cannot rely solely on objective or factual know-how. Subjective experience and biographies form a key element. The quadrant, shown in Scheme 2 and developed by Wilber, names and combines different kinds of knowledge and clarifies this requirement. (Wilber, 2000)

Wilber argues that since the Age of Enlightenment, knowledge has striven for acquiring measurable knowledge, that is, empirically acquired analytical knowledge. He terms this "IT" knowledge or objective knowledge, as seen in the right hand side of the quadrant.

Views on subjective knowledge have been buried by facts or simply under-estimated. However, not only should subjective knowledge be rediscovered, it should be integrated with objective knowledge to create a new level of understanding. Subjective knowledge is indicated by the term "I & We" knowledge, as seen in the left side of the quadrant.

Furthermore, Wilber distinguishes knowledge pertaining to the individual (upper portion of the quadrant) from information relating to collectivity (lower half).

If we apply this scheme to the knowledge required during training for "*working with diversity in early childhood centres*" we would place individual biographies in the I-part, using this knowledge to gain insight in one's own emotions, behaviour, attitude, motivation and openness. The only criteria for the validity of this knowledge will be the individual's integrity and honesty.

The IT-part would contain knowledge from the field of development psychology, together with theories about language, multilingual development and learning. This objective knowledge is deemed valid if it is measurable and demonstrable.



SUBJECTIVE/ INTERIOR

OBJECTIVE /EXTERIOR

<p>I</p> <p>Individual</p> <p>Interpretative Subjective awareness Self expression Sincerity, integrity Truthfulness</p>	<p>IT</p> <p>Individual</p> <p>Empirical Analytic Behavioural Representation Truth</p>
<p>WE</p> <p>Collective</p> <p>Cultural Ethics, morals Mutual understanding Rightness Justness</p>	<p>THEM</p> <p>Collective</p> <p>Social Systems theory Social systems Economic systems Functional fit</p>

The collective WE section (lower left) contains knowledge of and experience with one's own cultural background and values and standards, as well similar understanding of different groups living together in a country or anywhere in the world. This part deals with pedagogical values and standards within different styles of raising and educating. The validity of this knowledge is measured by the criterion of "justness".

The lower right hand THEM section contains objective information about collectivity: facts about social systems and the social-economic context.

Training in handling diversity clearly illustrates the weakness of objective knowledge in the right hand side of the quadrant. However depending exclusively on subjective knowledge would be one-sided. The challenge is to integrate knowledge from all four areas of the quadrant into our training. The practices outlined in this manual do just that.

Practised and proven methods

The DECET network has experience with training and tutoring in many different settings. This book provides examples of in-service training, initial training and train-the-trainers contexts. Several childcare centres have provided good 'case histories' of in-service training in Belgium and France. Every single team received assistance on the job, as well as via joint workshops or intervention. This type of assistance takes place over a longer period of time (1 or 2 years) and aims at assisting executive professionals as well as co-ordinators/managers, thereby creating the best conditions for success. Chapter 5 deals with these aspects in a more detailed way (*Making Training Possible*).



The examples focusing on initial training illustrate how traditional teaching institutes address diversity in their training programmes for young child education. These institutes have turned the need to address diversity into something concrete. Indeed, the theme of "diversity" forms an integral part of the curriculum and cuts across several subject areas at the French institute ESSSE. Great Britain's NVQ system regards handling diversity as an essential part of the quality system for childcare. In Flanders, the postgraduate course creates a good template for train-the-trainers courses, as does the "I am I and You are You" course in Holland. Both courses are devised for trainers, tutors and teachers working in the field of young childcare, who will then pass on the acquired knowledge for adaptation to their own context and target group.

This same flexible approach applies for this manual. Trainers themselves, after assessing their individual setting and needs, can select and adapt the methods and approach that will most effective. How to do so is examined in detail in Chapter 6 (*How to set up your own training on diversity*).

Getting the best from this manual

Before working with this manual, the trainer or tutor should have knowledge and experience of working and training within the early childhood area and possess fundamental skills such as supporting group processes, understanding the needs of individual students, providing feedback and the like. Trainers should be familiar with the context and the institutes where future professionals will be working and about the required qualifications for professionals.

Furthermore, a trainer should be capable of selecting the most appropriate pedagogical material for each target group they will be working with. To do this, tutors must assess the general level of knowledge and experience, and bear in mind that they will be handling a range of attitudes, images and prejudices regarding diversity.

Using this guide, together with your experience and knowledge of the training setting and target group, you should be able to tailor your own effective, relevant and valuable training for diversity in the early years programme.



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Making training possible

Organising and structuring the training context

Contextual organisation: the esse's 'respect for diversity' project

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1. Introduction

This paper addresses the issue of respect for diversity, the societal context, and the DECET network and associated training projects. Issues addressed by these projects are often linked, as are the solutions, and depend on the characteristics of the participants, the region or country they work in, and the childcare setting. Therefore, only through a methodological approach can the ESSSE 'Respect for Diversity' project can make sense locally while adhering to the objectives of DECET, a multinational network.

For any project, participants must first structure the context in which it is to be implemented. Indeed, institutional support and involvement help create favourable conditions, which are necessary to anchor and thus legitimise all activities. An organised setting also helps to clearly define objectives, particularly in regard to the workings of the institution and its partners.

2. Defining the context in historical terms.

The notion of Diversity is not the same as the idea of Difference. Where difference means what is dissimilar or stands out, Diversity describes intrinsic and qualitative differences. These distinctions need to be established at the outset.

For instance, in the French educational system, Diversity and Difference both relate to the issue of relations among people in terms of likeness. Which raises the question of identity: what makes it possible to recognise one person among all others?, as opposed to sameness: two objects, or persons, are called identical when they are altogether similar though distinct entities.

It is clear that the terms we use carry connotations and refer to a set of values and to ideologies. Only with reference to a particular context and with relation to specific perspectives can one understand, and find one's place in a project aiming to advance 'respect for diversity'.

2.1 Socio-educational work in France

In France, the introduction of compulsory schooling for all was designed to combat the privileges of a number of social groups. The disestablishment of the Church (that is, its separation from the state) then made it possible to distinguish a subject's religious tenets from his or her position as a citizen. It was in this political and historical context



that ushered in a secularised society in the 19th century. This society was based on principles of equality, but also greatly influenced by anti-clerical feeling. The reaction against the Church was clearly due to a desire for autonomy, as the Church and a number of liberal and philanthropic societies had brought about significant developments in teaching, public health, or social and educational work before the state took over.

The concept of ‘respect for diversity’ creates a breach in this egalitarian system, which leaves parents at the doors of schools, childcare centres, hospitals, and specific institutions for handicapped children, or children in difficult situations. Those parents who become most actively involved belong to the most privileged social groups, or at least to those groups closest to the models conveyed by the institutions, although it is parents themselves who symbolically express diversity.

But over the last 50 years, developments in the social sciences (psychology, sociology, socio-psychology, anthropology, and philosophy) have fundamentally altered both the prevailing patterns in the social context and the ways institutions see their own roles.

Professionals in the socio-educational and healthcare sectors were trained to deal directly with the children in day-care facilities, schools, residential childcare facilities, and healthcare institutions.

Working with children while excluding their parents, or at least dealing very cautiously with them, or keeping them at a distance, can be justified in professional terms, both for equality reasons and for reasons that have to do with hygiene or safety. Indeed sometimes it is necessary to protect the children from their immediate environment (parents and close relatives).

Vocational training has helped provide insights into the parent-child relationship. But it is only recently that techniques have been developed to work on the relationship between parents and professionals for the child’s benefit. This change is affecting in-service training rather than initial training.

As a result, professionals are rather uneasy when it comes to finding the right attitude and position with respect to parents. They are confronted with a number of concerns; privacy, the right to interfere, value judgements, or the difficulty of arguing objectively when disagreeing with parents. There is also the issue of rivalry over the child; who is in the best position to be in charge? Obviously, the answer is both, but then, how can that be made to work?

This historical backdrop makes it essential to base our approach on the notion of ‘diversity’, not along ethnic lines, but as a nexus of related issues.

Difference is taken into account only when a problem arises. Reference to the norm is implicitly the basic value in the process of socialisation, and therefore in the process of integration, or assimilation. ‘Your child has adjusted very well!’ This is like giving a good grade to both child and parents. Yet, it is a well-known fact that children are over-



adaptable, so that adjustment is no indicator of well being. It is also well known that necessity is a strong incentive to conform; a law that children abide by quite readily. In fact, difference is a threat to the proper functioning of all institutions. When difference has to do with an autonomous individual, it can be dealt with more readily; not so with young children. Perhaps we should give them enough time to evolve toward autonomy at their own pace? Which means that parents must be considered as privileged partners in a scheme that takes all differences into account.

Immigrant families, as well as individuals, demonstrate, either deliberately or out of sheer necessity (their 'survival' is at stake), a high degree of adaptability to their new context. Whatever obstacles exist are attributed to 'culture shock'; a form of destabilisation resulting from people's inability to comprehend difference when they encounter it in everyday events, reactions, and behaviours that are steeped in different value systems. This is where the issues of cultural hierarchies, the difficulties stemming from inability to relate to difference, come to the fore. Relating to difference is destabilising both for the individual and the group, as it calls for a conception of our relationship with the world that is relative, and no longer absolute.

3. From early childhood care to caring for diversity

This denial of difference is at work within educational institutions as well as among immigrant families? The denial operates as long as it is seen as useful, and there are no hitches or obstacles. It may be due to the institutions' desire for egalitarianism, or to the immigrant families' determination to conform and gain positive recognition. But this is not without consequences for the harmonious development of children, who experience this tension between the need to adapt and the need to be an individual and who live and learn in contexts which do not acknowledge the positive value of difference and its role in the process of socialising and developing identity.

Yet difference generates changes, creativity, and cultural development. Through the clash of norms, values and attitudes and the desire to reconcile, new practices and ideas are generated. Indeed as new approaches are adopted successfully, we learn to acknowledge what 'difference' can contribute to our search for solutions.

Whenever we recall instances of violence that can result when people assert their identity, difference is seen as a threat. In his book, *Murderous Identities* (1998), Amin Maalouf highlights the issue and suggests we work on the concept of 'multi-allegiance'. This calls for a position in which we no longer exclude but include several levels of experience together: *'What makes me who I am, and not someone else, is the fact that I stand on the edge; that is, in-between two countries, two or three languages, and several cultural traditions. And this is my identity.'*

Hence the necessity for us to speak of diversity rather than difference; from diversity, one can infer multiplicity, whereas difference rather implies duality; us and them, one or the other.



To define the respective roles of families and child-care institutions, Philippe Caillé (in his book, *Once Upon a Time—From Family Drama to Systemic Tale*, suggests a systemic distinction between founding models and operational models. Family allegiances must come to terms with the need to integrate within a community, so that an individual can experience inclusion into a social group while retaining and acknowledging his or her own rooted identity.

Meanwhile, by their very nature, the services offered in the social context (day-care centres, schools, leisure centres) have an operational function: they promote integration into the community through the help they offer in social terms. The child who is cared for in an early childhood facility thus comes to experience a twofold allegiance: to family and to the childcare structure. The latter has a duty as a public service: taking difference into account, respecting and establishing structures and practices that promote diversity, so that everyone is recognised and acknowledged through their distinctive features.

In a multicultural environment, and within the context of widespread social mobility, respect for diversity is an egalitarian proposal. Cultural adjustment is a slow process, which comes about only providing all conditions conducive to it are present. Depending on the conditions, culture shock can result in violence or/and cultural elaboration and structuring. These will take place precisely at the neutral point where differences can find a way of being met, expressed and negotiated.

In *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*, René Girard sees cultural elaboration (which structures the workings of differentiation) as a way to regulate the violence stemming from mimetic rivalry and conflict, the basis for which is an exacerbated reaction to similitude. In any activity what is at stake is finding the means to mediate violence, and bring about conditions favourable to cultural transformation.

This would imply finding a meeting-point or compromise which can accommodate the needs and values of both sets of individuals, of communities and institutions, of the private and public sectors, of secular values and religious allegiances. Such a transformation would owe something to each party, while producing, in a specific context, new alternatives as the offsprings of diversity.

4. Addressing the issue 'Respect for Diversity'

4.1 Levels of reflection and action

There are three elements when training personnel to respect diversity: the training institution itself, the children and their families, and the training team.

A. The training institution - Working on 'respect for diversity' implies the active participation of all parties concerned. However, health-care and socio-educational bodies must develop specific skills to fulfil their mission as public servants.



B. The relationship with children and parents - This has become a burning issue, but new regulations helped make some progress. Families are increasingly starting to regard all early childhood care facilities as places where educational guidelines are provided. For this reason, demand for these facilities is increasing. But accommodating diversity does not boil down to merely diversifying responses to the individual needs of the families. It is essential for professionals to work with parents, keeping in mind the needs of families and their situation, the structure of the institution and project goals. Working with parents also involves three levels:

1. Parents should progressively take an increasing role in the life of the institution, both individually and as a group. Because parents are their children's primary educators, this must be taken into account for the sake of continuity in the child's socialisation. Secondly, as users of the institution, parents have rights when it comes to monitoring the quality of the service they are offered; the institution must function democratically.
2. Progress must be made regarding the co-operation between parents and professionals. 'Parental day-care centres' (in the wake of experiments conducted in 1968) have proven to be successful, and they might be used as a model. This mode of participation gives parents a structural role in conceiving and managing.
3. The parental function within the family must be supported. This is particularly important with parents in a difficult situation, either for economic reasons, or because they live in a new environment, one that is at odds with their own cultural background (new immigrants for example). Or difficulties may be due to a change in the structure of the family (when the parents live apart), or to the isolation of one or both parents. Of course, such an approach also concerns children who are handicapped and need support. What matters is early preventive action with families who find themselves in a precarious situation, together with an approach that links the social and educational aspects of the project (as recommended in decree n° 2000-762).

There are several types of early childhood facilities which can meet these parental involvement objectives and there are also progressive changes in the position of parents as users of the facility.

Regarding parental involvement, inconsistencies can be pinpointed at several levels in the field of childcare. As noted in diagnostic work educational continuity from parents to childcare structure is often missing or faulty. There are also huge gaps between the respective cultures of professionals in health and in education, while partners involved in the protection of early childhood in the same district find it hard to co-operate.

Indeed, in those childcare facilities promoting respect for diversity, the necessary balance can easily be upset, either by extreme situations which the centre cannot cope with, or by outside events. This can cause people to over-react when it comes to sticking to their cultural identity with the result that those who are different may be excluded.



Beyond the question of how to manage facilities to develop respect for diversity, we must take into consideration the effects of the environment on the structure in a given district. Indeed, a number of problems can be worked out only if activities in any given district are coherent, inspired and supported by a policy of reciprocal services and partnership between all concerned institutions.

If one is to ensure social diversity within the structures, and an adequate response to wide ranging needs, this may only be possible through means which are beyond the scope of an individual institution. For instance setting up by the local authorities a service to receive all family requests, which can then be referred to the appropriate organisation. Ensuring services offered in any given district are truly complementary is only possible through encouraging partnership work and developing formal structures to co-ordinate early childhood care.

5. The childcare team

The make-up of the childcare team says a lot about diversity. A team can encompass great variety in terms of qualifications, social conditions, and socio-cultural backgrounds, not to mention gender. Mixed recruiting should be encouraged, the differing ways individual members understand and react to any situation exemplify 'multi-allegiance' and makes it possible to experience complexity, its effects and its value, literally from within.

6. Working objectives for a training centre

Both initial and in-service training are vital to build the skills necessary to work on 'respect for diversity' in the following areas:

- welcoming new families; contact on their daily arrival and departure
- socialising all children while taking into account their distinctive characteristics
- welcoming and socialising children who are handicapped
- working as a multi-disciplinary team
- working with both parents
- working on a project basis, in particular projects that focus on articulating diversity and socialisation in an early childhood care centre
- developing partnerships

Training must enable students to employ the theoretical tools that will best help them understand the situations, assess their own position as professionals, create the conditions for regular contact, and analyse their own behaviour.

7. The training process

7.1 Defining the general objective

The aim is to tackle the issue of the child's socialisation through an approach that, starting from the issue of context, will locate differences, together with the obstacles



and exchanges that follow, to make room for and help along the cultural transformation and evolution of all parties concerned.

The ultimate goal is to develop training procedures in early childhood care for professionals and students, with a view to making all activities more relevant to a true respect for diversity.

This encompasses four key concepts:

- diversity, rather than difference, will be taken into account
- equal opportunity, rather than egalitarianism, will be the aim
- socialisation will be implemented on the basis of diversity
- diversity will be seen in its different forms, rather than in merely cultural terms.

7.2 Research methodologies employed

- a) Theoretical research: will need specifying through discussion with the various partners; theoretical input will depend on the context and the partners, as well as on a preliminary identification of the main lines of action.
- b) Methodological and thematic bibliography as listed at the end of this article.

7.3 Training steps

The programme employs a range of teaching procedures; some essential and some which can be adjusted to specific needs.

A. The essential stages are as follows:

- in-depth exploration of the issue 'Respect for Diversity'
- diagnosis within specific contexts, how does the question of diversity arise?
- identifying the problems to be delved into, by choice or by priorities
- assessing the results of the training process

B. Stages which can be adapted:

- methodological follow-up work with a group (this may include practice analysis for instance, or looking for new ways to improve the procedures)
- exercises of the photo-language type, or others developed within the DECET network or by the team of trainers
- input of further theoretical knowledge, as required through professional enquiries (anthropology, systemic approaches, legal studies, collaboration with parents, awareness of handicaps), using materials such as videos, CD-Roms, etc.
- presenting and discussing other experiments
- development of innovative experiments by the trainers, to be implemented within their professional environment.

7.4 The role of the trainer

Trainers must engage in an action-and-research process ; developing both initial and in-service training makes it a necessity. This in turn implies external personal enrichment on a regular basis. Conducting the project requires availing oneself of methodological tools in the field of project-steering and further input from seminars in such fields as sociology, anthropology, and social studies.



The training procedures will be scrupulously finalised in a written document; this will help capitalise on the findings, in terms of project-steering. The trainers will then be in a better position to enhance the project, whether initial or in-service training.

Documenting the various aspects and levels of the project is a necessity; this will take the form of bibliographical work for students, partners and trainers.



The trainers' role also involves preparing educational and theoretical documents, in teamwork with the network of partners. This can be done within the framework of reviews and professional institutions interested in similar issues. Collaboration with research groups and organisations must be sought after and made to work on a regular basis, in such fields as social work, the educational sciences, or within the more specific branches thereof.



Finally, trainers must integrate the 'Respect for Diversity' project into the general picture, enhancing it in theoretical and practical terms, with the support of partners from both national and transnational networks.

8. Identifying resistance and solving conflicts



It is vital to take into account the resistance and the conflicts that might put the Diversity project at risk. If a project involves examining and changing current practices, participants must definitely tackle resistance to change in its many forms. Training looks at resistance on the part of the students and resistance on the part of the trainers themselves.

Students must:

- Work in stages, with debates and readjustments at every stage. It is vital to stress the importance of a progressive approach.
- Base work on experience, as it is through practice that students live, observe, and can understand their own contradictions. In this field, personal and professional behaviours are at stake, as one cannot be separated from the other
- In the first stage, work in small groups, as peer-support is what fuels changes
- Make diverse contributions to elicit a range of questions and reactions to concrete situations, as well as observation, understanding, and knowledge.

Trainers must:

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- Be involved in the project, either at the level of its conception, or as members of the team that puts it into effect.
 - Implement the project through a series of readjustments; taking into account students' reactions and the position and views of the trainers. After each session, trainers should collectively assess the group's work with respect to the project objectives.

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- Report on progress to trainers not directly involved so that all areas of the training curriculum may benefit, for instance other training units, student practice, papers and documents, Practice Analysis groups



9. Example of contextual organisation for the Respect for Diversity project.



In this illustration, the strategies adopted to set up training have been defined in a French context. Even though partnerships may be different elsewhere, the procedures are the same. It is essential to take into account both the political level and the technical level (educational and administrative dimensions), together with national and transnational networks.

9.1 Mobilizing political and institutional participation

This is done through:

- Synthesising the overall planning of the project in a written document
- Using this document to introduce the project to the several authorities and partners
- Holding formal meetings initially, with follow-up meetings to fine-tune and assess progress and future plans.

9.2 Internal partnerships at ESSSE:

To establish this project the training team made its proposal to the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, a General Meeting of the association, the team of directors, and the team in charge of the childhood socio-educational sector. The training project was given a firm basis at all ESSSE levels, and the objectives were adjusted to fit together seamlessly.

Ongoing communication included:

- Regular briefing with Executives on the committee and directors on the board
- Introduction of the project to the team of directors with regular follow-up meetings
- Regular meetings with the childhood socio-educational team at every stage during project set-up.



9.3 Building the team

A team of three interested ESSSE trainers was set up. Their work consisted of sharing information about all aspects of the project, thereby ensuring active participation by all parties, contributing appropriate skills where appropriate. All ESSSE trainers were regularly updated on the project evolution.



The students in initial training were also kept informed about training activities and the DECET partnership. . Partnerships with other training centres for EJE (i.e. centres for the training of infant-and-young-children educators) are being sought for and progressively set up.



9.4 In-service training and forming partnerships

Initial and in-service training must be closely interrelated, given that vocational training for personnel who specialize in educational tasks with children is conducted on an in-work training basis. This makes it possible to circulate information and adjust training at both levels.

The ESSSE team is in charge of in-service training, but external partners are taken into consideration. For instance, getting directly in touch with township services is a way to open preliminary discussions with decision makers. If a proposal gets the go-ahead, trainers can join forces with decision-makers. This is essential for establishing in-service training within a network of childcare facilities.

9.5 Setting up a resource centre on the institution's premises :

To carry out the documentary work, a specific resource unit was set up within the general documentary centre of ESSSE. It can be found on the following websites : www.decet.org and www.essse-formations.com

10. External partnerships

At a national level ESSSE

- takes part in the meetings of an interregional network, Le Furet, and contributes written reports and documents
- contributes reports and documents on the work done in the field of EJE initial training, within the framework of AFORTS (an association of French organizations dealing with training and research in social work)
- works in co-operation with the French Ministry for Social Affairs, and its inter-ministerial Delegation for Family Affairs (instances of this co-operation : the Conference on Family Problems, or implementing the 2000-762 decree)

At a transnational level:

- Partnership with the DECET network. Our team of trainers is represented at the formal meetings of the network, and is involved in the work of the research group on training methods. This, together with bilateral exchange visits, and communication via the Internet, constitutes an invaluable help when it comes to sharing thoughts, swapping experiments, producing written papers, and putting activities into practice. To facilitate exchanges with transnational partners, those managing the project were given a special course in English. In many respects, the DECET network has opened up the world for ESSSE.

We also share resources with DECET partners in the context of a 'Training the Trainers' scheme set up at ESSSE. For instance, one of the yearly sessions organised for the group managing our 'Respect for Diversity' project was conducted by an external partner from VBJK, also a member of the DECET network.

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- Meetings with the BVL Foundation. Preliminary contacts at BVL(spell out?) headquarters proved central to our understanding of how the Foundation works, and to our placing this project within a wider scheme. Follow-up visits by Foundation directors has secured direct links between BVL representatives and the ESSSE.

10.1 Joint partnership with the Technical Council

The Technical Council for the Training of Personnel in Early Childhood Care works on a partnership basis and is representative of all external and internal parties involved in the training project. It includes :

- representatives of ESSSE's managing directors, its board of directors and executive committee, delegates from the EJE students, and representatives of the trainers
- representatives of authorities overseeing training, and of bodies implementing decisions in early childhood care : DRASS (in charge of health and social affairs at the regional level), PMI (Infant and Mother Protection Service for the Rhône department), CAF (in charge of family allowances for Lyon and Villefranche)
- resource associations in the sector: CREFE (a resource centre dealing with children, families and schools in the Rhône and Loire departments), APER (a workshop on infant and child care in the Rhône department), FNEJE (the National Federation of Educators in charge of Young Children), MANEJE (ESSSE alumni association)
- public services or associations dealing with young children : co-ordinators in childhood care from the Lyon, Vaux-en-Velin, Villeurbanne and Grenoble townhalls, the federations of Welfare centres, and parental daycare centres (ACEPP), together with representatives of other services dealing with children's health, or socio-educational objectives

In the course of meetings, Diversity training was viewed in a favourable light, giving rising to interesting discussions on the following points:

In a country like France, where the border between the public and private spheres has been clearly defined, where state responsibility and individual freedom are separate entities, doesn't a project aiming to work on diversity endanger these notions, and thus threaten each individual's private life with the spectre of social control ?

How can one reconcile an egalitarian system with providing service to the public, and equal opportunities for all ?

How should one approach diversity that comes from disability without considering such diversity as a handicap, and vice versa?

Are all forms of diversity to be respected, and what are the systems of values that underpin them?



10.3 Working within new regulations

The 1993 reform of the Diploma in Early Childhood Care, together with the August 1st 2000 decree which sets up regulations for early childhood facilities, open up new perspectives. These changes bring to the forefront the social scope of the professionals' activities and the institutions' projects: co-operating with parents, opening the facilities to all children, setting up preventive schemes, working with all partners in a given district, keeping in mind the social objectives of the facilities. Our 'Respect for Diversity' project offers real potential to help resolve social issues through initial and in-service training.

Respect for diversity requires consideration of the bigger picture, the local community rather than just what childcare facilities can offer. This raises the issue of the availability of early years facilities to the public as a whole, but ensure we work with all bodies concerned with infants and young children in a given district.

10.4 Organising partnership work with outside bodies and institutions

Beyond the kinds of partnerships referred to above, working out the project brings ESSSE into formal contact with other sections of society. Some make unexpected offers, which can link up with if they complement the project.

11. Conclusion

One of the most positive outcomes of this new project is that ESSSE was eager to be involved at every level. Meanwhile, meetings with our several partners are progressively extending the contributions of a wide range of interested parties.

This first phase, aimed at organising and structuring the training context, is essentially one of information and exchange at many levels. This is vital to help foster a collective involvement, and make clear everyone's position and role in our 'Respect for Diversity' project - fundamental for successful implementation.

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Trainer-accompanied long-term in-service training Action-research-training

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Anne Marie Thirion, Françoise Damiean, University of Liège, Belgium

1. Professional objectives on diversity and equality

1.1 DECET Mission Statement and goals

The day-care centres define their own goals, therefore all the objectives of the DECET mission statement are addressed in different ways. Most often, however, the focus is on four key areas.

Every individual:

- experiences a sense of belonging
- has all aspects of his/her identity confirmed so he/she can learn from others across cultural and other boundaries
- can participate as an active citizen

In addition, there is also a strong focus on structural discrimination, since the programme addresses the accessibility of day-care centres. In Brussels for instance, action research was combined with quantitative research on inclusion/exclusion.

1.2 Institutional goals referring to diversity

The Universities of Ghent and Liège are the two universities in Belgium that are both public and pluralist, one based in the Dutch-speaking community, the other in the French-speaking community.

At Liege, the research, led by the Unit of General Pedagogy and pre-school education (ULg), occurs within the wider context of the emergence of early childhood policies in Europe and in the French community. The work of the Training and Resource Centre for Childcare (VBJK) is embedded in the Department of Social Welfare Studies at the University of Ghent.

The two universities have combined resources to develop action-research projects that contribute directly to the promotion of the quality of care by:

- elaboration of psycho-pedagogical 'frames of reference' (referentials),
- implementation of training systems and approaches for new professional competencies, the main one being establishing and regulating good educative practices through trainer-accompanied in-service training.

1.3 Specific goals of professional training

More stringent requirements for quality in childcare, increasingly promoted in Europe on the basis of new legislation, have transformed the early childhood professions. The goal is that these new roads towards professionalisation will contribute to the effective quality of childcare.

This quality concept is put into practice every day by the concrete functioning of the childcare centres and by the participation of all those, children and adults, involved in



the educational process. These quality aims work hand in hand with respect for diversity and equitable access to childcare services.

By providing long-term in-service training for childcare professionals, the action-research approach initiates this dynamic of co-construction and co-evaluation of quality and opens it up to democratic debate. In doing so, this project also contribute to the implementation of the Quality Code of the French community, in particular, to article 3, in favour of non-discrimination¹. At the same time, this project helps provide a structural place for diversity and equity to the Flemish community's Quality Act of 2001.

2. Competencies - Knowledge, skills and attitudes

The objectives address three different areas:

a) Educational practices within the participating day-care centres

Stimulate professional practices respecting diversity by:

- including the ethos of "respect for diversity" in all educational practices
- implementing a pedagogy of diversity adapted to the context of their work and their own cultural and professional history.
- involving parents in the development of the curriculum
- taking a range of opinions on education into account

b) Accessibility of participating day-care centres

Facilitate access to the participating day-care centre for socially excluded groups (i.e. ethnic minority groups, disadvantaged families, refugees, etc)

c) Dissemination

Raise awareness of these issues among other day-care centres in the areas concerned and among local and regional policy makers.

Long term objectives:

- Participants learn how to organise change in their practice, whether they are childcare workers, co-ordinators, trainers, etc.
- childcare professionals learn how to collaborate as part of a team: how to formulate and work towards common objectives and evaluate the progress.
- Trainers and their supervisors gain insight into training dynamics, training methodologies and their impact on professionals

3. Context

This programme is the result of close co-operation between the University of Liège and VBJK-University of Ghent. The University of Liège has long been involved in a trans-national project on developing methodology in the field of action-research-training in early childhood care. This experience was combined with the experience of VBJK-University of Ghent in the field of diversity training in early childhood education.

¹ "Le milieu d'accueil évite toute forme de comportement discriminatoire basé sur le sexe, la race ou l'origine socioculturelle à l'encontre des enfants, des personnes qui les confient et des encadrants" (art. 3)



3.1 Establishing the right systems

The elements of a "system" (partners, structure, timetable) must be adjusted to the constraints and the resources of each context. The training "setting" encompasses both the structuring of the framework and the social dynamic resulting from the interaction of participants. This social dynamic links everyone involved in a specific project through the diversity of their professional identities and their institutional membership.

3.2 Brussels, Antwerp and Liège experiences

This programme has been implemented in three regions of Belgium:

- Brussels - commissioned by the Vlaams Gemeenschaps Commissie, a governmental organisation providing guidance and training for, among others, Dutch-speaking day-care centres in the Brussels area. There are six centres actively participating in the project. The training is done by an instructor from VBJK and the supervisor is also a VBJK staff member.
- Antwerp - Commissioned by the city of Antwerp for their municipal day-care centres. There are 6 groups in 5 centres, involving 20 educators and 7 managers. These centres provide for approximately 150 children. Training is provided by the VCOK training centre, with supervision also through VBJK.
- Liège - A joint undertaking between the Department of Educational Sciences of the ULg and the city of Liège, for day-care centres of the Department of Public Education. Training and supervision is done by staff members of the University, in close collaboration with the city's crèche co-ordinator. The programme involves 9 settings, 80 childcare professionals and approximately 200 children.

3.3 Profile of the participants

In Liège and Antwerp, trainers work within an established network of crèches. In Brussels, the programme brings together crèches from various backgrounds, who have not previously worked together.

Staff (Equipe de terrain)

The entire staff takes part, including "management (director – nurse or social nurse, responsables) educators and childcare workers (puéricultrices, auxiliaires, éducateurs). All activities are discussed with the management as well as with the team of educators, as a group (Liège), or separately (Brussels and Antwerp). Accessibility issues are discussed primarily with management.

Stakeholders (Comité de pilotage)

Brussels: A steering group is organised with the local and regional stakeholders (policy makers, financial backers, representatives from target groups, social workers, etc) to follow up the project and discuss policy on accessibility.

Trainer (Encadrant)

A professional from a training centre is appointed to the day-care centre. He/she organises and supports meetings for the team and for managers.

Supervisor (Formateur)

Supervises trainers in meetings where the action-research-training can be assessed and continually adapted to the context. He/she also organises the stakeholders meetings.



3.4 Structure of the action-research-training

There are several facets to the training, involving adults as well as children, long term planning as well as day to day concerns, but all revolve around communication. In each setting the team are invited to raise questions and issues about daily practice. Chosen by the entire team, these questions are relevant and significant to the team's history and can be individual to each setting.

Work with day care or crèche staff is based upon six different types of meetings:

Intra-team meetings. Held at regular intervals with all staff members of a day-care centre, or only with the participating unit (or units) and management, usually accompanied by a trainer. In these meetings, common goals are discussed, educational practices analysed and evaluations made. The analyses and evaluations deal with the evolution of the project within the centre. Meeting frequency depends on the "full staff meeting" culture of the centre, but usually are convened every 3 to 6 weeks. Regular monthly meetings are the objective.

Inter-team meetings. Bringing together delegations of the participating teams (one childcare professional representing each establishment) together with all directors and trainers, to exchange practices and reflect on each other's experiences. The frequency of these meetings is negotiated with the teams; but tend to vary from monthly to bi-monthly.

The added value of this process lies in the building of a network of childcare centres. In Liège, although the aim was to gather everyone together, sheer numbers dictated working in two groups of 4 or 5 establishments each. In this way, each team has a better opportunity for its story to be clearly communicated and analysed more effectively. In Brussels and Antwerp one supervisory group with all the participating centres was created.

Management meetings. Monthly meetings of managers (in some cases, with a local coordinator) and trainers to discuss the range of approaches (how managers support staff, implement accessibility policy, etc)

Supervision meetings. In Antwerp and Ghent, these consist of bi-weekly consultation between the trainers and the supervisor (VBJK). In Liège, supervisors also conduct bi-weekly trainers meetings and monthly meetings with participating students² (in psychology or educational sciences).

Stakeholder meetings. Four to five times a year, the stakeholders meet VBJK. In Liège, stakeholder contacts are determined on an as-needs basis and usually consist of an invitation to the plenary events, as well as written communications.

² The university students participate at all levels, it is part of their practical training as future educational specialists or psychologists.

Plenary meetings: At the end of each year, a study day gathers all personnel from all settings, including decision-makers. In Liège, the teams have asked to hold the study day every other year, with presentations by resource persons followed by small group workshops. In the workshops it is the childcare workers themselves who contribute



and present their projects and their evaluations. The results are discussed by all and re-evaluated. Generally, new questions and issues arise, new courses of action are chosen and plans are formulated. In Brussels and Antwerp during such seminars, participating teams share their experiences with a larger group of day-care centre personnel and regional decision-makers.

3.5 Training timetable

Phase one: *intake* (month 1-2)

All day-care centres in the area concerned are invited to participate in the project. Both staff and management are informed about the programme, its advantages and the requirements (especially concerning investment in the project). Participation is voluntary.

Phase two: *short training* (month 3)

All participants have one (staff) or two (management) days of training

Phase three: *setting goals* (month 3-5)

Each team sets clear goals that:

- Are linked with the mission statement of DECET
- Are relevant for their context
- Can be achieved within a reasonable time span
- All members of the team can agree with

Phase four: *activity* (month 4 – 23)

By putting training into practice, the team can discover why real life situations can differ from the desired hypothesised outcome (goal) and gain insights into how to effect change. Practices designed to bring about change can then be implemented. These are continuously evaluated and can give rise to new hypotheses, teaching techniques and even objectives.).

Phase five: *final evaluation* (month 22-23)

The teams evaluate activities and changes in practice according to the goals they had created. How well have they succeeded in meeting objectives? What still needs to be done, or could be improved upon?

Phase six: *Dissemination. Sharing of findings and experiences via the Plenary Session* (month 24)

4 The process

Why this approach?

This approach is based upon the experience gained through the European Project - professional training of early years' co-ordinators designed to serve as "accompaniment" to childcare centres. The professional competencies required are developed through innovative training systems creating an effective interface between the staff (early years' professionals and directors), co-ordinators, trainers and politico-administrative decision makers - the "stakeholders".

These training systems encourage the development of networks among projects, simultaneously reinforcing the capacity of each institution to innovate and share new insights, thereby multiplying the benefits.



This strategy for change, by giving childcare professionals new competencies in innovative systems and by opening up new networks, aims at a "durable professional development" to promote quality and raise standards.

The ultimate aim is that this training and networking process, carried out over the long term, will lead to a greater use of resources and training practices specifically addressing non-discrimination. Professional practices will adapt, as professionals question their 'good norms' and consequently judgements held about children, parents and other professionals, redefining their attitudes and approaches within the context of the DECET mission statement.

No specific area of discrimination ("ism") is, however, addressed here, though trainers keep all "isms" in mind. Particular prejudices at work in a given situation are treated as they occur. Usually any possible biases will come to light during the more reflective analysis phase. Practices proven to be effective in minimising a particular bias can then be explored, thus improving the quality of childcare both generally and in specific situations. The outcome is to provide care equitable and respectful of each child and his/her family.

Collective analysis of the teaching practices implemented with children and adults lies at the heart of the process and is both formative and evaluative. In-depth group evaluation regulates practices and reorients the development of local projects.

For evaluation to be effective, participants must keep a record of the reflections and assessments revealed through the different types of meetings. Paper board, video recording, action plan, schematisation, modelling, collective writings, are all useful. These collected observations allow participants to review their shared benchmarks and to assess the merits of professional practices.

Documentation contributes to a better understanding and appreciation of practices for all participants concerned. Only those involved can provide these records with meaning and open debate about the issues they raise. This use of documentation and evaluation ties in with the social and dynamic approach of effective quality, as well as with a socio-constructivist pedagogical action model.

It is necessary that evaluation takes into account the issues of accessibility and diversity which are present in everyday situations such as relationships, interactions and transactions between childcare structures and families



5 Activities

5.1 Trainers' activities and attitudes

The trainer's role evolves throughout the various phases of the project.

- During intake, trainers are very concerned with how the decision to participate was reached. Were staff involved in the decision? What is the view of management think? This is a phase of careful negotiations with each partner, concerning his or her expectations, commitment and the time he or she will be able to invest.
- During training, the trainer must provide an insight into all aspects of the mission statement to facilitate the discussion teams will have as they establish their own priorities.
- During the crucial phase of setting objectives, the trainer sees to it that the goals are firmly established and achievable. Is there enough backing for targets to be met? Can an agreement be obtained? How is it linked to the common goals in the mission statement? Participants do not interfere with the choices that are made.
- During the activity phase, when training is put into practice, the trainer tries to be as supportive as possible, while interfering more than absolutely necessary. It is his or her role to ask the right questions rather than to give the right answers. The trainer also makes sure that practices are linked to the set targets.
- The trainer also works to build relationships between different participating teams and helps them benefit from each other's experiences.
- The trainer also focuses on the process and discusses with the participants how change occurs and why particular activities succeed.

5.2. Examples of activities undertaken

The project is based around two key areas of focus.

1. The first deals with issues of accessibility.
Who are the children accepted at the centre?
Who are the families served?
Who does not have access to childcare?

This concern is addressed through two levels of action:

- Equitable management of accessibility of childcare, at the level of local policies (VBJK enquiry on structural discrimination)
 - Practice analysis: becoming aware of the discriminating aspects when deciding whether to register a child and possible discriminating effects in the manner families are contacted for the first interview with the child and parents.
2. The second focus: How is the diversity dimension dealt with on a daily basis in educational practices?

When discussing and choosing specific issues participants wish to tackle in this project, whatever the topic, respect for diversity always arises. For example:

- One team may notice that many parents (and especially those from ethnic minorities) drop their children at the gate. They then develop a project to encourage and make it easier for parents to stay and have the opportunity to talk about their children.

- One team becomes aware that play materials do not represent each child's reference groups and decides to include the various family cultures in decorations, books, dress-up clothes etc.
- One team wishes to include family cultures in the daily menu.
- One team opts to work on multilingualism respecting the family languages, while facilitating learning of the dominant language.
- One team had already been working on re-examining 'strengthening relationships with families'. This project offered the missing piece in their process. With each new group of babies, they have started developing new tools and new ways of mutual communication with the families.
- One team chose to work on socialisation between children (aggressive behaviour, conflicts, etc), developing methods to help children interact with each other with respect.

6 Evaluation

The accompaniment approach, whereby trainers observe participants at work on their projects, has regulation and evaluation built-in. The long-term 'action-research training' experiences highlight changes in the context and conditions of the evaluative activity as an educational process and a social practice.

In practice, each team reviews its project with a trainer, reviewing the progress of the project and studying all reports used in developing the practices. On the basis of these documents, and the analysis done in the inter-team meetings, a comprehensive report of the experimental activities can be drawn up, showing how the project has promoted diversity and enhanced accessibility.

Because the project is on-going and long-term, it is too early to talk in terms of "results". Indeed, the process cannot simply rely on methods and procedures which have been well codified in other contexts, but must innovate.

What's more, accessibility and diversity issues can upset established norms and values, introducing a new concept of knowledge that brings activity and subjectivity, shared social meanings and singular experiences face to face. In this new context, It is, then, all the more important that the training system and the accompaniment approach allow for a "co-evaluation" involving a third party who can facilitate analysis, allow participants to achieve an objective distance and bring together all those involved and their differing experiences.

This approach, taking into consideration the contradictions, the plurality of interpretations and values, invites participants to go beyond entrenched judgements and defence mechanisms.

Co-evaluation, distancing, and team participation are vital requirements from both a teaching and ethical point of view. Such an approach assures an effective evaluation which promotes progress ("évaluation majorante") for participants at all levels.

Long term in-service training – Training – action – research

Emanuelle Murcier, Michelle Clausier, ACEPP, France

1. Professional objectives on diversity and equity

1.1 DECET mission statement and goals

ACEPP's action-research-training programme develops in-service training projects for childcare centres to promote respect for diversity with specific emphasis on:

- recognising the place of each individual: parent, child, professional (objectives 1 and 2),
- developing intercultural exchanges (objective 3)
- acting together against discrimination both as citizens and at the institutional level (objectives 4, 5, 6)

1.2 ACEPP - institutional goals referring to diversity

- to help all the childcare centres within the network (not only those located in the underprivileged districts) to work on their accessibility,
- to base respect for diversity work on parental involvement. For ACEPP, validating and respecting each child's identity, taking into account the family culture
- to support exchanges between parents and professionals and to enable them to build a common educational approach based on the diversity of their own educational experiences.
- to allow professionals to expand their own perspective; to give meaning to the parents' practices and values so that solutions can be negotiated which consider the values of both the parent and the professional.

1.3 Specific goals in this training example

- To support all childcare centres to help them evolve in their practices regarding accessibility and respect for diversity.
- To improve the quality of childcare.

2. Competencies - Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes

- To allow parents and professionals to examine the operation of the childcare centre with regard to diversity and the involvement of parents.
- To work on representations, prejudices and attitudes of the professionals and the parents: to teach them how to face cultural shocks and how to acquire attitudes of openness towards the Other, 'the one who is different'.
- To allow parents and professionals, by being actors of change, to make practices and the operation of the childcare centre evolve tangibly. To make themselves more respectful of diversity by recognising differing expectations, by valuing the place of



each individual and by dealing with the practical matters of parents' participation, fee, regulations, etc.

- To work with institutional partners on early childhood local policies to make the childcare centres accessible (fee, training possibilities, regulations, etc.).

3. Context

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- Long-term action: from 18 months to 2 years, to allow changes to occur and to have time to evaluate them.
 - Commitment of the childcare centre as a whole is essential.
 - Participation of the parents, professionals and institutional partners is necessary.
 - Trainers must formalise an ethical framework for their mentoring role, thereby creating a climate of trust. For these reasons, training is constructed transparently. The objectives and training methods are negotiated with the participants) and results, resulting in a written contract which can be re-worked at the request of the childcare centre.

4. The process



The project is based on three types of inter-connected interventions:

4.1 *Trainer mentoring at childcare centres.*

The trainer generally attends a childcare centre for 6 half days, providing ample opportunities for a significant number of parents and professionals to get involved.

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- In the first meetings, the trainer and the childcare team conduct an audit of the situation; reviewing the people involved in the project, types of families served, the history of the centre, its operation, relations between parents and professionals. The expectations of all parties regarding the childcare centre are then explored.
 - The group then agrees on specific topics it wishes to work on and carry out experiments (for example: to re-examine and modify the centres' regulations, to meet the families who do not attend the childcare centre).
 - These experiments are evaluated as they are carried out. Based on the findings, new experiments are created.
 - In-service training also aims at re-working the contents of the theme training sessions by adapting them to the issues of the centre.

4.2 *Theme-training sessions*



These take place every month or two, bringing together approximately ten childcare centres (one parent and one professional from each centre) and discussing the following:

- Evolution of the missions of the childcare centres (from hygiene to the educational and social aspects).
- Intercultural communication between parents and professionals: respect for the diversity of the educational values of the families.
- Accommodation of immigrant families and families in great difficulty

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- Creation of methods and tools so that all the parents and children find their place in the childcare centre and feel respected.
 - Role of the childcare centre in the neighbourhood and the environment (partnership.)



To help participants communicate what they learned from the session to parents and professionals, they must write down, at the end of each training:

- what they retained from the training,
- what they wish to transmit to their centre,
- how they will transmit it.

4.3 Meetings of parents - partners - professionals



Two or three times a year parents and the professionals present to the institutional partners ideas developed during the theme-training sessions as well as the difficult questions relating to policies (finances, regulation, etc.). They then work to build solutions together. This joint co-operation is very stimulating because it forces each party to enter into the other's culture, to understand his position; to go beyond the differences and to build policies together which are based on diversity. It is during these meetings that objectives 5 and 6 of DECET are addressed.

5. Activities

5.1 The activity module on intercultural communication.



A central facet because it allows participants to become aware that educational values are relative and thus overcome the incomprehension related to the diversity of the values and the practices.



The group is invited to focus on examples of culture shock (incomprehension leading to reactions of rejection or withdrawal) they have experienced day to day in the childcare centre. These shocks are analysed together while working on the framework of references of the person who is shocked and by building hypotheses on the framework of references of the other person and on the meaning of his attitude. The group then explores attitudes which enable them to override the shock and take each other's values into account (Chapter 2)

This module ensures participants integrate the idea that respect for diversity starts by knowing themselves, their culture, their prejudices and their fear of those who are different and who threaten to destabilise established values or professional frameworks. This realisation considerably modifies the attitude of people, in particular of professionals, and often generates an active process and openness for the remainder of the training.

5.2 Trainer mentoring in the childcare centres

- As already described, the initial meeting between trainers and professionals in a childcare centre allows trainers to review the situation, all parties involved and particular issues and aims. In essence, conduct an 'audit'.

- 
- During the second meeting, the trainer aims to engage with two distinct groups: parents and professionals. As parents, what do you expect from professionals, and vice versa? This exercise generally elicits expressions of satisfaction from both sides and can make misunderstandings, such as for example, professionals imagining that the parents are dissatisfied with them, disappear.



The trainer then carries out an exercise called "inventing the space of the possible". Each group is invited to imagine what the ideal childcare centre would be for him: how the children would play, how the parents would be welcomed, how they would be involved, which families would be accommodated. This exercise allows parents and professionals to go beyond the constraints, to become aware of the existence of various expectations, but also of the possibility to build an operation which allows all these expectations to coexist.



This sharing between parents and professionals is very rewarding, because it generally shows that there are many more common expectations than differences with regard to the ideal crèche, and that a common objective exists: the well-being of the children. This sharing paves the way for discussion and negotiation as to how this ideal childcare centre could take into account varying expectations of the participants.



The participants in this session are then confronted with reality - the situation inventory from the first meeting. How does reality differ from the ideal? What causes this difference? Which attitudes and approaches should we should we go into more deeply? Which actions can be developed?



Based on the difference between the ideal and the reality, the objectives of the accompaniment and the projects to be developed are negotiated with parents and professionals, taking care that these projects are feasible. Or at least some of them, in the short run, so that the centre can quickly set in motion the dynamics of change and benefit from its effects.

During other training sessions in the childcare centre, the development of these projects is evaluated and, based on this evaluation, readjusted by parents and professionals.

Training also uses the theatre forum: role-play on discrimination or incomprehension. The parents or the professionals then intervene to try to modify the situation, to propose attitudes which allow respect for each other. The theatre forum is a good tool for becoming aware, individually and collectively, of discrimination and for working on it (objectives 5 and 6 of DECET). Its interest is that it). Role-play allows one to step back, to analyse the effects of particular attitudes and to find new ways of thinking. It also provides a means of expression that is more accessible for some parents.



6. Evaluation, experiences, questions

6.1 Evaluation of these action-research-training programmes takes place during bi-monthly national meetings, convening the co-ordinators of the various action-research-training programs. There are several simultaneous meetings in France.

In addition there are evaluation meetings for each action-research–training, gathering all the trainers (those accompanying each childcare centre and those carrying out the theme training sessions). In these meetings, analysis of the progression of each childcare centre, the actions implemented, the changes of attitudes and of representations are carried out. Participants also work together on the next training sessions. Significant time is given to work on the attitudes of the trainer.

The strength of action-research–training is that it allows each childcare professional to become aware of his or her own frames of reference; to decentre and thus go beyond prejudices to learn how to find alternatives which enable him to respect the parents' culture.

Childcare professionals comment:

"I understood that it was more important to listen than to want to control everything."

"The parents sometimes adopt shocking attitudes but they are always motivated by the well-being of their child."

"Our job is not to tell them what is good for their child. It is to seek, together with the parents, what is best for this child with respect to his family life."

"Before, I saw initially what went wrong with parents. Now, I first see what goes well."

"When I feel shocked, I always try to find out why I am shocked, but also why the parent acts like that. I think that he must have a good reason to want that."

"A good professional is one who realises that she does not have all the answers."

"Those who I believed were bad parents, they were parents I did not understand."

6.2 This action-research–training has also strongly reinforced the capacity of parents to take initiatives in the childcare centre, in particular those parents who were hardly involved before.

In many centres, parents have developed initiatives (during the training sessions in the childcare centre) to reinforce collaboration between parents and professionals and interaction among parents: a newspaper, parent-child workshops, group discussions, books telling the story of the centre, etc.

6.3 The training programme had, moreover, an especially important impact on the daily operations. Childcare centres have developed several strategies to reinforce quality and accessibility:

- modification of their welcome and registration procedures to offer greater flexibility,
- redefinition of their educational and social policy and their approach,
- transformation of some of the crèche capacity into playgroup capacity,
- creation of immediate care openings for children for whom parents need sudden care due to training courses, new employment, hospitalisation,
- arrangement of space for parents in the centre,
- creation of partnership with other services,
- establishment of meetings with isolated parents from the neighbourhood.



6.4 Above all, this action-research-training program has allowed parents, professionals and institutional partners to work together, know each other, overcome differences of language or culture and experience the encounter with the "other" - the diversity.

A mother said to the representative of an institution "OK, I am only a parent, I am not used to it, but I don't understand anything that you say. Then if you want the parents to get involved, I wish you were more concrete, I want to understand".

Little by little, this common language was built, and all parties have learned how to take others into consideration. The parents have come to appreciate the constraints of the institutions. The institutional partners have recognised the importance of the terrain. As one group observed, "After all, we are not so distant from them, they also want the childcare centres to be more accessible". It is this common will which has allowed this work to be so productive.

6.5 For ACEPP, this action-research-training system is significant because it holds the potential to make a real impact on childcare centres.

Its success is due to the trust which develops between trainers and the childcare centres - the key players in the process of change. To achieve this level of trust, it is necessary to work in depth on the positioning of the trainer, and to use the aims and preferences of the individual childcare centre as the starting point. Therefore, trainers are there to stimulate new thinking, while never imposing a particular point of view or notion of quality. One vital success factor in the ACEPP approach is that by emphasising the positive right from the outset, participants feel confident and motivated even before they begin working on solving problems.

The initial training process for educators of young children in respect for diversity

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1. Objectives

The Early Years Educators Department, within this process of training, aims at:

- Training the students on their work with the children in connection with the parents and their social and cultural references, in respect of diversity;
- Working on the question of the child's belonging, at the same time, both to his family and to the educational structure that receives him (*fr.: double appartenance* = "double-belonging").

For each of its projects and activities, the training institute depends on the national Early Years Educators statutes and standards on the one hand and, on the other hand, on the objectives of the DECET network in general.

2. Context

The ESSSE (*Ecole Santé Social du Sud Est*) is a training center that welcomes each year, among other training programmes, 55 Early Years Educator trainees, as well as a number of persons already employed in this way. In the course of their training, the students participate in a training module entitled "Culture and Education". This module aims at allowing the students, starting from their own personal and professional experiences, to analyze their practices and to construct connections between and an enhanced understanding of the notions of Culture and Education.

The preamble of the Early Years Educators Department project points out that "educating young children means not only contributing to the construction of their autonomous personality but also to prepare them as individuals for their future life as citizens, supported by their family, social and cultural anchorage... in this sense, the Early Years Educator must be considered at the social worker of Early Childhood."

The Early Years Educators Department is an active partner of a European network that supports projects concerned with cultural diversity, integration and training in the field of early childhood development. This is the DECET network, which includes European partners engaged in initial or on-the-job training activities, and working on the theme of diversity. The network activities, like the "Respect for Diversity" project developed by the ESSSE, are financed by the Bernard van Leer Foundation², an institution that works



in favor of young children in difficulty.

Early Years Educators training package consists of 7 training units. These are delivered in 2,5 years for students undertaking initial and full-time training, and in 3 years for those taking training while already working in the sector. The training programme is sanctioned with a State recognized diploma.

Throughout training, various classes and practical experience allow trainees to approach the themes of Culture and Education.

3 Knowledge and skills development

The approach to working with families consists in developing professional skills by a process of theory integration and takes place in several steps.

The purpose is to develop the development of a professional methodology through various pedagogical means:

- Providing theoretical background in Anthropology and in systemic approach, by means of thematic workshops or lectures tackling issues pertaining to "double belonging".
- Allowing for participation in photo-language activity, based on exchanges and reflection over wide variety of family situations as represented in photographs. This requires trainees to perceive their own reactions and sensitivity in regard to the situations as they differ from those of their peers, and to reflect over their own modes of representation when confronted to real situations.
- Practical training in professional settings: in-the-field training, locally or abroad, for students in initial training for social work, in order to favor experimentation in a professional setting and to contribute to the development and institutionalization of training abroad as a one-month voluntary experience either in or outside of Europe. The trainers take pains to assure that host professionals become involved in the pedagogical set-up: meeting with field trainers and following-up the fieldwork of the trainees.
- Supervising research work based on an analysis of the fieldwork experience through an essay on Culture and Education. This demands that the students know how to adjust and re-adjust in regard to various situations and contexts. Photo-language activities and research work will be developed further, in the following parts of this article.
- Developing academic knowledge by research in the Institute's documentation center and through contact with other resource centers, and by the construction of a partnership with practitioners involved at various levels in promoting diversity.
- An Art (*arts plastiques*) module complements these more theoretic modules.

The trainees are asked to define the problem issue for their research work in the course of the Training Unit 1 – Pedagogy and Human Relations.

Anthropological and systemic approaches provide trainees with macro and micro theoretical points of reference which allow them to better grasp the functional and evolutionary processes at stake in a given culture, and the interactions between family and institutional systems.

¹DECET : Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training



The links between these inputs with fieldwork are made when the problematic issue of child "double belonging" to her family and to her childcare center is defined.

4 The process

The process consists in developing professional competencies by integrating theory and practice in several stages.

- 4-1 Approach of the "double belonging" issue;
- 4-2 Elements of Anthropology and systemic approach;
- 4-3 Work on attitudes and existential competencies (photo-language workshops; expression and visual arts activities);
- 4-4 Experience through professional situations: practical training, locally and abroad;
- 4-5 Research, based on thorough analysis of the practical experience (essay for the "Culture and Education" module);
- 4-6 Theoretical input (thematic sessions);
- 4-7 Library research; contact with resources centers.

Personal work: research on Culture and Education.

This work is the focal point of the Respect for Diversity training process. The trainees are required to write a paper composed of two parts:

The first part is elaborated during fieldwork. Based on a fieldwork experience, the trainee chooses a child rearing practice that is handled differently in the family and in the day-care center (feeding, sleep, language, religious event...)

After thorough observation and from an enquiring viewpoint, the trainee attempts to identify the differences in these practices, interviewing parents and professionals, taking into account their respective contexts. The point is to highlight the meaning given by the parents and the professionals themselves, to these various practices. From the different elements gathered, the trainees are asked to define a problematic issue and a question.

It is recommended that they choose a family situation stemming from a cultural background different from their own.

In the second part, the trainees undertake theoretical research and develop professional perspectives for educational input based on the problematic issue and the question raised (education of bilingual children or children who do not speak the language of the host country, the taking into account of the child cultural or religious background within non confessional structures, the handling of feeding practices linked to religious taboos, the taking into account the use at home, of the transitional object or pacifier, the adjusting to sleeping rituals practiced at home and in the day-care center...). This work phase is carried out through a period of eight months. The paper must be written in some ten pages, and it counts for the validation of one of the seven training units.



This work leads the trainees to identify links between culture and education from educational practices, conducted either in the day-care structure or in the family.

It is on the borderline between family and day-care center, that differences can be identified between home practices and day-care practices: what questions do they raise, in which reflections do they engage the observer, what professional posture do they entail?

In order to undertake this work, the trainees must question their ways of interacting with the parents, while barring any value judgments, preconceived ideas, or quick interpretations.

How may one adopt a posture that is not intrusive and allows for a true dialogue? This demands that the difference is not seen as a problem or a deficit to correct, but rather as a resource to enhance.

As an example, Séverine's research work: she wrote on the transitional object issue. In the daycare center where she undertakes her fieldwork, the transitional object is considered a "good practice", a practice that eases up the adapting of the child. In the family, from Ivory Coast, the object is seen as unnecessary, because "the mother thinks tenderly of her child, and stays within her". In a most respectful manner, the trainee writes up the exchanges that are taking place among the family, the institution and herself. She then undertakes a "classical" theoretical research on the subject (Winnicott, for example) and applies it in the intercultural context.

5. The stages of this work

Assignments for the first stage

First, the trainees observe a child rearing practice in two different contexts: the situation of a child, raised in a cultural background different from their own (foreign culture, or socio-cultural background). They describe the situation within the family context, its actors, its modes of doing and interactions, and its history...

Then they observe the situation as it is conducted within the daycare structure (a place stamped by its own cultural identity, educational practices, its rules and rituals, its taboos, its history...) The studied theme is the same in both situations.

The trainees must choose a theme related to the child, a theme that involves an educational practice such as feeding, sleep, nappy change, play activities, special events, parent relationships, child-adult relationship...

Two levels of investigation are to be highlighted:

- Direct observation or interview
- Enrichment of the reflection through reading, films or other experiences.

The question is how to understand these child-rearing practices from their cultural context? The trainees have to look into theoretical references that provide meaning to the observed situation and allow an explanation for it, from the trainee's perspective. What questions are raised at the crossing of these two approaches?



Assignments for the second stage

The first stage has allowed the trainees to identify the understanding process of a practice observed in one child rearing context and another. From this study, the trainee has raised questions that can now be enriched with theoretical reflection.

In this second stage, the point is to deepen this singular reflection and to enlarge it in the field of sociology or anthropology, psychology or psycho-pedagogy or else, systemic approach, which, while taking stand on these particular situations, will bring out new elements for further and more general thinking, for a professional practice as an Early Years Educator. This will take the form of a 4 to 6 page document, complementing the first part of the essay (10 pages altogether).

The different steps

The assignments are presented prior to fieldwork. They are also presented to fieldwork trainers in charge of the trainees' supervision. They are discussed, argued and justified, adjusted if necessary (e.g., in a particular daycare structure where contacts with parents were not possible, the assignments were postponed to another fieldwork period). During fieldwork, an interim point is made during a reunion in the training center. Trainers adjust their assignments according to the questions raised by trainees and provide them with backup if necessary.

A few days after fieldwork, the trainees give back the first part of their essay and the trainers return them back after correction. Feedback is both collective and individual. A synthesis of methodological and theoretical references is also delivered.

A few weeks later, the trainees give the second part of their essay and trainers give return their corrections, together with appreciations, individually and collectively. Another synthesis of the methodological and theoretical aspects of the work is made, which also covers the professional perspectives observed by trainees.

In the end, various levels of evaluation take place. During the meeting between trainees and trainers for the final feedback from the research, trainees are asked to give their point of view of the added value of the exercise for them. In a recurrent manner, they all describe how their capacity to enter a relationship with families has evolved.

6. General evaluation of the training approach

A team of five trainers is involved in the entire module Culture and Education, a training module that addresses trainees with direct access to initial training, or undertaking on-the-job training. This is the team which is also engaged in the "Respect for Diversity" project supported by the Bernard van Leer Foundation, in connection with the DECET network. The trainers are conducting evaluations of the project process and the training content, in order to adjust them and better follow up the trainees. The work is also discussed and assessed with the entire staff of the Early Years Educators Department, during the overall yearly evaluation of the general training program.

Evaluation conducted by a training specialist; a member of the DECET network (BVJK training center) focused both on trainers and trainees. An enquiry was done with



trainees and young professionals in order to measure the impact of the project on their work. The following must be understood as the product of this teamwork and collective reflection.

An important moment in the training is the photo-language activity. It is often the first time that trainees are invited to give their personal point of view regarding diversity, and this triggers enriching exchanges. This is quite enlightening for them. The alternating exercises of observation, family interviews and lectures are crucial. Trainees' prejudices are shattered when experiencing encounters with families and interviews. They explain that they realize how fundamental the dialogue with parents is important before establishing adequate educational practices in the childcare structure. Acknowledging the culture of the families and dialoguing with them is important indeed. It is often new to them, as well as for the structure itself. Trainees say: "we do not work with small pieces of families". The trainees also note that they have learned how to observe positively, to see differences not as a "problem" but as an enriching and challenging aspect of their work. They talk about taking distance from their own culture, and to look at it as only one possible way of being. This new realization enables them to question their own approach and convictions about what is good for the children.

They often think about this experience, their reactions facing new situations and the way in which they question themselves, and take distance from their professional practice.

They become aware that the notion of culture is broader than the question of ethnicity, and they realize the power dimension of one culture over another.

It appears that trainees get hold of the very objectives of the training institute: for them the open-mindedness versus ethno-centrism becomes a central competence for an early childhood educator; *"it is important that educators are aware that they will encounter difference"*.

The systemic theory classes, as well as workshops on interviewing techniques are both necessary inputs to help penetrate this type of reflection. Above all, alternating between theory and real situation appears essential.

Trainees say that no training component is more important than another, but that they are aware of the existence of stages, and of a gradation within the continuing training process.

The family interviewing is a key moment in the trainees' learning experience. The trainees become more understanding towards the families. The trainees' capacity to take distance with their own culture is now clearly identified.

The alternating between theory and practice allows trainees, in the long run, to assimilate contents, experimenting and bridging out with the other contents of their training.

In general, all agree on the interest of such a progressive process.

They note that one of the important moments for their personal research is reading additional theoretical inputs, which helps put distance between the situations that they



have faced and their understanding of them. This is a comprehensive process; observation is not an end in itself but a starting point, eliciting reading and critical reflection.



During the first experiences, we had noted some resistance on the part of the trainees as well as from the fieldwork structures, stemming from their difficulty to envision formally dedicating time for meeting with the families. We had to reformulate the rationale for our project in our presentation, and re-explain how to dialogue with parents without being intrusive.



With some structures, we were confronted with the principle of separation between family and institution, separation between private and public spheres. We have had to reflect upon the way to reconcile respect for families with respect for diversity. This paradoxical issue is to be worked upon, and to be approached in meetings with the fieldwork host trainers.



The trainers remark that many trainees have difficulties in noticing and naming the differences in child rearing practices. Trainees belonging to ethnic minorities have the tendency to assert that they are "everybody else"; they also resist speaking with the families. This can be explained by the French context in which the concept of a laic public education system strictly separates the public domain (the day-care structure) from the private domain (the family). Indeed, some educators or teachers affirm that they are able to work with children only if they know nothing of what is going on in the family. Asking parents how they practice child rearing at home is perceived as a lack of respect for their intimacy. Of course, it is very important to explain how such information provided by the family will be used and why, and to also insist on the need to learn from them and their way of doing.



The methodology is tied to the pursued goals:

Trainees begin to sense the importance to taking into account family culture in order to work with a child and to recognize a child's double belonging to her family and day-care structure.

Trainees realize that several aspects of a child's identity have to be recognized. Trainees learn to see culture as a broad concept and they become convinced that we cannot "do without" the families.

Trainers seek to elicit from trainees personal research while also providing bibliographical references, relevant to their work. This articulation between both suggesting and soliciting modes is to be regularly adjusted. Intercultural concepts are linked to various schools of thought. In order to be relevant, research work must have an adjusted bibliography.

In the course of each session, trainers wonder how to define what is, in their own point of view, a "good" research paper.

Beyond the respect of an observation and research methodology, trainers evaluate the trainee's capacity to:

- Identify cultural differences between families and child-care structures;

- 
- Evolve in his/her reflection, advancing through research even if some aspects of the final work can be improved.

Overall process evaluation

To conclude, let us go back to some of the elements of reflection that emerge from discussions and exchanges or from listening to comments that trainees make in the course of their research:

Trainees grow aware of the fact that we all learn from everyone. Trainees and trainers alike clearly profess that we can learn from the cultural background of the family.

Trainees also explain that they understand through this training that they act as active citizens, and that this approach can have a similar effect on parents, facilitating their participation in the structure; inasmuch as it gives a place to their convictions and practices.

In some of the structures sheltering fieldwork, trainees' research papers are enabling certain evolutions to take place in the teams' opinions. A few of them were able to shed light on the power of the structure as a type of institutional prejudice, which triggered discussion.

Whatever triggering factor (interview with family, theoretical observation...), the reflection process at play always raises debates and induces change within trainees' conception and approach to diversity and to relationship with families in general.

Post academic course on Diversity in Early Childhood Education, University of Ghent, Belgium.

Michel Vandebroek, University of Ghent, Belgium

This training course is organised by the Department of Social Welfare Studies, University of Ghent, in collaboration with the Resource and Research Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education (VBJK).

The course was initiated in 2000 as a 30-hour programme and, after evaluation by the first group of participants, was adapted and repeated in 2001. The 2001 course was expanded to 36 hours to accommodate added sessions on gender diversity and children with special needs.

No course was held in 2002, to give staff the opportunity for further evaluation and to allow them to restructure the curriculum, taking into account the ongoing work of the DECET network. In 2003, training resumed, and encompasses some of the work outlined in this manual.

1. Professional objectives

As a broad-based programme, this course targets all the objectives of the mission statement. Indeed many of its aspects were designed around the DECET mission statement and goals. Training is structured so that it applies themes and objectives set out in the mission statement, for example:

- **New attitudes to diversity.** In the first session, trainees examine and compare different discourses on diversity, starting from key texts representing typical historical multicultural and intercultural approaches. At the end of the session, trainees analyse the DECET mission statement and learn how this approach differs from traditional multicultural and intercultural strategies.
- **Respect for multiple identities.** This covers gender, ethnic, cultural and class identities. At the start of the course, trainees receive a reader comprising academic articles and discussion on this topic. Trainees also seek out newspaper articles that illustrate dominant opinions on identity, prejudices and stereotypes.
- **Learning from each other.** Trainees obtain an insight into the development of prejudices and the societal influences, with a focus on unequal power relationships.
- **Actively addressing bias.** Trainees develop their own training course designed for the people they work with. They prepare a paper which is then discussed critically within the group.



2. Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes

At the end of the course, trainees should have gained insights into the following key concepts:

- diversity and equality, comparing different models, such as intercultural or multicultural education.
- plural identity, prejudice, gender, inclusion of children with special needs, racism by omission, etc.
- diversity management (including staff management) and multilingualism
- a broader view of diversity and equality issues including racial /ethnic diversity, gender, children with special needs, poverty and families in need.
- how a curriculum on diversity is set up.
- using teaching tools and methods including persona dolls, pictures, videos and other training methods. Learning to appraise their existing teaching tools and choosing those most appropriate to the trainee's own situation.

3. Context

The course is a post-university training programme designed specifically for trainers. Participants are trainers of early childhood workers or policy makers and must possess a master's degree in psychology or education. Those holding a bachelor's degree are allowed entry only after an access interview. The course involves 36 hours of teaching and another 36 hours of self-study and is completed with a paper written by the trainees. Upon completion of the full course, the trainees are awarded an academic certificate.

4. The process

Most of the twelve 3-hour sessions combine content with practical ideas on how to translate this material to suit the particular target groups the trainees work with. Between sessions, participants engage in individual work, such as reading or preparing proposals. To complete the course, each trainee presents a paper to the group.

5. Activities

The 12 training sessions are structured as follows:

Session 1

- The international, national and local context of working on diversity
- The UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child
- Quality targets of the European Network for Child Care
- The DECET network and its mission statement
- Belgian legislation on diversity in Early Childhood Education

- 
- An analysis of basic texts representing different views on diversity
 - Individual work: trainees examine the mission statements of their own organisations and the societal vision of diversity underpinning them

Session 2

- 
- Self awareness and the other
 - Societal evolutions influencing identity
 - Plural identities and identity dynamics
 - Cultural identity
 - The emergence of prejudice
 - Personal task: finding texts in popular media (newspapers, magazines etc), as well as in children's publications (books, comics, magazines) that reflect stereotypes or prejudices.

Session 3

- 
- Anti-bias, diversity and equality, multiculturalism
 - The four types of multicultural work according to Bouwer and Vedder
 - The Anti-Bias curriculum
 - Critical reflection on different models and the DECET mission statement
 - Discussion of the mission statements of the participants and of mass media examples brought by the participants.

Session 4

- 
- ECE (spell out what this means) as a forum for democracy
 - Social exclusion in ECE
 - Historical background of power issues in ECE
 - ECE and its place between the private and public domain: policy issues
 - New models such as multifunctional ECE and crèches parentales

Session 5

- 
- Parental support programmes
 - Parental support as an issue in child and youth work
 - Defensive and pro-active views on parental support
 - Parental support as a social service
 - Participants reflect on the social mission of their training and its accessibility.

Session 6

- Interculturalism in social work and education in Flanders: an overview of current discussions and programmes.

Session 7

- Gender diversity
- Gender segregation. Experiences from successful empirical field research programmes studying men as carers in Flanders, the UK and Denmark. .
- Trainees receive tools for screening training sessions on gender specificity and analyse their own training courses on gender segregation and gender stereotypes.



Session 8

- Inclusion of children with special needs, providing examples of innovations in pilot centres in this field.
- Resistance and challenges are discussed.
- Participants reflect on specific issues of diversity (i.e. identity and prejudice) regarding children with special needs. Images of children with special needs in children's books are discussed.

Session 9

- This session focuses on didactics.
- Training materials are presented to the participants, covering issues such as identity, prejudice, bias and power relations. The first set of materials encourages each trainee to discuss his/her own background, culture and values. A second set looks at emerging prejudices and examples of 'othering the other'.
- Individual work: each participant takes one piece of existing training material to study. At the next session they will assess the theoretical insights underpinning the material and the possibilities for use in their own circumstances.

Session 10

- This session looks at a specific methodology, Persona Dolls and is organised in collaboration with Mutant (The Netherlands).
- A video illustrates using the dolls to discuss diversity and empathy with young children. Participants are then encouraged to develop stories to use in their own situations. (see Chapter II.8 in this manual for details).

Session 11

- Putting learning into practice.
- Participants present the training materials they have analysed (see Session 9).

Session 12

- Practice and evaluation
- Critical discussions of the participants' papers. Depending on the themes of the papers, guest lecturers are invited to comment, including representatives from ethnic minorities.

6. Learning materials

Participants receive these readings, covering most of the course's theoretical aspects:
Vandenbroeck, M. (2001) *The View of the Yeti*. The Hague: Bernard Van Leer Foundation.
Boudry, C. & Vandenbroeck, M. (2000) *Spiegelkje, spiegelkje*. Amsterdam: SWP.
Vandenbroeck, M. (1998) *Respect for Diversity in Early Childhood Education*. Cd-rom. Ghent: MEQ-VBJK.

An international series of studies on identity and prejudice compiled by the Koning Boudewijnstichting, Brussels.

An anthology of articles that appeared in KIDDO and Children in Europe on areas such as persona dolls, diversity in practice, crèches parentales etc.



7. Evaluation

17 trainers attended the first course and the second course had 18 participants. Both groups rated the programme very highly. Training was evaluated orally during the final session. In addition, participants received an evaluation form requesting written feedback on the course content and format.

7.1 Participants' assessment.

The participants were highly satisfied with the training. The most positive responses highlighted the broader outlook gained and the scope for in-depth insights into key issues such as identity, power relations, discrimination etc. For most participants, examining diversity as a much broader issue than multiculturalism was new and particularly well received.

7.2 Transfer of knowledge

Participants appreciated the way the course helped them to reflect more critically on their own training practice. The course was regarded as very relevant and useful for application their daily work. Insights gained would "deepen" their own training sessions; this was the single most-cited benefit.

7.3 Quality of the papers

The participants' papers were excellent. Participants were tasked with writing about aspects of the training that could be applied in their own situation. One example: three trainers from three different early childhood training colleges worked together to completely rewrite their curriculum. These trainers had attended a small module on interculturalism, prior to taking this course. Combining new insights from both courses, they introduced aspects of diversity into every module of their curriculum.

7.4 Networking

Some participants continue to exchange experiences with other trainers they met during the course. Using the phone and e-mail, they share methods and knowledge. The trainee mailing list is regularly used as a forum to ask questions and reflect on practices.

7.5 Areas for improvement

Participants pinpointed areas where the course could be enhanced and offered suggestions:

- More occasions should be created to facilitate post-training networking, to ensure contacts do not gradually dwindle. To facilitate this, we will be organising an annual meeting for all participants of the post-academic courses.
- Several participants felt some of the sessions did not allow enough time to discuss the elements on the programme.
- The structural aspects of the training programme raised some concern, as participants saw advantages as well as disadvantages involved in conducting this course in an academic context.

On the plus side, an academic setting lends greater stature and credibility. For many professional trainers, an academic context is a necessary condition to obtain permission



to enrol in a course. Further, it can lend participants added authority when discussing their training experiences with colleagues in the workplace.

Most of the negatives concerned bureaucracy. Academic training courses are indeed more formal in some respects (for instance, the enrolment process). This may scare off some participants with less formal training experience. A formal structure can also influence the atmosphere of the group, making it more difficult for some to feel at ease and talk freely.

Train-the-trainer course 'I am I and You are You'

Anke van Keulen

Agency MUTANT, Utrecht, The Netherlands

1. Professional objectives on Diversity and Equity

1.1 DECET goals

The goal of the train-the-trainer courses is the implementation of the DECET goals in early childhood centres and in colleges for initial training. Participants in the train-the-trainers course are trainers, tutors and college teachers who will then go on to train students and professionals in early childhood centres.

The training focuses on the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enable children and adults to build early childhood education services and communities together where everyone:

- feels that he/she belongs
- is empowered to develop different aspects of his/her identity
- can learn from each other across cultural and other boundaries
- can participate as active citizens
- actively addresses bias through open communication and willingness to grow
- works together to challenge institutional forms in the areas of prejudice and discrimination.

1.2 Institutional goals

MUTANT's mission is to contribute to equity in society by supporting and empowering professionals and institutions in early childhood education, welfare and healthcare to use innovative methods in training and consulting.

Important values when doing the work:

- upholding equity and justice
- using each person's capacity as the point of departure
- acknowledging diversity
- breaking down boundaries among social sectors (such as health, education, welfare)
- using all types of knowledge (academic, intuitive, experience, etc)
- empowering special groups in society
- stimulating intercultural relationships

The agency runs projects commissioned by local governments and national or local non-governmental organisations. Respect for diversity is a key issue in all projects. In The Netherlands, the issues 'diversity and equity' are not integral and/or compulsory in educational policy or quality measuring in childcare. MUTANT contacts and joins trainers who are interested in implementing this theme into their own programmes through the train-the-trainers courses.



1.3 Specific goals for the train-the-trainer course

Trainers and tutors who follow the train-the-trainers course, will receive a framework with which to build and execute a course, a coaching process or a programme in their own institution.

The implementation of the programme 'I am I and You are You'¹ is a long-term process and concerns all levels and all staff in an institution (such as a childcare centre, a college, an educational consulting organisation). Thus, it is important to integrate the targets of the programme into the educational policy of the institute, so that 'diversity and equity' are not dissociated themes but an integral part of policy and daily practice. All staff should be involved and invested with knowledge and understanding around the theme.

For example, at the Kinderopvang Korein (Eindhoven) a trainer, after completing a train-the-trainers course, began with a course for all the executive professionals, organised workshops for middle management (co-ordinators for local centres) and set up a meeting for directors and the central management team. (see illustration)

2. Competences - knowledge, skills, attitude

Trainers who follow the train-the-trainers course, must already possess basic training skills. They must be able to transfer information to their own context, to compose their own training or lessons and to train educators.

The main goal for educators is to be able to implement the programme 'I am I and You are You. Education Without Prejudice' into daily practice.

Within this primary goal are the following sub-targets:

- grafting the influence of one's own (ethnic-cultural) background onto the process of education
- understanding that the personal interaction and emotions of the professional may carry a positive or negative influence on the development of the child's positive self-image
- broadening understanding of the children's and their families' background. This entails:
 - increasing the capacity for communication with parents from different ethnic-cultural backgrounds
 - gaining an insight and understanding into personal boundaries and emotions involved in setting individual standards and values
 - recognising and becoming aware of prejudice in communication (among children and adults as well as between children and adults) and in the physical environment (decorating, toys, etc);
 - becoming aware of relationships among children and identifying signs of exclusion. Also recognising and handling teasing and bullying adequately;
 - making decisions and choices in strategies for handling situations of (institutional) discrimination.

¹A. van Keulen. ***Ik ben ik en jij bent jij. Methodiek en praktijkboek over Opvoeden zonder vooroordelen in de kinderopvang. (I am I and you are you. Education without prejudice in early childhood).*** Utrecht: NIZW,



3. Context

3.1 History

In a two-year pilot programme, MUTANT used the principles of the Anti Bias curriculum by Louise Derman-Sparks² and worked with fifteen childcare centres to create their own programme. The Dutch programme is entitled: 'I am I and You are You. Education Without Prejudice.'

The train-the-trainers' programme has developed from this pilot project. The programme contains eight modules to be presented in four days with a two-week interval.

During the course, the participants engage in activities centred on children as well as their own skills and attitudes. Each exercise and activity is related to one or more of the DECET goals. An introduction in the Persona Dolls methodology is included, with storytelling based on the DECET goals.

3.2 Target group

Participants are trainers, tutors and college teachers. The training is meant for trainers who are new to Diversity and Equity issues, as well as for more experienced trainers. It is the intention that, after following the train-the-trainers course, trainers will be able to set up their own training courses, lessons, etc.

3.3 Training approach

The participants receive theoretical and practical information through literature, video and CD Rom, which they practise themselves by observation, role playing, team discussions and engaging in children's activities. All exercises, activities and resources used in the training are described in the training book 'I am I and You are You'³, which is the main training source.

During the two week interval, participants must put the exercises and the activities into practice in their teams and children's groups. The observations, questions and remarks which they bring to the next training sessions forms part of the course.

During the final meeting, the participants will present a programme which they have developed themselves for their own context and target groups.

4. The process

The training programme, based around the book, 'I am I and You are You', covers the following areas:

Part 1: Theory

- Education without prejudice, development of pre-prejudices, terminology, framework and goals of the programme.
- Early childhood and educational innovation, moral development, social and political context.

² Derman-Sparks, L., **Anti Bias Curriculum. Tools for empowering young children.** Washington: NAEYC, 1989.

³ See note 1



Part 2: Practice: guide for using training exercises

- Identity, positive self-esteem, observation of children's contacts, family surroundings, educators' backgrounds.
- Similarities and differences, physical differences, determination of perception of what is 'normal', discovering diversity in personal cultural backgrounds, differences and boundaries, starting with babies, information from parents.
- Empathy, observations and interventions, persona dolls.
- Learning and unlearning prejudices, observations, coffee-break talk, working with comics and cartoons, testing tolerance, the prejudices game.
- Teasing and bullying, observations in the group, group climate, exercises on standing up for oneself, the anti-bullying game.

5. Activities

The programme contains three categories of activities:

- observation by the educators
- awareness-raising and team discussion
- interactions and activities with children

5.1 Example: Observation of environment, resources and communication

The goal of this activity is to recognise and to be aware of stereotyping and prejudice in the childcare centre, in environment, resources and communication. One of the most important results is the discovery, by all participants, of all kinds of prejudices and the discovery of what is the strongest prejudice in one's group/team/centre.

The prejudice is very often unexpected. For instance, in a rural area in the Netherlands, the educators found many prejudices concerning family structure and gender. In a black urban area 'class-ism' was most striking.

This important discovery leads to the next step - how to deal with these prejudices. Through this process of raising awareness of one particular prejudice the group can move on to a greater awareness of other -isms.

5.2 Example: Personal cultural background

Step 1: Positive elements and values about one's personal cultural background.

The goal is to realise the influence one's personal social and cultural background may have on children's education. One's own background has everything to do with personal values and standards. Whether or not one is from a religious family, has moved home or travelled a great deal, is the eldest or the youngest in a family, has had poor schooling - all these factors colour one's outlook on life. Educators carry their histories with them to the children at the childcare centre, consciously or unconsciously, and it influences their education. Together with a professional outlook, educational vision, and the institute's teaching policy, each educator's personal ideas also influence the process of raising and educating children.



Assignment

- Name a positive characteristic of your own cultural background.
- Does this influence your way of raising and educating children?
- What is it specifically that you would like to pass on in your work with the children?

Reactions and suggestions

- I think people in Holland are tolerant, when it comes to considering different ways of life and family forms
- In the province of Limburg, people really know how to enjoy life
- A large family teaches you how to work in a team
- We have strong family ties in Suriname, family members help each other
- My Christian background has provided me with a strongly developed sense of justice
- My Turkish background has taught me to appreciate hospitality. We always have food ready for any and all guests
- In my farming family, I learnt to be independent at an early age

Step 2: Discovering diversity in one's personal cultural background.

The goal is to discover diversity within one's own ethnic-cultural background to prevent generalising and stereotyping in other ethnic-cultural groups. This exercise takes one another step forward in that it is not only about the positive aspects of one's background, but about taking a critical and subtle outlook at one's own set of values and standards.

With the aid of this exercise, trainers can observe the differences within their own culture. Participants receive an explanation about the generalisation of cultural background, for instance not all Dutch people have the same opinion or attitude concerning gender roles and not all Turkish people have the same vision and practice of Islam. Within one's own cultural background, can be found differences in the subcultures of young and old, of religious and non-religious people, of rural and urban inhabitants and from one region to another.

Assignment

Try to describe, as accurately as possible, the cultural differences within one's own culture. Think of differences between:

- Boys and girls
- Men and women
- Young and old
- Youngsters in general
- City and countryside
- Northern and southern parts of the country
- Religious groups
- Social backgrounds

Step 3: Respect for other cultural backgrounds /values

...And finding the boundaries in one's personal set of values/ principles. The aim of this exercise is to obtain insight into personal limitations and emotions within one's own set



of values and standards. To be able to develop respect for people with other values, individuals need insight into their own backgrounds and need to explore other cultures and subcultures. Without these two steps, it is impossible to take the third step.

Assignment

1. Observe differences in families and lifestyles within your childcare centre. Select a family with values and standards that appeal to you least, or not at all
2. Which values and standards do you come across?
3. How do you handle this: privately, professionally, practically?

Evaluation

Participants realise how much detailed information they already possess about their own cultural background: the differences in subcultures, in customs and values within one city or region. At the same time they discover their tendency to generalise other less familiar cultures.

6. Example of implementation: Korein, Eindhoven

Korein is a regional organisation with an extensive network of childcare centres, located in and around Eindhoven. Currently, Korein has 40 branches providing professional daycare for children from 0 to 4 years old. Korein is also proposing after-school care (BSO) for primary school children in the age group 4 to 12.

In March 2001, a diversity policy project started within Korein, focusing on staff policy and parental involvement, as well as teaching policy. Staff from different levels of the organisation are involved in the project. The eventual goal is to ensure that all children and parents feel welcome and at home with Korein. In addition Korein wants to offer children from diverse cultures the possibility to meet other cultures, to discover and to respect their diversity.

A key element is to further the expertise of personnel. The management team and branch managers have completed short courses to ensure that diversity management receives ample attention within the whole organisation. Educators are also offered a course, based on the MUTANT programme "I am I and You are You". The project leader on Diversity followed the Train-the-trainers course 'I am I and You are You' and is now spreading the programme to all 40 branches. Within each team, one or two educators are responsible, together with their branch co-ordinator, for continuing the diversity issue in their centre.

After two years, Korein implemented a Diversity policy on a structural base and has integrated diversity into educational policy in different ways. Diversity has been formally registered in the central Korein teaching framework, as well as in the evaluation methods for planning teaching establishments. Moreover, the course "Diversity: Everyone is OK" is an important motivator for group leaders to start working with the Diversity theme.



The project director, together with the team, has produced a policy report concerning diversity policy, containing guidelines for educational work and suggestions for exercises/activities for work around the theme of diversity. This policy report has been published in the Manual for Pedagogical Policy.



And the programme continues to develop. Integrating diversity policy into human resources and parental involvement is now underway. In the coming year, further work will be carried out concerning the handling of new immigrants and how to keep them involved. Furthermore, Korein is taking part in the Bureau MUTANT's project (Parents and Diversity). In this way, Korein hopes to improve communication and co-operation with parents.

7. Evaluation, experiences, questions

7.1 The evaluation process.



At the end of the training, the participants complete an evaluation form. Then, after the participants have set up their own course or support programme, the evaluation data of the participants and their programmes, as well as that of the students and trainees, are assessed. Trainers receive a certificate following the assessment.

After completing the 'train-the-trainers' course, participants develop and carry out their own courses or lessons and they write evaluation reports.

7.2 Experiences and comments



Many trainers recognise problems in disseminating and continuing the notion of diversity in their daily practise. Focusing on the theme, integrating the theme into educational policy and quality measuring remain important issues. However a national Dutch network has been founded for trainers to discuss experiences, new developments and results after their train-the-trainers course.

Some of the reactions of educators, trained by certified trainers:

"I didn't realise there were so many existing prejudices of every kind: gender, ethnicity, social class, weight."

"In our team, we are now prepared to discuss what we consider to be 'normal'."

"We know now this approach has a lot to do with personal values and related critical observations."

"Once you have started on this road you can't stop. "

"As a teacher, I feel proud to contribute to such an important issue."

Naming my World

Starting the process of creating change by clarifying the issue

Petra Wagner,
Project Kinderwelten, Berlin

1. Introduction

Praxis, as a process of creating change, was made popular by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. He describes the process as a cycle of theory, action and reflection (see scheme "Praxis cycle"). In the adaptation of the "Situationsansatz" (Contextual Child-development Approach), this is the methodology of planning pedagogical change in 4 steps:

1. Analysis of the situation
2. Decision on the goals
3. Action: Changing the situation
4. Evaluation of the experience.

In a Kinderwelten workshop, given with Louise Derman-Sparks in 2001, the method of beginning the process was elaborated upon in detail. The questions: How can we start working on an issue around discrimination and prejudice in a way that ensures participation of all the group members and includes their diverse experiences and different views of the issue? How can we raise our understanding of an issue or concern that takes into account both individual experience and analysis of the societal/ institutional realities?

2. Professional objectives on Diversity and Equity

This method addresses the four Anti-Bias goals, as mentioned in the Anti Bias Curriculum by Louise Derman-Sparks¹ and the Anti Bias Training Approaches in the Early Years².

As far as educators are concerned, strengthening personal identity (AB goal 1) means that the training must provide everyone with the recognition and inclusion of his/her situation and experience ("Naming my world"). Respect for the diversity (AB goal 2) of experiences evolves by listening to others' narratives and comparing them ("Finding similarities and differences"). To move from individual experience to societal realities (AB goal 3), the narratives must be placed in the broader context and discussed critically. Only then will it be possible to decide on goals for change and to take action (AB goal 4).

¹ Derman-Sparks, L., *Anti Bias Curriculum. Tools for empowering young children.* Washington: NAEYC, 1989.

² Gaine, B. And A. Van Keulen, *Anti Bias Training Approaches in the Early Years. A guide for Trainers and Teachers.* Utrecht, London: MUTANT, EYTARN, 1997.



3. Competencies - knowledge, skills, attitude

The primary goal is to clarify feelings, thoughts and knowledge concerning a specific issue. By doing this, groups create a common language that helps when deciding on actions for change. Having experienced the method, educators and managers of childcare centres can use it themselves for the sequencing of planning processes with children and parents, as well as among themselves.



4. Context

The method introduced here is practised with groups of educators, managers of childcare centres and trainers (3 to 20 participants). Any concerns or problems can be shared and resolved using this method.



5. The process

This method is useful whenever an issue arises that the group wants to deal with. For example "Language and identity", "My power as manager", "Working together with parents" etc.



6. Description of the method

The process of clarifying the issue is sequenced in three steps, as shown in the appendix "Praxis cycle".

6.1 Step 1: "Naming my world"

Everyone in the group is encouraged to tell his/her experiences concerning the issue. The group are not allowed to discuss and judge the individual stories, simply because biographies of people cannot be judged. Depending on the degree of confidence within the group, participants could share their experiences in groups of two, in small groups or with the whole group.

6.2 Step 2: Finding similarities and differences

The group looks at the experiences and individual narratives. What are the similarities and the differences? As part of the process, the group are asked to summarise, classify and to link common themes from the single stories, finding underlying questions, problems and contradictions. Collecting "similarities" and "differences" by writing them down on a flipchart is a useful method that highlights that there are similar, but also different, experiences and views. While similarities provide relief ("I'm not alone!"), the existence of differences might be threatening, especially for teams that work together. It is important to have a diversity of opinions and attitudes and to be completely honest about the differences that come up.





6.3 Step 3: Analysis: Connecting individual experiences with societal realities

How can we explain these differences and similarities? How are they linked to the social status of the persons involved? How are they linked to mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in our society? Here participants increase the level of their knowledge about history and about the institutional structures by integrating data, findings and statistical information. It is useful to deal with contradictory documents and texts as this will cause "cognitive dissonance" and stimulate thinking and discussions. The result will be a more objective picture of the issue which helps the group understand how individuals are involved in and influenced by social and political realities.

7. Evaluation, Experiences, Questions

It is very important to move through all three of these steps. However, there are two potential traps to avoid. One trap is the inclination to stick to individual anecdotes. Often, practitioners have many stories to tell and it may be pleasant to have the time and space to tell them. However, if there is no summing up or structured analysis of individual stories, it will not be satisfying in the end. The other trap is the inclination to avoid stories by starting with "hard facts". When this happens, participants may not be able to identify with the issue because they miss the relevance to their own situation and feelings.

"In this process, heart, mind and behaviour are working together moving back and forth between individual questions and questions of the larger society." (Louise Derman-Sparks)

7.1 Example: Workshop on "Roots and wings" (2 hrs.)

Introduction: "Children need roots and wings, roots to know where they come from and wings to explore and grow".

Participants are asked to reflect on this statement by answering the following questions: what do children need to have their roots nurtured? what do they need to develop wings? The answers are collected and written on the flipchart.

Step 1: "Naming my world": The next question is: "Think about yourself. How were your roots nurtured?" After taking some time to reflect individually, each participant shares his/her experiences with one other participant.

Step 2: Finding similarities and differences: Coming back to the whole group, participants are asked to share their experiences, responding to questions such as: "Who discovered that his/her roots were well nurtured? Who thinks his/her roots were not well nurtured?" Participants indicate answers by raising their hands and sharing with the group what they want to say about their own experiences.

The answers in our workshop revealed one striking result. Most of the participants of the dominant group (German educators) indicated that their roots were more or less nurtured by their families. The participants with migrant backgrounds (Turkish, Greek) said that they remember their families being very supportive and nurturing, giving them strength and self-confidence when they were children. However, they also



remember the denial of acceptance and encouragement when they started to go to kindergarten or primary school. There, they soon felt intimidated and ashamed of their origins: "When I was seven years old, I refused to say that my family was Turkish." "I was glad that I was fair-haired, so I could pretend to have German parents."

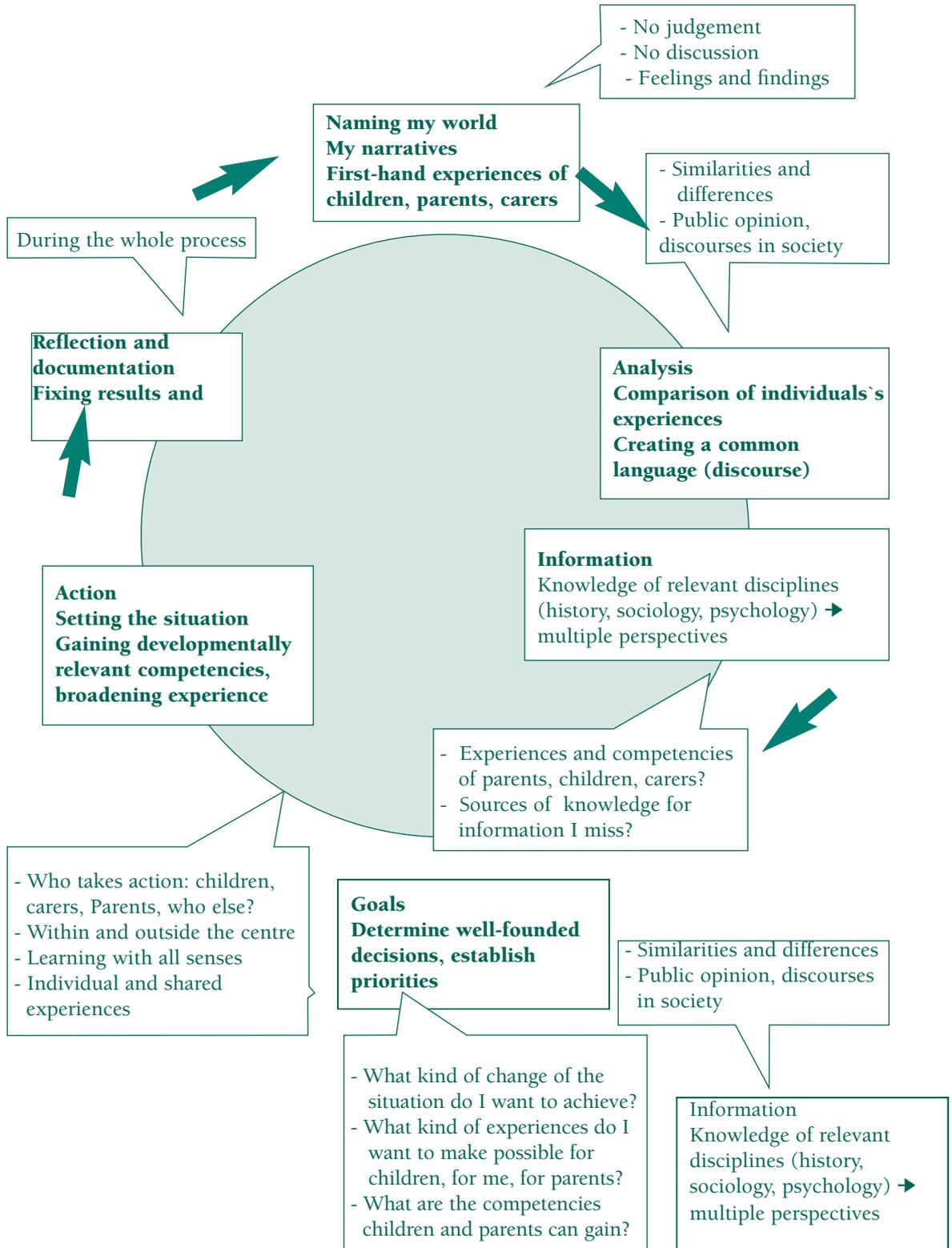
Step 3: Analysis: Connecting individual experiences with societal realities. Why are there such differences in the experiences of the participants when it comes to having one's roots nurtured in childhood and how does this depend on family background? The participants discuss the question. They bring in knowledge about values and norms that are fostered in childcare and in schools and that may exclude children that don't "fit in". Some of them talk about their experiences of exclusion and non-acceptance in childcare and school because of differences in social class (children from a working class or farming family). They explore how the mismatch between home and institution marginalises certain groups. The direct experiences of colleagues from migrant families is very illuminating in this regard, showing that marginalisation is not exceptional. The discussion concludes with statements concerning the groups' responsibility as parents, educators and teachers in nurturing the identities of young children, especially minority children.

Theory of Action and Reflection

Paolo Freire

Brought together with the Contextual Child Development Approach (Situationsansatz) and the Anti-Bias-Approach

By Louise-Derman-Sparks and Kinderwelten Staff (March 2001)



Bearbeitung: Christa Preissing 2001

A training pack for talking about families

Myriam Mony & Dominique Malleval, ESSSE, Lyon
Michel Vandebroek, VBJK, Ghent

1. Professional objectives on diversity and equity

1.1 Objectives for families

The training session focuses on family diversity. In accordance with the DECET mission statement, training fosters greater understanding and openness among parents and educators and thus:

- allows families to belong
- supports children and their parents in developing the diverse aspects of their identities
- enables families to learn from each other across cultural and other boundaries

1.2 Objectives for students

Students participating in the training will:

- learn to understand different family situations presented through photographs.
- become aware of what we can communicate to others and can learn by listening, through different ways of viewing a single question or photograph.
- Explore and exchange various ways of seeing and understanding. Each student will have his/her own interpretation of a photograph and will share differing points of view.

2. Knowledge, skills, attitude

Through examining and discussing photographs, participants will be able to:

- Examine the construction and deconstruction of our representation of families
- gain insight into how images of families include diversity
- raise awareness of prejudices towards certain families
- gain insight into where these prejudices originate
- build empathy and respect for diversity

3. Context in which the training takes place

This training method can be carried out in a variety of different contexts, such as

- initial training of Educators of Young Children¹
- short training for family day-care providers (3 to 5 evenings)
- short or long training sessions for day-care workers
- training for trainers

This exercise should be accompanied by a period devoted to theoretical thinking about family and diversity.

¹See Chapter II.3



Whatever the context, an atmosphere of confidence in which ideas and opinions can be freely shared, is essential. Therefore, we advise that this exercise be preceded by a session in which participants are encouraged to share their own histories².



Participants are also encouraged to raise questions, as professionals or as students, based on personal sensitivity and experience.

4. Required training: the process

4.1 Organisation of the session

1st phase (5 min):



Presentation of the process: procedure, objective, instructions, including the opening question. This question can vary according to the context and the specific objective.

Each participant is asked to:

- Choose a photograph or two which raises questions for you regarding your concept of "family".
- Choose the picture that most resembles your idea of an ideal family.
- Choose a picture that raises questions for you.
- What family is closest to yours?
- What family would you like to know more about?

2nd phase (15 min):

- Look closely at all the photographs, mentally choose one or two, based on the opening question.
- Silently, prepare what will be shared in the group. Save all comments, questions or impressions for the group time.
- Take your time. Even if your choice has been made, wait until everyone has chosen.

3d phase (1 hr):

- Group time.
- Each participant can now take the photograph they had earlier chosen mentally. If two people have selected the same photograph, that is not a problem. Each participant should stick to his/her initial choice and comment on it in turn.
- Present the photograph, or photographs, by clearly and fully expressing the reasons for the choice. Be prepared to respond to questions and reactions from the group.
- If necessary, the trainer can help participants at this stage.

4th phase (10 min):

- Trainers comment and assess what occurred during the session.
- Group discussion on how the session raises and answers questions linked to the diversity issue. New insights are shared.
- Trainers conclude the course by informing participants about a follow-up module: Culture and Education³.

²See training pack on Family, edited by VBJK

³See Chapter II.16



5. Required training: activities

5.1 Materials required

Training works best in groups of 10 to 25 participants.

Duration : 1h 30min.

Materials consist of 27 pictures, representing 10 different families, in recognisable daily situations. The families represent a range of diversities. For example:

- Single father with one child (preparing dinner)
- Step-family with two adolescent and two small children visiting the zoo
- Lesbian couple with twins, playing together
- Moroccan family with one child relaxing over a meal
- Single mother feeding an adopted child
- Family with four children of different ages
- Turkish family at the hospital celebrating the birth of a baby
- Somali family with 6 children having supper;
- Large family with five children, two black, three white, playing in the garden and having supper
- Family with two children, one of whom has special needs.

The pictures are set up so participants can freely move around and examine them all.

5.2 Role of the trainers

Leading the session:

- Watch, listen, exchange, facilitate the debate
- Broaden outlooks and thinking
- Be in a position to understand
- Support the process of developing collective thinking
- Deal cautiously with the personal reactions generated by the exercise (aggressiveness, emotional outbursts, refusal...)
- Encourage everyone to speak: Allow each participant to express him/herself as the group listens. Facilitate respect for each other's statements. .
- Be extremely careful not to place oneself in the position of the speaker
- Do not lock the debate into consensus or conforming opinions; dare to risk diverse views and dissension.
- As trainers become accustomed to working with the photographs and the photo-language, the more interesting the work will be.

6. Evaluation, experiences, questions

6.1 Comments of the trainers

Choice of photographs

- The choices are oriented by our history.
- Logical and noticeable sequences of photographs.
- The photographs not selected (excluded or not applicable) are an interesting indicator.

- The correlation between the content of the discussions about the chosen photograph and the initial question raised is significant.
- The choice and the presentation of the photographs are respected, denoting an absence of value judgement among students.
- The representation of the family through the photographs is idealised. Almost all the students would justify the choice of photographs by saying that the children and the adults "look happy".
- Students chose scenes which 'spoke' to them, portraying familiar situations they could identify with. Few photographs were chosen that portrayed families of foreign origin.

Support

Using photographs is a useful support to:

- introduce questions concerning values, visions and ways of understanding that are different
- share visions, explore different definitions, and get involved in the discussion
- work on one's own representations and be open to the ideas of others
- address stereotypes and prejudices
- reflect more on family models than on cultural models
- Go beyond technique in welcoming families
- Reflect on the following questions involving difference:
 - Why is it that only differences challenge us?
 - How, as professionals, do we speak to children about differences?
 - Which view do we adapt?
 - What do we ask of the family?
 - What is our professional position?

6.2 Quality of the discussions

Trainers noted:

- The great level of tolerance, and listening, allowing authentic expression.
- Frequent references to one's personal experience (e.g. being a militant in a homosexual group)
- The importance for all, of maintaining a professional point of view, as a future Educator of Young Children
- The openness of student comments: for once, they are allowed to express ideas without being judged.
- The lingering influence of the others' presence when making comments.

6.3 General evaluation regarding respect for diversity

The pictures are, for many reasons, very good stimuli for talking about families. Because the photographs show only a fragment of life, each participant is tempted to fill in the rest. The pictures allow multiple interpretations, so it often occurs that participants have very different, often opposing, interpretations. These divergent views (when treated by the trainer as different, not as 'good' or 'bad') enhance discussions about where our ideas come from and raise awareness about prejudices. This exercise addresses similarities as well as differences, therefore participants can also easily identify with the families.

Persona dolls

An innovative approach to raise diversity issues with young children

Anke van Keulen

Bureau MUTANT, Utrecht, The Netherlands

1. Introduction

"Persona dolls, and the stories they tell the children, provide a truly exciting, innovative and non-threatening way to raise tricky and difficult issues with young children, such as racism, exclusion from play, name calling and teasing. Moreover, because the storytelling sessions are so interactive, children become involved in trying to solve the issue the doll has come to talk about."

(Babette Brown, video Persona Dolls in Action)

Persona Dolls are used for telling stories to little children. Stories that can make children feel well supported in their emotions and in the fact that they are different. The children are encouraged to show empathy with the doll, which enables them to feel good about themselves and their own culture and, at the same time, to show respect for other children and other cultures. The stories do away with stereotype images and prejudices. Also, children are stimulated to help the doll solve problems.

1.1 Example Scenario

TEACHER INTRODUCING DOLL TO CHILDREN:

Do you remember who this is? Yes, this is Johed. Last time he came to see us he was really happy. Do you remember why he was so happy? Yes, good for you, he'd eaten pizza with his father and his mother in a pizza restaurant. Has any of you ever done that? Who likes pizza here?

(Children respond)

But today Johed is not happy at all. Do you know what happened? He went to the park for a game of football with the boys living next door. But the big boys in the park started yelling at Johed: "You can't play, you!", "Afghanistan", "You're dangerous, ha ha!"

What do you think Johed felt like? He walked away, and stood there all by himself watching the boys play football.

Now, would you like to help Johed? What would you have done if you'd witnessed something like this in the park?

(children provide suggestions)

Those are wonderful ideas! You would have gone to play with Johed, if you'd seen this, or you would have comforted him. Johed thinks you helped him really well, and look! He even looks a bit happier!



2. Background

The Persona Dolls method started in the USA and was developed during a two-year European project in which institutions from Denmark, Great Britain and The Netherlands participated. The examples in this article are based on the experiences in The Netherlands, where many educators from several playgroups and childcare centres developed the method.

3. Professional objectives

The Persona Dolls method gives children the possibility to identify, empathize, think up creative solutions to help and comfort the doll and to give or to share. It also offers a possibility for solving conflicts. Persona dolls and stories are developed around all the DECET goals.

3.1 Some examples

- **developing a positive self-image and strengthening identity:**

Doll Milou greets her aunt from Uganda. Two Ugandan adopted children in the group are observed to react with recognition and pride.

- **improving group identity and group atmosphere:**

When there is a party in the group, doll Kyril is allowed to join in.

- **learning to know and recognize diversity:**

Doll Jeroen lives with his mother and often stays at his father's during weekends. Children learn diversity in family structures and by naming similarities and differences in external characteristics, such as hair colour and type, skin colour, gender.

- **learning about emotions:**

Doll Mia misses her girlfriend at the childcare centre because she has gone to primary school. Mia feels very sad. Children learn to recognize and to name emotions.

- **practising empathy:**

The Persona Dolls' method is a means to stimulate and exercise empathy at a very early age. Children learn what is hurtful and harmful; they learn about unfair behaviour and then learn to act accordingly. For instance someone has taken away doll Mia's little play car. She's very sad. How can the children help her?

- **standing up for oneself and others:**

Doll Nelson is not allowed to play with a group of other children. What are the children's ideas for helping him to stand up for himself?



4. Competences: knowledge, skills and attitude

With the aid of the dolls, children may:

- recognize and name certain emotions;
- feel supported because they realize that other people have similar experiences;
- feel safe enough to talk about their own emotions;
- get acquainted with social diversity, ethnicity, handicaps and diversity they don't often come across;
- learn to understand diversity in the ways families and lifestyles are constructed;
- learn to understand the value of their own individuality and their own experience;
- learn to cope with dishonest behaviour, for themselves and others;
- learn to recognize stereotypes and prejudice;
- develop a critical mind and learn to reject unfair behaviour and discrimination;
- learn to solve problems.



The dolls also have an effect on the adults who work with them and who tell stories about them. They stimulate the educators to:

- help children to communicate with others;
- develop their own capacities for listening, as well as the capacity to accept the children's answers;
- put the dolls to pro-active use, in case there is a problem that occurs;
- pass on clear and correct information;
- discuss challenging themes with the children, themes that may have met with resistance before;
- become conscious of one's own stereotypes and prejudices;
- avoid presenting one's own ideas to the children as a standard, and to take a step back
- move the climate of the group towards caring and respect for each other, with less teasing, yelling and exclusion.



5. The context



Training using the Persona Dolls takes place within a programme or curriculum on Equity and Respect for Diversity. It is vital that this method be introduced within the framework of an Equity and respect for Diversity approach, such as:

- **Initial training.** Addressing several goals on diversity and combining various skills, such as arts and crafts (making the dolls), anthropology and psychology (designing a persona and family background) and storytelling.
 - **Long-term in-service training.** Working with teams in childcare centres to introduce the method, to support the educators in using the method in daily practice and to provide feedback to educators.
 - **Train-the-trainers.** Providing several modules on the method during a course on Diversity and Equity for trainers, tutors, staff members and/or college teachers.
- 



The Persona Dolls' method should not be an isolated activity. Working with the Persona Dolls in a childcare centre should receive the commitment of the complete team, not just of one of the educators. Staff members and managers should integrate the Persona Dolls method into their own teaching concepts and practices.



Professor Glenda Mac Naughton used the Persona Dolls in Australia as a research tool. Her research revealed that the best chance for children to learn about diversity is when professionals:

- ask children what they already know about (social) diversity;
- give children time to think about themes and questions and are patient when they look for answers;
- try to discuss the reasons behind the children's answers;
- prepare children for discussions in small groups;
- evaluate progress.



6. The process

The training process with Persona Dolls consists of the following elements:

Observation

Each educator begins by observing her children's group, using a global questionnaire to answer the following questions: 'Which diversity do you see in your children's group?' 'Which children's emotions are important in your group?' 'When listening to communication, which values, judgements and prejudices do you realize in your own, your colleagues' and the parents' remarks and comments?'

The observations provide many starting points for determining the choice of the doll and choosing the themes of the stories. The observations are not only important at the outset of the project, but also regularly during the project period.



Choosing and developing the doll

Based on the observations, the educators choose a doll suitable for their children's group. In general, they have two possibilities. They could choose a doll which provides diversity in the group (a black doll in a group of white children, a disabled doll in a group with physical healthy children). They could also choose a doll which corresponds to the situation of some of the children in the group (children of divorced parents; children living in a family business, such as a farm or a restaurant; children with the same ethnicity and/or skin colour). The educator should avoid having the doll resemble one of the children in too many features.



Introduction of the doll

A new doll will be introduced in the children's group during a few sessions, before the real story-telling starts. The doll will be presented to the group as a friend, one who visits the group now and then and sits on the shelf in the classroom or group. During the first sessions, the children will hear the name, family background and character of the doll. The aim is that the children recognize and relate to the doll, through questions



to the group such as: "In whose family there also is a baby sister?" "Whose grandmother also lives far away?" "Who loves pizza, too?"

The doll's visit starts and finishes with small rituals: saying hello, singing a song, giving a hug to say good bye, holding the doll on one's lap, etc.

Storytelling



The themes of the stories are compatible with the children's age. Therefore, recognizing emotions and stimulating empathy will be most important with children under three. Teasing, conflict solving and standing up for oneself and others can be used for the three-year olds on up. The process of storytelling must be done within the framework of the Equity and Respect for Diversity approach.

Follow up activities



The stories will be more effective if they are supported by follow-up activities: reading a children's book, singing a song, drawing, dancing, drama. The children then better understand the message of the story.

Registration, reporting, continuing

As mentioned before, the Persona Dolls method should not be an isolated practice or activity. The method is part of the learning plan in the childcare centre and the entire team, not just one of the educators, should be committed to it.

7. Training activities

7.1 Choosing a doll



During the training session, there are a variety of dolls available. The students must choose one of the dolls and describe a persona along the following lines: name, age, gender, family background, ethnic background, social class, family structure, living conditions, experiences of migration or flight, preferences in food, special habits, special holidays, favourite activities, books, songs, TV programmes, characteristics.

Example of characters:

This is Mia. She's three years old and lives in a flat with her father and her mother. Her grandma and grandpa live in Curaçao (Dutch Antilles), where the weather is always lovely and warm. At home, her mother speaks to Mia in Papiamentu and sings songs from Curacao to her. Mia doesn't like boisterous games; she's rather shy sometimes. She loves chicken with sauce and marshmallows.



This is Alfred. With his father, he lives above the pizzeria, where he often goes to play because of its nice busy atmosphere. Alfred likes lots of people to be there and there is a lot of laughter. Alfred is four, and still needs time to get used to Daddy's new wife, his stepmother Maria. Alfred isn't sure yet how much he likes her. Alfred's mama lives in Italy and he spends every summer with her. Daddy speaks Italian to Alfred and Maria speaks Dutch. Alfred likes pizzas, but he also likes sausages and French fries. He wishes he didn't have to wear glasses.



This is Johed. He lives in a flat with his parents, two brothers and a sister. Johed is four and adores playing football; he's good at scoring goals. He's been living in Holland for three years now and they've just moved to this new flat. Everything is new and unknown: the street, the neighbours, the shops, the childcare centre. Before they came to Holland, the family used to live in Afghanistan, where Johed's grandfather and grandmother and his uncles and aunts still live. Daddy and Mummy talk a lot about grandfather and grandmother; they often feel very sad.

7.2 Telling a story

Using their chosen Persona Dolls, the students compose a story based around the issue of diversity, prejudices and discrimination, or standing up for yourself and others.

In a role playing session, one of the students tells the story to the group, while the rest of the participants react and respond as if they were the young children. Afterwards the story is evaluated, commented upon and, if necessary, improved, .

Storytelling example:

Doll Mia is briefly introduced. The children come up with all sorts of stories by themselves that they still remember from previous visits. Mia tells them she was playing with a little car and then someone came and grabbed her car from her.

Target - to teach Mia to stand up for herself

Mia felt sad and angry because her car was taken away from her. The educator asks for recognition of and empathy with Mia's emotions.

How do we help Mia? The children come up with all sorts of solutions.

Conclusion/summing up - the educator mentions a solution proposed by one of the children, which comes closest to her target, i.e. helping Mia in learning how to stand up for herself. She says, "Mia is really happy that you wanted to help her. Next time, if someone comes and grabs her car, she will think that it's a good idea to say: "I want my car back, get your own car out of the cupboard if you want to play with me."

8. Evaluation

8.1 Educators' experiences

The educators who are involved with the method are enthusiastic and believe the group cannot live without this 'special' doll. The doll has become a friend to the children and, as one of the educators said, 'the children love the dolls'.

At the outset, educators thought working with the Persona Doll would take some getting used to. What would be the children's reaction to the doll? How were they to tell the story and what should they do with unexpected questions from the children? This unusual new method made some educators insecure. However, any hesitancy is quickly disappearing, in particular because the children are so enthusiastic. The children tell the doll's stories at home and some parents ask the educator 'Who is that new 'child' they are talking about?'



The educators are pleased about the children's involvement during the storytelling. One educator feels that she can support the children's feelings, which she thinks is very satisfying.

8.2 Potential Problems and Pitfalls



In spite of these positive experiences, the educators, coordinators and tutors discovered some pitfalls during the process of working with the dolls. One of these is the tendency to attribute too many features to the doll which are different from the children in the group. The risk is that the doll will be seen as strange and weird, instead of similar and a friend. With too many differences in the doll's character or daily life, the children can neither connect nor identify with the doll.



Another potential problem is that educators want to set out their teaching and moral rules through the stories of the doll. For instance, when an educator is annoyed that the children don't want to tidy up the room after playing, she uses the Persona Doll to give a good example to the children. The doll is not meant to be used to promote the educator but, rather, to support the children.



Finally, the doll should not become a 'problem doll'. This will happen if, too often, the doll is confronted with problems and never has positive experiences. It is important to find a balance between the dark and light sides in the doll's life.

8.3 Positive Aspects



Many teachers have found that the Persona Doll Method is very useful in stimulating young children's empathy. The stories also stimulate the children's problem solving skills.

Good observation is a must for identifying suitable themes, such as: pride in one's background, one's family, one's skin colour and body; similarities and differences between individual children and between groups and communities; collaboration within the children's group, toy sharing and respect for each other's possibilities and limitations.

Educators are pleased with the Persona Dolls Method and see it as a productive and playful approach for bringing equity and diversity issues into practice



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Intercultural communication between parents and professionals

Emanuelle Murcier, Michelle Clausier, ACEPP

DECET mission statement and goals

ACEPP has developed a training module for childcare professionals which recognises each child's place and identity in the childcare centre while supporting intercultural exchanges. Promotion of greater respect for diversity among parents and professionals plays a key role in achieving these aims. Through this approach, the module addresses Objectives 1, 2, and 3 of DECET. (see Article II.2)

ACEPP - institutional goals regarding diversity

The approach of ACEPP is centred on parental involvement; an essential element in the respect for diversity issue. Indeed, for ACEPP, the presence of the parents in the childcare centre makes it possible to better identify the culture of each child and take it into account when providing care. Moreover, the parents' participation enables a diversity of educational values to be experienced in daily life. In this way, the childcare centre offers a space for intercultural encounters, where all involved learn how to move beyond prejudices and lack of understanding.

ACEPP's objective is to support the development of parent-professional relationships which welcome a diversity of educational values and respect each child's identity.

Understanding cultural shock

Through this training module ACEPP facilitates collaboration between parents and professionals that respects diversity and encourages professionals to acquire attitudes of openness. At the same time, this module recognises that, while diversity is enriching, it can also be the source of many cultural shocks between parents and professionals, due to differences in values and educational practices.

This concept of cultural shocks, introduced by Margalit Cohen Emerique, is important, because, if ignored, cultural shocks cannot be dealt with and overcome thus generating withdrawal or rejection.

When facing parental practices that are far removed from their own, professionals may judge the parents (*"These parents cannot deal with their child"*) or impose their norms (*"Here, we do like this; it is the rule"*). Both these attitudes are harmful to the child and to the respect for his identity because he feels that his parents' cultural belonging is being denied.

These attitudes of judgement spring from an identity threat on the part of professionals, because these shocks have not been addressed. Their professional culture is often



centred on theories of child development, which refer to a Western and normative concept of education.

When facing parents who have practices which do not correspond to these models, childcare professionals struggle with culture shock. For example: putting a child down to sleep in a noisy playroom in the middle of the other children and adults clashes with professional concepts of respect for the rhythm of the child, as well as the association between sleep and calm. As a result, professionals may adopt the attitude that the mother has "a lack of respect for the child". Or a parent speaking to a child in a manner which may seem rude, sharp or abrasive may also arouse culture shock, as does the practice of allowing one's child to play alone outdoors outside an apartment block.

Emerique has developed a three-step approach to addressing culture shock, beginning with and based upon each person's understanding of his/her own frame of reference. In this way, each individual can understand where shocks may lie. This in turn makes it easier to stand back, 'decentre' and keep an attitude of openness.

The second step - exploration of the other's frame of reference - makes it possible to provide meaning to the parents' practices, thereby avoiding fixed, generalised, simplified or judgmental interpretations which block communication.

Finally, the third step, negotiation, is fundamental, because parent-professional relationships in a diversified context are, necessarily, the object of negotiations between two different frames of reference. Only by negotiating; that is, looking for an 'in between', does it become possible to avoid making one culture dominant and another submissive.

Emerique's approach is a key process for working with professionals to foster attitudes of openness, understanding and respect for the diversity of parents. These attitudes are also a pre-condition to respect for the child's identity.

Regarding parents, this training module aims to assist them in overcoming judgmental attitudes with respect to others.

Module goals - developing knowledge, skills and attitudes

ACEPP'S objectives for this training module are to:

- allow professionals to become aware of cultural shocks they can experience in the presence of parents who use educational practices foreign to them;
- become aware of the impact of their attitude on the quality of care and the possible involvement of parents in the centre;
- work at distancing themselves from their own frame of reference;
- gain insights into the relativity of educational values;
- establish a relationship based on trust and on the sharing of knowledge between parents and professionals concerning the education of children from different cultures; providing parents' practices with meaning and requiring professionals to go beyond incomprehension, value judgments and/ or attitudes of withdrawal;
- allow the participants to build capacities for negotiation so that educational



practices of the different families are considered both in individual care and in the collective educational project.

Training context

Training normally takes place over four days. Participants must possess maturity and professional experience. Training can be implemented with a group made up solely of professionals or a mix of professionals and parents.

Timing and format

This module is integrated into a longer training process, for example the programme described in Chapter II.2. It constitutes the core of the courses ACEPP offers relating to diversity. This module, which depends upon a climate of trust and mutual respect within the group, usually takes place after the initial days of training, so that participants have had the opportunity to bond. However, it is important that the module does not take place too late in the training session, since it often triggers self-questioning and a desire to change the childcare centres.

Three part structure involving practical exercise

Having established the core theoretical concepts, such as culture and frame of reference, the group engages in practical exercises based on Emerique's approach, such as decentering, approaching the other's frame of reference and negotiation.

Exercise 1. Cultural shock and decentering

The concept of culture is often limited to ethnic belonging. However, each individual is composed of multiple memberships (family, professional circles, geographical locations, political and religious affiliations, etc.) which intervene in a more or less conscious way in any relationship. These bonds are often at the origin of cultural shocks because the values related to these memberships are being questioned. Therefore, each one of us has 'sensitive areas'; that is, strong values linked to the groups we identify with and upon which our identity is based.

This first exercise is designed to develop the concept of culture and help each participant become aware of its various components, including the memberships that constitute that culture.

Participants are asked to recall situations of culture shock experienced within their professional or personal lives.

For example:

A mother requests that her child be put on the potty every hour, so that he will learn how to be clean.

Another mother (affectionately) calls her child "little idiot".

A childcare professional is shocked to learn that a two-year-old child sleeps in the parents' bed.



Such situations are then explored according to an analysis grid, developed by Emerique, which highlights what shocks each participant; the sensitive areas and personal and professional value references which are affected. Participants ask themselves:

- Which emotions did I feel: anger, indignation, surprise?
- To which values and personal or professional concepts within my frame of reference is this shock due?



By analysing the cultural shock, one can 'distance him/herself' from the emotion and achieve 'decentering'.

To supplement this exercise, and to help participants become aware of their own frame of reference and belonging, trainees could also pinpoint events in their professional or personal lives that allowed them to become aware of one or more aspects of their identity (religious, political, sexual, regional, professional membership). These are called 'founding events'.



For example, one group participant recalled a father speaking negatively about his neighbours. "You can see clearly that they are Catholics." "At that time, I realized that I found the remark painful, and I am aware today that what I felt related to my own Catholicism which is stronger than I imagined. It is part of me, that's true."

Exercise 2. Exploration of the other's frame of reference



This second stage focuses on discovering and trying to understand the framework of references within others. The trainer asks the group for their theories on what the person at the origin of the shock may feel: the values operating for him, his frames of reference and the various memberships which could explain his attitude. This exercise, because it rests on the development of hypotheses and not of certainties, allows participants to put aside their initial impressions and prejudices. In this way, they discover that different attitudes and approaches can make sense and have meaning - a necessary step before adopting a value judgement.

The group also explores the broader issues raised. Do differing values and frames of reference relate to the concepts of education, woman's place in society, religious practices, professional practice, and the like?

Exercise 3. Negotiation



The group then explores negotiation skills and strategies, discovering effective methods for achieving solutions that respect both parties' needs and interests and where each give some ground to achieve the best compromise.

For example, what is the best way for professionals to reach an agreement with the mother who wants her child put on the potty hourly? How can we ensure that this compromise respects the child's interests, takes into account the mother's wishes and is not in contradiction with the project of the childcare centre?

Participants learn negotiating techniques through role playing which allows the group to analyse real life situations and to find various possible solutions.



The evaluation process

Evaluation has two components:

- After each day of training, one hour is reserved for assessment.
- A few weeks after completing the module, participants complete an evaluation form asking them to assess the changes of attitudes and understanding that have taken place as a result of this module. Has there been a change in outlook and to what extent?

Evaluation outcomes

Because the group bases its work on real life situations of actual cultural shock, the evaluation results highlight the most valuable discoveries and skills achieved by both trainers and participants:

- The importance of acknowledging the fact that one can be shocked and that so long as it is not recognised it cannot be addressed properly.
- The growing ability of the participants to understand cultural differences without comparing and judging them based on their own cultural references: their "cultural glasses".
- The involvement of each person in the exploration of his/her own values and conceptions.
- A better understanding of cultural differences and of behaviours that are different.
- Discovering that any behaviour does have a meaning for its author.
- The importance of accepting the relative value of the professionals' expertise compared to that of the parents.

Participants' feedback

These new insights can be summed up by some of the comments which have appeared in the evaluation forms:

"This work is important not only for my work in the crèche, but also for all my encounters."

"I have come to understand that each parent had a reason to act like that and that it was often, from his point of view, for the good of his child."

"When I do not understand another parent, when I find that s/he exaggerates with his/her child, I now try to step over this judgement and to understand why he/she acts like that."

"When a parent had practices which I did not find very good for the child, I always told myself: how could I convince him to do as I do? In fact, I was interfering with the parent's common sense. Now, I wonder how to open the dialogue to understand why s/he acts the way she does."

"I changed my way of looking at things. Now calling practices into question and criticising and feeling bad about it, I ask myself: why do I feel that? What is at stake for me?"



"What has changed is that it does not disturb me any more that another parent does not act like me. Before, I felt attacked by different practices. Not anymore. There are as many parents as there are ways to raise a child. "

" The module has made me more open and allowed me to understand certain attitudes of other parents that I can now use, whereas before, I would have judged them severely."

What the trainers have learned

When tackling questions of cultural belonging, it is vital that the group feels confident. When people are asked to work on themselves, there is always a process to be respected. Individuals must feel free and safe to disclose what they have discovered. What is most important is the self-discovery, not the sharing with others. The trainer must act as guarantor of this respect so that the group can function. He or she must also set the limits of what can be worked on within the group. This process is a discovery and skills development exercise, not a therapy session.

Sensitisation Workshop - Art and Drama

Anastasia Vafeas

Centre of Artistic and Educational Training "Schedia" ("The raft")

1. Professional objectives on Diversity and Equity

1.1 DECET mission and goals

This short training programme is designed to meet the following objectives contained within the DECET mission statement. Every individual involved in early years childcare:

- feels that he/she belongs
- is empowered to develop the diverse aspects of his/her identity
- can learn from others across cultural and other boundaries
- can participate as active citizens
- actively addresses bias through open communication and willingness to grow
- works with others to challenge institutional forms of prejudice and discrimination

1.2 Institutional goals

This programme focuses on the importance of art to promote respect for diversity, helping education professionals to understand the role artistic activities can play within the school context:

- Engage the active interest and participation of pupils in the learning process by basing activities around children's experiences and by introducing everyday situations into the school programme.
- Provide varied ways of expression and channelling of creativity.
- Emphasise the crucial importance of connecting manual to intellectual work.
- Offer opportunities within the classroom for the exchange and processing of cultural elements in the family background of each child.
- Allow teachers to work on existing group dynamics and intervene where required, so that groupings on the basis of stereotypes (e.g., girl-boy, native-immigrant, etc) are avoided.
- Open new avenues for the expression of hidden tensions and differences among children. Conflicts and concerns can be alleviated through the most suitable activity: rational (e.g., discussions) or symbolic (e.g., theatrical play). This also allows children to practice conflict resolution techniques.
- Develop a positive, more confident outlook to secure each child's successful social integration.

2. Competencies - knowledge, skills, attitude

This training programme shows professionals in pre-school education, how to use artistic activities effectively and creatively to promote respect for diversity.



Training is based on experiential-participative methods, giving participants the opportunity to:

- Experience the powerful results creative activities can have in exploring one's multiple identity, building a sense belonging, understanding other points of view and challenging prejudice and discrimination.
- Learn teaching methods based on artistic activities.
- Develop their interest in this area and participate in more in-depth training programmes.

3. Context

The training session lasts two days and is designed for educators of day-care centres and kindergartens based in a particular city or locality. The total number of participants varies according to the specific needs of each area. Participants are divided into mixed groups of 15-20, to facilitate the exchange of experiences. Participants are usually not acquainted with the issues of diversity and equity.

Course trainers are qualified teachers as well as artists. (collaborators of Schedia)

4. The process

Course participants must be pre-school educators working within the city's early years educational system.

5. Activities

The training session includes the following activities:

1st day – Artistic Workshops

Theatrical games and painting:

Who I think I am

How I see the other

Music

Our differences and our common interests

Synthesis of all three forms of art

(for example: theatrical improvisation combining elements of music and painting) How we can collaborate to achieve a common goal?

2nd day

- a. Discussion of personal feelings and reactions during the workshop on Day 1.
- b. Writing some common thoughts.
- c. Role play: "How our own identity and prejudices influence our work."

- 
- d. Demonstration of an example of good practice regarding respect for diversity in early childhood education.
 - e. Ideas to improve the quality of services in pre-school structures regarding the goals of anti-bias education.



6. Evaluation, Experiences, Questions

6.1 Evaluation

This training programme has been implemented in the Greek municipalities of Athens, Argiroupoli, Faliron, Thessaloniki, Heraklion. The programme received positive assessments from both the participants and the organisers. Most of the participants expressed their willingness to participate in longer training courses in this same field.



6.2 Experiences

During the creative workshops on the first day, participants enjoyed the experience, especially rediscovering their own eagerness to play. These reactions were aired during the discussions on Day 2, and all agreed that artistic activities are a very effective means of expression and communication.

Participants were more reserved when it came to discussing "How our own identity and prejudices influence our work." The group fell into two categories; those who admit their own prejudices and those who deny them.

6.3 Suggestions to trainers

Participants highlighted some areas where the trainers could be more effective. During the artistic activities, trainers should help participants feel more comfortable about expressing themselves freely and enjoy themselves. Censorship of any kind, ideological or aesthetic, will not allow the participants to enjoy the full, liberating creative experience.



During the discussion on Day 2, trainers must use great sensitivity in co-ordinating the discussion groups, so that no participant is offended and so that no defence mechanisms are aroused. In addition, trainers must be very careful not to project his/her prejudices onto others.

7. Literature



Anastasia Houndoumadi, *By a pool, eating plums. Exploring the learning needs of children of Muslim families living in Metaxourghio, Athens*. Athens: Schedia, 2002.

'How good it is to be you!' - An Anti-Bias journey

Training workshops and discussion groups designed to work in tandem with the above video.

Petra Wagner

Project Kinderwelten, Berlin, Germany

1. Introduction

This training programme has been designed to work hand in hand with the video, "How good it is to be you! – An Anti-Bias Journey" (Ghent: VBJK 1998, 28 min.)¹ gives an inspiring introduction to the Anti-Bias-Approach². In the video, Louise Derman-Sparks and ReGeena Booze outline how they developed the Anti-Bias Approach and what it means in practice. Some examples of Anti-Bias practice in Californian childcare centres are shown, such as playing with diverse dolls, looking at family walls, and talking about different ways of baking bread.

Through workshops and group discussion, the issues, guidelines and methods illustrated in the video can be examined in greater detail. Participants will gain a deeper knowledge of the issues raised, have opportunities to reflect on new ideas introduced within the video and also gain a more concrete understanding to the Anti-Bias goals referred to in the video.

2. Professional objectives on Diversity and Equity

The video should be seen as a starting point for structured group discussions. By talking about the issues raised in the video, participants will learn more about the Anti-Bias approach and will discover ways to use that knowledge in their own teaching context. This is an important goal, as Anti-Bias work requires a strong awareness of issues of social justice and power in one's own society. Techniques designed for a California context cannot be transplanted from one culture to another without adaptation to a new situation and set of issues.

3. Competencies - knowledge, Skills, Attitude

Through work with the video, participants will learn about Anti-Bias development and the principles underlying of the Anti-Bias activities, and gain opportunities for reflecting on their own attitudes and situation. In return, trainers will an insight into the participant's knowledge and experiences concerning Anti-Bias work.

¹Video ,How good it is to be you. An Anti Bias journey. Gent: VBJK, 1998. www.vbjk.org; www.decet.org

²Derman-Sparks, L., *Anti Bias Curriculum. Tools for empowering young*



4. The context

The method introduced here can be practised with groups of educators and students who want to know about the development and principles of the Anti-Bias Approach but have little or no knowledge of it.



5. Workshop activities

Participants view the video and share first impressions. The video is then played again, section by section, stopping for more detailed discussion and questions. A transcript of the video is very useful.

The workshop is structured along the same lines as the video:

The beginning

Louise Derman-Sparks recalls how a discussion with her adopted Afro-American son sparked her interest in exploring children's development of identity and their attitudes towards others

Questions for reflection and discussions:

What do you know about the development of identity in young children?

Where/ from whom did you learn it?

Was this an issue in your teacher training? How?

Valuing diversity

ReGeena Booze gives examples of how she nurtures pride and self-esteem in children. Derman-Sparks explains why an active Anti-Bias-Approach is needed to help children to understand who they are and to respect others.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

(Based on a review of ANTI-BIAS goals 1 and 2)

How do we understand identity/self concept and group identity?

What is the link between self and group identity?

To be proud – is it a goal that you pursue?

What are your personal experiences with pride?

Who uses "pride" in your context?

Discuss the statement: "To bring different children together does not automatically lead to mutual understanding and inclusion of all the children." What is your experience?

Derman-Sparks states that children, at a very early age, show discomfort towards people who are different from them because they perceive negative messages about these people. Are there any examples of this that come to mind?

An environment reflecting diversity

Booze explains, using examples, how an Anti-Bias environment reflects diversity.

**Questions for reflection and discussion:**

Why should a childcare centre reflect the diversity among its children and their families?

Does your childcare centre reflect the diversity of your children?

Who is reflected?

Who is missing?

Booze says it is not tolerance that she wants. What does she mean by that? What do you think about it?

**Building an Anti-Bias Approach as a journey**

Derman-Sparks stresses the need for self-reflection as teacher/educator.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

(Read the ANTI-BIAS goals for children and adults: Discussion of terms)

What is similar for children and adults? What is different?

Which of my own experiences come to my mind?

**Prevailing prejudices**

Booze tells how she reacts when children confront her with prejudices.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

What kind of prejudices are you confronted with?

How do you react when children or parents express prejudices?

How do you feel?

Why is it so difficult not to judge but to ask questions and explain?

**An Anti-Bias Approach benefits all children**

Derman-Sparks explains how discrimination has different effects on children, depending on their status as members of the minority or the majority. However, it is harmful for all children.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

"Anti-Bias education is necessary when there are many minority children." Discuss the statement.

Why is Anti-Bias-work necessary for children of the majority?

6. Evaluation, Experiences, Questions



For participants who are not proficient in English, the translated transcript of the video should be provided (available in German). However, even those not fluent in English found the video interesting, providing succinct, well-organised information, new issues to reflect upon, and an opportunity to see two impressive women making a difference.

The Dominant Walk

Colette Murray

Miranda Cooke

The 'eist' Project Pavee Point, Ireland

1. Introduction

This is an interactive exercise which explores the representation of all children and families in society in general and, more specifically, in the early childhood setting.

2. Professional Objectives on Diversity and Equity

The exercise aims to:

1. Raise awareness of the strong messages about what is 'normalised' in society;
2. Introduce ideas about identity formation and the development of self-esteem
3. Highlight issues of individual and group identity;
4. Make a connection between diversity issues and practitioners' expectations for minority group children;
5. Assist participants to proof the physical environment¹ of their early childhood settings;
6. Highlight the importance of first impressions for parents when accessing a service;
7. Support the participant in challenging negative stereotypes within their physical environment.

3. Competencies and Knowledge

Participants will learn how:

- Dominant culture and minorities are depicted in our society and how the power of these images influences attitude formation.
- Societal messages give value to or devalue, from a very early age, who children are and where they are from
- It is important for children to receive messages that support their identity, both as individuals and in terms of their particular background or community, so that they feel a sense of belonging and valued.
- An environment that reflects diversity can be a useful tool for prompting discussions and supporting the development of children's understanding of diversity and equality issues, as well as for dealing with difficult issues that may arise.
- Vital it is to ensure that all children are represented in the physical environment.

¹ The physical environment includes the book, art, music and home corner, dolls, puppets, toyhomes, play props, wall displays, posters, table top activities, labeling of play areas, equipment and rooms, the outdoor play area, welcoming areas, leaflets, notice boards and accessibility to play areas and equipment.

3.1 Skills



Participants will learn to develop:

- The ability to proof their physical environment to see if it represents all the children in their settings and diversity in the wider society.
- Ideas on how they can begin to represent children in their setting e.g. through a resource list or ideas on how to make their own resources.



3.2 Attitudes

Participants will reflect on the development of empathy and on how attitudes are influenced by the messages we receive from society, media, television and publications, etc. This exercise gives participants the opportunity to examine how their own attitudes may have been influenced by societal messages. This exercise can also be useful to challenge participants who may be in denial about the relevance of this work to early childhood.



4. The context

This exercise can be carried out at pre-service or in-service training sessions with managers, practitioners or trainers.



5. The process

This exercise is very child-centred, capturing the imagination and concerns of practitioners who wish to support all children in their settings. Suitable for introductory training or as part of more in depth course work, The Dominant Walk is a good starting point for any training programme in that it give educators the skill to proof the environment. Prior to the exercise, it is useful to provide participants with some grounding in identity development/formation and current research on the development of pre-prejudice in children.



6. Activities

6.1 Materials required

- A collage of images from newspapers, magazines, travel brochures and nursery catalogues stuck onto large pieces of cardboard. It is advisable to laminate.
- A selection of greeting cards: young children's birthday cards, and cards for other festive occasions.
- A selection of magazines and travel brochures.
- A selection of illustrated children's books, books used in early childhood settings and primary school books.
- An overhead with the questions for the participants to think about as they carry out the walk.
- A selection of child personas which give a description of a particular child, including the child's age and some information about his/her identity and where he/she resides.
- It is vital that the descriptions of the children (personas) include examples that have



relevance to the participants who are involved in the exercises. Therefore, prior information about the make-up of the children under the care of the participants would be very helpful in making the exercise more relevant and useful.

- Each of the child personas printed on card and then laminated.

6.2 Space



Enough space will be needed to display all the different materials of the dominant walk

- space for the participants to move around the room in pairs to look through the various materials.

6.3 Time

As there are many materials used in this exercise, set-up time is clearly needed. Also allow between 1,5 and 2 hours for all participants to view the materials and give feedback.

6.4 Method of delivery



The trainer will need to take the following steps:

1. Explain the exercise
 2. Divide the group into pairs
 3. Give each pair their child persona, The following are some examples that have been used in sessions:
 - A Black, four-year-old boy, now living in a rural area, who was born in Ireland to an Irish 'single' mother working as a legal secretary.
 - A white, Irish, five-year-old girl whose mother is a doctor and father is a solicitor. She has an older brother in boarding school and a sister at university.
 - A four-year-old Muslim girl who was born in Ireland. She lives with her mother and father who run their own food store in Dublin city centre.
 - An adopted Vietnamese three-year-old bilingual boy whose family speaks Irish at home. His mother is a primary school teacher and his father is a prison officer.
 - A Black four year-old boy who is deaf; his parents use sign language to communicate with him. His father is a doctor and his mother works at home.
 - A three-year-old Traveller girl living with her mother and father, three sisters and a brother on a halting site. Her aunts, uncles and cousins live on the same site.
 - A four-year-old boy who lives on a small island off the west coast of Ireland. He speaks Irish and his father works for Raidio Na Gaeltachta (Irish Language Station)
 4. Participants in the paired groupings are asked to discuss their particular child as described on the cards and to develop a 'persona' for the child i.e. a name and more descriptive details, for example, what is important to them in their lives. These will be shared with the group having completed the activity.
 5. Each pair is asked to go for a walk as if they are this child, but using their adult knowledge to analyse the situation and consider the messages the child is receiving. The group has been told that this is a random selection of printed materials currently available in local shops and in society in general.
 6. The participants are asked to look for images that reflect their 'persona' identity,
- 



including the family of the child. The images should include those that are positive, negative or neutral.

7. Participants make notes of their observations. An overhead lists the questions for them to keep in mind while viewing.
 - What images of you and your life are reflected here?
 - What do these images tell you about yourself?
 - How did you feel?
8. After approximately fifteen minutes, each group reports back to the larger group. They are asked to describe the persona they have developed for the child and to answer the questions on the overhead.



6.5 Discussion

The participants responded to the images presented as follows:

The majority culture, children and families:

- They dominate the general images.
- They appear to be the only people who go on holidays.
- White people appear to be leading successful and happy lives in most of the images.



Traveller children and families:

- Images of Travellers were dull and grim, mostly black and white print and in newspapers.
- In the newspapers, Traveller children were only photographed in poor conditions and in very serious situations: for example, at protests, watching their parents having to deal with the police and other negative news stories.
- Black children and Roma gypsy children are photographed when articles are written on racism.
- There are more photographs of Black and white children doing things together.
- Participants encountered no photographs or books with Traveller and settled children existing happily together.
- There are no positive role models depicted for Travellers in any of the materials used in this exercise.



Black children and families

- There are no relevant images of Black Irish children and families.
- Images are exotic and have no relevance to children's everyday lives.
- Black people tend to be depicted if they are famous: for example, associated with sports, music and fashion, or if they are living in poverty.
- Pictures of Black children living in poverty tended to show a white person (usually famous) helping them.
- There are very few images of Black people carrying out everyday tasks or working for a living in a variety of positions.



Family diversity

- 
- Very little diversity of family types.

Disability

- Disability was invisible.

Language diversity

- Very little representation of language diversity.



6.6 Group responses to the exercise

Having taken on the 'persona' of the child, participants reported feeling as if they were in the minority, that there were pre-conceived ideas of who they were. It did not feel good being this child and they felt they were not represented in Irish society.



6.7 Conclusions

Conclusions reached in previous sessions using this exercise have focused on the fact that children get messages from images and representations in their environment, whether or not this is intended. Therefore early childhood practitioners have a responsibility to audit the environmental imagery they present in their settings to ensure inclusion for all children. Another important point is that what is omitted from the environment can send just as strong a message as what is included.

7. Follow up exercise on the Dominant Walk

Taking the same identities already used in the Dominant Walk, participants are asked:

- As pairs, to think of ways in which they could provide a sense of belonging for the particular persona child if he/she was in their early years educational setting.
- to think imaginatively about ways to portray positive images of minorities in the physical environment.



8. Resources

The 'éist' project has developed a resource list, which recommends resources (and where to find them) for promoting diversity and equality in early childhood. However, participants are also encouraged to develop their own resources in their early years setting. A camera can be a useful tool. For example:

- Develop a family wall and encourage families to bring in photographs. Discuss the photos with the children and deal with any issues that arise out of those discussions.
- Take photographs of the children's faces, enlarge and laminate them and use them to discuss similarities and differences. With older children they can be used as jigsaws.



Before finishing the session, participants are advised not to ignore the issues that arise in their day to day activities and to ensure that minority children are not singled out and asked to represent their background or community. When children ask questions related to diversity, clear and accurate information should always be provided.

9. Evaluation



Participants are usually asked to write, in one sentence, what they thought of the exercise. Below is a sample of the responses from a group of pre-service participants:

- *I realised that many children from different backgrounds are not represented as they should be. It made me think of ways to include children.*
- *Very interesting about learning how to represent all types/different children.*
- *I found it very interesting and it also enlightened me as to how different cultures are represented.*
- *Eye opening - made me more aware of media depictions.*
- *Interesting and makes me think differently.*
- *I found this session very informative on the different images portrayed of people and families in magazines, books etc.*
- *It made me think!*
- *Subtle messages are often the strongest and speak louder than direct statements.*
- *Made me think from a perspective different to my own, but I found it quite hard.*
- *Interesting way of looking through others' eyes.*
- *This class was very surprising in that it showed me that there are so many gaps in how people from minority groups are portrayed.*
- *Interesting - made me notice things I mightn't necessarily have considered before.*
- *Drew my attention to how little minorities are positively represented in the media.*

Respect for diversity in early childhood care and education

The cd rom and its application

Anke van Keulen, Bureau MUTANT, The Netherlands

1. Professional objectives on Diversity and Equity

The CD Rom 'Respect for diversity in early childhood care and education' (VBJK, e.a. 1997)¹ is based on the 'Quality Targets in Services for Young children' established by the European Commission Network on Childcare. These targets advocate respect for diversity.

The CD Rom also meets these DECET goals:

- Feeling of belonging;
- Opportunities for developing diverse aspects of individual identity;
- Learning from each other across cultural and other boundaries;
- Participation as active citizens;
- Active confrontation with bias through open communication and willingness to grow;
- Co-operation in challenging institutional forms of prejudice and discrimination.

This CD Rom is designed to introduce diversity and equity issues to educators and students.

2. Competencies - knowledge, skills, attitude

The theoretical framework of the CD Rom is based on the Anti-Bias Curriculum, developed by Louise Derman Sparks, and on experiences in different European countries. Both theoretical and practical frameworks are extensively demonstrated on this CD Rom with texts, interviews and examples of good practices.

Users may 'surf' and find ideas and answers to questions about the recruitment and selection of a multicultural team. How do parents talk about diversity and evaluate this in the childcare centre? Users may also listen to lullabies from all over the world and browse through a great many children's books. They may view a childcare centre and learn from the way it is arranged, or stroll through various layouts, listen to musical instruments and explore play materials.

For those wishing to study diversity and equity issues in depth, the CD-ROM contains a library with texts and articles in many languages and a list of terminology. (Languages: English, French and Dutch)

¹CD ROM *Respect for diversity in early childhood care and education*. VBJK, KCCN, ACEPP, DIT, Gent, Belgium, 1997. Trilingual: English, French, Dutch. www.vbjk.org; www.decet.org.



3. Context

The cd-rom is a useful tool to be used for individual study as well as in with groups in initial training courses, in-service training sessions and team meetings.

4. The process

Examples of the use of the CD Rom in training courses:

- introduction of the issue of diversity in workshops and conferences,
- in-service training sessions for educators or initial training courses to show different aspects of working on diversity issues,
- as an exploratory route for educators and students to find their own way and become acquainted with different types of diversity. Viewers can select favourite themes, pause at issues they want to know more about, become acquainted with terminology, etc.
- for educators and students to discover and learn about:
 - ideas for good practice,
 - theoretical information,
 - definition of terms.
- for tutors to gain new ideas and best-practice examples for train-the-trainers courses.

5. Activities

To get the most benefit from the cd-rom, educators should undertake the following tasks. Some can take place during viewing; others are outside research, which will provide added insights. Using the cd-rom to answer the following questions will help educators to meet the target CD Rom Introduction for Educators.

1. Find and listen to the lullabies. Could you find them? What are your impressions?
2. Look up Louise Derman-Sparks and read the anti-bias goals. Where did you find them?
3. Look up the term 'colour blindness'. Do you agree with this text? Motivate?
4. Look for play materials and watch the Persona Dolls.
How should you include diversity in your play material?
5. Look for the multicultural team and look for quotes against this policy. With which opinion do you agree or disagree?
6. Look for the term 'tourist approach'? How should you prevent this?

6 Evaluation, Experiences, Questions

Trainers as well as educators need specific skills to use the cd-rom. Many of them are not used to this CD Rom medium. They have no experience with its technical use and do not know how to surf from one issue to another.



It is vital to ensure that educators, solo, or in teams, put the cd-rom to effective use, instead of merely watching the pictures while someone else uses it. Questioning individual educators to see how much information they have gleaned from the CD is a possibility. To answer the questions, the cd-rom would need to be used effectively. Another option is for the educators to work on the cd-rom at home, so that they can familiarise themselves with its use.

Once educators have mastered the cd-rom, how can this medium be used most effectively? Many trainers will need concrete guidelines on using the cd-rom with students and educators. Educators will need technical support in using the medium at home, or in general. A questionnaire, supplied with the cd-rom, containing the questions outlined above, is a useful way to provide educators with a 'route map' while surfing through the cd-rom. This questionnaire could be also used by trainers to assess the objectives.

The Target Game

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1. Professional objectives

The Target Game aims to raise awareness of systemic but covert discrimination in the accessibility of day-care centres. In the Flemish context in which it is developed, there is a shortage of day-care places. This means that centres have an explicit or implicit accessibility policy. The Target Game is a fun way to introduce a debate on accessibility in childcare and the covert (and often unintended) discrimination of different (minority) groups.

During this exercise, players will experience the frustration of being rejected for reasons that are difficult to understand. In a discussion afterwards, participants may recognise events that have occurred in their own practice and become more aware of the situation in the (Flemish) day-care centres. In doing so, the Target Game helps to meet the DECET aim of working together to challenge structural forms of discrimination.

This game can be played with professionals involved in the intake policy in early childhood provision, such as directors or heads of centres. As the game has no direct visible links with any actual childcare providers, it can also be used for any discussion on accessibility in other settings.

2. Competencies - knowledge, skills and attitudes

The Target Game does not aim to shed light on the overall situation or the specific mechanisms of exclusion in day-care. Rather, it enables participants to encounter first-hand the effect of random exclusion, and use this experience as a starting point for discussion or reflection. Adding an element of humour makes a difficult topic easier to address.

The game focuses quite precisely on the frustration that can arise from being rejected due to incomprehensible and arbitrary seeming procedures, and rules which of themselves are discriminatory. In addition, The Target Game endeavours to create awareness and knowledge of cultural habits and, ultimately, to realise the importance of good communication with everyone.

3. Context

Most often, the accessibility policy of Flemish day-care centres is implicit. Research reveals that people from ethnic minorities, as well as Belgian marginalised groups (such as the unemployed) have much less access to publicly funded day-care. In general,



high-income groups are over-represented and low-income groups underrepresented in Flemish day-care. Very often, the availability of access comes under the remit of the director, yet directors are seldom aware of the discriminating effects of their policies. This makes it rather difficult to organise a debate on the social function of day-care centres.



4. The process

The Target Game has to be seen as 'warm-up' for a more in-depth session on accessibility criteria. The exercise helps to create a more open mood, which enables accessibility criteria and the possible discriminatory effects to be discussed more freely later. Because this subject is rather taboo, The Target Game provided an effective starting point for a longer project on discrimination in Brussels' day-care centres.



5. Activity: How to use the game

Components

- game board
- several dice (one for each group or player)
- coloured game pieces (one for each group or player)
- for each number on the game board, a set of questions or assignment cards
- a game leader (judge)
- bonus cards

Rules

The game has a maximum of 8 players or 8 groups of players.

The winner of the game is the player or group who reaches the target first. The rest lose out.

Everyone starts at the same time by rolling the dice and moving their pawn to the first number, where they must select a card and answer a question or carry out an assignment. They can only move on if they have the right answer. The answer has to be checked with the "judge" and he/she decides if a player can move on or not.

If the answer is not correct, the player has to go back to the beginning (or 'nothing') and start all over again.

The cards

Sample messages, questions and assignments which will appear on the cards.

1. Congratulations! The first step is the hardest and you have taken it. You can go on.
 2. How many hours do 2-year-olds sleep a day?
 3. What is the right way to put an elephant in the refrigerator?
 4. ILI SABAHLAR IDINIZ NE? If you don't understand this, you have to go back to the beginning.
 5. To participate in this game, you will need a certificate. If you haven't got one, get it from the judge and go back to the start. If you do have a certificate, go on.
 6. Bonjour, avant de continuer ce jeu, vous devez faire une prière Marie, un avé.
- 



Je vous salut Marie, plein de ... » Si vous n'arrivez pas a terminer la prière, retourner jusqu'au "nothing".

7. What is the best food for a 4-month-old baby?
8. You need a written character reference to go on with the game. If you don't have this evidence of good character, you must ask the opinion of a competitor in the game. If it is negative go back to the start.
9. Good Job! You have reached number 9. Go on to number 15.
10. Where does the light go when it gets dark?
11. It is not important to wear shoes for this game. Go on.
12. This question is only for men. If you are not a man, go back to "nothing". For men: Why are women so sensitive?
13. Provide a plan for your working week for the same time next year.
14. How do you get a mouse into the refrigerator?
15. ILI SABAHLAR(good morning), IDINIZ NE(what's your name?) Devam et (go on).
16. What is the best way to put a one-year-old to sleep?
17. What are the main ingredients of "Gentse Waterzooi" (a typical Flemish dish)
18. From which age may children eat avocados?
19. Sorry: This number means bad luck, go back to the start.

6. Evaluation

After the game, a round-table discussion is organised with the trainees. They frequently express the fact that they felt frustration playing the game, stimulating a lively discussion later in the session.

Sample feedback:

"I appreciated the fun and active way to experience the topic."

"I now realise how frustrating it must be for some people to find a place in childcare if they are rejected everywhere and often do not understand why they are being rejected. "

This is, of course, no miracle training approach. In the round-table discussions, some participants are reluctant to analyse their specific access policies:

"I don't want to discuss accessibility because we can't do anything about it."

7. Conclusions

In our experience, this game and the subsequent discussion the eyes of many participants. In most cases, participants are at least willing to discuss the problems of accessibility and to explore ways of changing things in their own practice.

However, some don't want to discuss this topic and refuse to change anything in the way they work. For these people, this game doesn't always bring more openness.

Gameboard:

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	nothing
9								
10								
11								
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	target

The Timeline

Diversity and Equality: Historical and Legislative Timeline

Colette Murray, Miranda Cooke
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1. Introduction

The Diversity and Equality: Historical and Legislative Timeline is an interactive exercise, which outlines the historical context and legislative response to diversity in Ireland. This exercise can be modified to meet your individual national or local context. All 'isms' can be addressed depending on your focus. As an alternative to a traditional lecture, this exercise encourages participants to actively engage and examine their own knowledge of diversity and equality issues in the Irish context.

2. Professional Objectives on Diversity and Equity

The exercises aims to:

1. raise awareness and acknowledge that diversity is not a new phenomenon in Ireland.
2. outline international conventions, agreements, national policy and legislation in relation to diversity and equality.
3. make the connection between the historical and legislative contexts.
4. identify the knowledge base of the participants being trained.

These aims are linked to the DECET goals by building on the practitioners' knowledge base and by challenging inaccuracies in relation to the historical and legislative context in Ireland. This exercise facilitates practitioners to reflect on their own identity, fosters empathy towards others and encourages critical thinking about the historical and legislative context in Ireland.

3. Competencies

3.1 Knowledge

Participants are informed about:

- Historical Context and the make up of Irish society
- International Agreements and Conventions and their relevance to the Irish context
- National policy and legislation which deals with equality and diversity issues, with particular reference to the early childhood sector.

3.2 Skills

Participants will improve their knowledge base and engage in critical thinking through discussion and reflection on issues relevant to Irish society, early childhood education and diversity and equality issues.

3.3 Attitudes

Participants reflect on what it means to be Irish. The stereotype of a white, Irish, settled, Catholic population will be challenged. Participants will also reflect on policy and legislation and the impact on the lives of minorities in Irish society. The group will explore how Irish society has been influenced by international agreements and consider the oppression and migration the Irish have experienced and how Irish society is now responding to new immigrants.

4. Context

This exercise can be carried out at pre-service or in-service training sessions with managers, practitioners or trainers.

5. The process

This exercise can be used in:

- introductory training
- more in-depth course work.

It is vital to cover this background information early on in the training process so as to build a common understanding about the Irish context before going into more depth on the issues.

6. Activities

6.1 Materials required

- Three blank timelines; two for the practitioners and one for the trainer
- The timeline is approximately 420cm long and can be rolled out
- Three sets of historical cards – colour coded e.g. green
- Three sets of national policy and legislation cards – colour coded e.g. brown
- Three sets of international policy and legislation cards - colour coded e.g. pink
- In total, there are nine sets of cards; six sets for the participants and one for the trainer
- The trainer's three sets of cards; (1) historical, (2) national policy and legislation and (3) international policy and legislation all have the dates written on them
- The participant's cards have no dates on them

6.2 Diagram of timeline

8000BC
century

21st

Section A					
Section B					





Section A = The dates are written, for example by century. Or dates may be divided into shorter periods, for instance 1900-1950, depending on the number of cards to be placed under each time period.

Section B = The cards are placed in the appropriate time periods.



6.3 Space

As each timeline is 420cm long and three will be used in the exercise, a large amount of space is required to carry out this activity.



6.4 Time

Plenty of time is needed for this activity to be set up and fully completed, between 11,5 and 2 hours.



6.5 Method of delivery

There are three distinct stages, each of which can stand alone.

Stage One: The historical context

Stage Two: National policy and legislation

Stage Three: International policy and legislation

The trainer will need to take the following steps:

1. Explain the exercise.
2. It is important to make clear this is not a quiz or competition but an alternative and enjoyable way of looking at history.
3. Roll out the two blank timelines for the participants.
4. Divide the players into two groups.
5. The two groups should then be further divided into pairs.
6. Each group is given a set of historical cards which are divided among the pairs. They are asked to place them in the relevant places on the timeline.
7. The participants are given between 10-15 minutes to carry this out.
8. While the groups are placing cards, the trainer can set up his or her own timeline at the top of the room where it will be visible to all the participants when they have completed their exercise.



6.6 Stage One. The Historical Context

Examples of cards used in this section:

- Arrival of the first men in Ireland across land bridge from Scotland: 8000BC
- Arrival of the Gaels: 100BC
- Christianity introduced to Ireland: 432 AD
- Vikings arrive: 795
- First Jews arrived in Ireland: 1079
- Earliest historical documentation of Traveller craftspeople, 'Tinkers' or tin-smiths: 1100's
- Arrival of Normans: 1170
- Palatines arrive in Ireland: 1709
- Anti-Semitism boycott in Limerick: 1904

- Muslims begin arriving in Ireland: 1950's
- Hungarian Refugees arrive: 1956

Following this section of the exercise, the trainer will place his/her own timeline at the top of the room showing the correct places for these historical events. Each group will be asked to nominate a representative to call out where they placed the various cards, which are then compared with the trainer's own timeline. Participants in previous sessions have found this very enjoyable and informative. Information is expanded as the cards are placed on the trainer's timeline.

6.7 Stage Two. National Policy and Legislation

- Each group is given cards with various national legislation and policy developments.
- They are asked to place them on the timeline, when they think they actually occurred.
- Feedback as in Stage One.

6.8 Stage Three. International Policy and Legislation

- Each group is given cards with various international legislative and policy developments.
- They are asked to place them on the timeline, when they think they actually occurred.
- Feedback as in Stage One.

6.9 Discussion

This activity generates much discussion, as participants discover their limited knowledge concerning the composition of Irish society and the legislative responses, both national and international. Participants have acknowledged the importance of having accurate information when discussing diversity issues and their roles as practitioners. The exercise has also highlighted the relevance of equality legislation in accessing the early childhood settings.

6.10 Reading materials

Materials given to participants include:

- Historical and legislative information
- Where to source information on equality legislation in Ireland
- Where to source policy documents and conventions that promote children's rights.

7. Evaluation

Upon completion of the activity, participants are asked to answer questions about the exercise on a personal reflection form. Below are some examples of how they responded to the questions: 'what did I learn and how did the session make me feel?':

- *Many acts and events were earlier in history than imagined...interesting I should know more about these areas.*
- *That Ireland has had a mixed community for much longer than I had imagined. That Ireland has been extremely slow in passing legislation protecting human rights. More aware and reflective.*

- 
- How long ago the mixed culture began in Ireland. Disgusted at the Irish government and the Catholic Church.
 - Everything covered was new to me. I need to know more about legislation and when it was introduced.
 - That a lot of very important Acts have only been introduced in recent years. I thought it was good as it opened our eyes to a lot of the inequality that has been present in our country up until recent years.
 - Different dates and times that new policies were implemented. Most of the policies were new for me, particularly those regarding the Travellers and racism and discrimination. I was interested in learning new facts and discovering things that I did not know.
 - Different cultures in Ireland since long before the 1900's. Travellers in Ireland for centuries. Information on Travellers I didn't know. I know nothing!
 - I learnt a lot of new information on different events, historical, national, international etc. It made me feel that we are not all as equal as we would like to think and there is still loads to be found out and to be done so that everyone can be treated fairly.

7.1 Trainer observations

Trainers need background information for each event on the cards, as participants may ask for more information or discussion may arise. It is, therefore, important to be able to elaborate and explain the various events and developments.

Culture and education

A Research Project for Education Students Examining Family and Professional Educational Practices.

Myriam Mony & Dominique Malleval,
ESSSE, Lyon

1. Professional objectives on diversity and equity

Students carry out a research project based on an internship allowing them to identify the links between culture and education by exploring the educational practices implemented by the childcare facility and by the family.

In the course of their research, the student should be in a position to listen and understand the practices of professionals and parents. Differences emerge at the interface between the educational practices implemented in the family context and those implemented by the childcare facility. As a result of these differences, what are the questions, reflections, and professional reactions that take place?

2. Knowledge, Skills, Attitude

Students are encouraged to question the way they deal with parents abstaining from value judgements, prejudice and preconceived interpretations.

They will explore ways to adopt a position which is not intrusive and which makes it possible to establish a real exchange. To do so, requires students to think of a difference not as a problem or a deficit to be corrected, but as a resource to be amplified.

Before embarking on the internship, students will participate in several activities, including a "photo-language session". Students will look at great diversity of family structures, reflecting upon their reactions and the images that come to mind when they view different family set-ups.

Also before undertaking their internship, students will undertake activities designed to build their understanding of the anthropological and systemic approaches underpinning the theories concerning macro- and micro-cultures. These approaches help to illuminate the processes of cultural functioning and evolution, as well as the interactions between family and institutional systems - raising the issue of the child's dual belonging to his family and to the childcare centre.

3. Context in which the training takes place

This individual research project takes place as part of the initial training course for Educators of Young Children¹, in the training unit UF1 - Pedagogy and Human Relations (where?) Prior to internship, students will be involved in a range of preparatory projects to ready them for work in practice.

¹See Chapter II.3 The Initial training process



4. Pre-internship training: the process and the activities

4.1 Part 1. Culture and education

Students choose the situation of a child from a family culture different from their own. (migrant culture or different socio-cultural milieu). They then describe an educational practice involving this child in two different contexts:

- In the family context: the people, the methods, the interactions, the history etc. ;
- In the childcare setting: a place marked by its own cultural identity, educational practices, rules, rituals, taboos, history etc.

For both situations, students explore and introduce a topic relating to the young child - an educational practice such as feeding, morning welcome, separation, massage, weaning, pacifier, toys, mealtime, sleep, nappy/diaper change, activities, play, festivities, relations with parents, adult /child interaction, and the like

They analyse the situation using two levels of exploration:

- Direct observation and / or interview
- Enrichment: readings, articles, films / other experiences

Students then reflect on their understanding of these educational practices based on their own cultural context, and ask questions which may arise from the interface of two different approaches.

By the end of Part 1, students should have prepared a 4-6 page document outlining the child and the situation in detail.

4.2. Part 2. Culture and Education

Part One enabled students to become aware of their reactions to educational practices as carried out in a family environment and in the context of the childcare setting. In addition key questions were highlighted.

Students are then asked to prepare a short paper 4 to 6 pages long, which addresses these questions at a deeper and broader level. They may find it useful to look at the theoretical background and carry out research into the fields of sociology. Or they may adopt a systematic approach based on their practical knowledge and their experiences in Part One. Or employ a combination of approaches. The aim is to develop ideas and insights, which are useful for the professional practice of any educator of young children.

This paper should be 4 to 6 pages long. Together with their notes on Part One, this should make up a 10-page document.

Before moving on to the practical phase of the project, these documents incorporating a description and evaluation of the situation are presented by students to the entire group. The student papers are also presented to the on-site trainers, discussed with



them, argued, justified and even modified, if need be (for example, in one situation, work was postponed until a later internship session).

4.3 Next steps

The students will regroup in June, during their practical training session, to assess the internship project, their experiences and their written work. This is an opportunity for students to pose questions about implementing some of the ideas suggested in their document into practice.

In September, the students turn in the first part of the paper. In October, the trainers give them feedback, both individually and collectively; the important methodological and theoretical milestones are then summarised.

In December, the trainers present the students – individually and collectively -- with their evaluations of the work. Trainers review the methodological and theoretical aspects, as well as the prospective professional implications observed by the students.

5. The written work

The paper must include, in addition to the child/situation description and evaluation:

A section on theory

According to the topic and practice chosen, start from the questions arising from the reflection on dual belonging and contribute theoretical elements in one or more disciplinary fields (anthropology, sociology, psychology, etc.).

A section on professional positioning

What is the impact of this theoretical reflection and identification of the prospective professional implications on the student's capacity to intervene as an Early Years' Educator?

6. Evaluation

6.1 Evaluation of the written work

Formative evaluation of the written work (part 1)

- | | |
|---|--------|
| - Quality of the construction of the paper (writing - links – structure) | 4pts |
| - Quality of the presentation of the educational practice in both contexts (family and childcare facility).
Use of research and other material | 6pts |
| - Quality of the ideas and the insights | 3 pts |
| - Quality of the complementary contributions.
Theoretical references in the field of Culture and Education. | 4pts |
| - Relevance of questioning | 3 pts |
| - Maximum total grade : | 20 pts |



Formative evaluation (part 2)

Assessing the student's capacity to:

- mobilise theoretical knowledge according to educational practice.
- integrate theoretical concepts into one's own thinking (to question the theoretical choices, to argue one's point of view).
- shift one's own focus and think as an Early Years' Educator.

Grading:

- Organisation (writing, links, plan) 4 pts
- Quality of the theoretical contributions and relevance of the links to the questioning 7 pts
- Quality of professional positioning 6 pts
- Coherence of the process and application of theory. 3 pts
- Total grade : 20 pts



6.2 Personal evaluation

Personal growth of the students:

1. Family contacts
 - Increasing skill and confidence at working with families, a key factor
 - Evolution of student's practical experience and how they overcame their original reservations when meeting the families.
 - Evolution of student's capacity to communicate.
 - Growing understanding and empathy for families and the student's position in dealing with families.
 - Capacity to distance oneself from one's own culture.
2. Alternating training:
 - Using theoretical course and practical observation to develop links with other aspects of the training.
 - Understanding the progressive aspect of this process.
 - Using theoretical personal research and becoming aware of the importance of understanding yet distancing oneself from the situations encountered.

From the trainers' point of view

1. Meeting families
 - Overcoming initial resistance from students and childcare centre's staff.
 - Appreciating that students find it difficult at first to overcome their fears and to speak to the families, and being able to understand without being intrusive;
 - Understanding the centre's point of view - questioning practices can upset the principle of separation of family and childcare centre, (private sphere and public sphere).
 - Learning how best to reconcile the respect for the families and the respect for diversity. This is always a difficult paradox, which needs to be worked on.



2. Building student research skills

- How best to encourage personal research while providing bibliographical references relevant to this work?
- Intercultural concepts are related to different models of thought.
- All relevant papers have a relevant bibliography.

6.3 Questions of Evaluation

In the context of this programme, what would make a paper poor?

In a nutshell, a lack of perception of the differences in cultural practices between the families and the setting.

However evaluation is never as cut and dried as that. It is always important to consider each student's starting point and how far he or she has progressed during the course of this project. Even if the process still needs improvement, each student's insights and their evolution must be taken into account.

Whatever the evaluation, this project is always a learning process. The road travelled while working on this project always encourages debates and stimulates a change in the students' conception of and approach to diversity, as well as their relationship to the families.

Glossary of terms

Activism	For adults, this means recognising injustice and working to create positive change. For children, activism involves learning to take action against unfair behaviours.
Anti-Racism	An activist approach or policy that aims to challenge and combat racism in all its forms: institutional, individual, behavioural and attitudinal.
Assimilation	"Assimilationist approaches are based on the assumption that it is natural and/or desirable for the minority group, or subordinate group, to adjust to the values and norms of the majority or dominant group. The culture of the minority/subordinate group is denied and viewed as inferior." (Platform Against Racism: <i>Glossary of Terms</i> .)
Asylum-seeker	An immigrant who has applied for refugee status on the grounds that they fear persecution in their country of origin, or because their life and liberty is threatened by armed conflict or violence. Asylum seeker status is temporary while a claim for refugee status is processed. Asylum seekers have limited rights. They are not illegal immigrants.
Bias	Having a preferred point of view, attitude or feeling about a person or group. Can be positive or negative.
Bigot	Person who is prejudiced in his/her views and intolerant of the opinions of others
Black	A term chosen by people from many African, African-Caribbean, and Asian/South-Asian countries to describe and distinguish themselves in terms of solidarity against racism.
Coloured	Outdated term to describe 'non-white' skin colour. It should be avoided as it is generally viewed as offensive to many people.
Culture	Everybody has a culture. It involves a sense of belonging; a shared understanding and identity. Culture is the way we learn to think, communicate and behave. While we are born into a culture, it is, nevertheless, learned rather than given.
Culturally Appropriate	Describes a childcare practice/approach, or materials/ resources designed or used to minimise exclusion, support the individual child's identity, promote respect and foster inclusive practice.



Disability A condition or impairment that may prevent or hinder the child, due to the physical environment or negative attitudes, from having access to facilities or resources, or participating in activities in an equal way to non-disabled children.



Discrimination Policies, practices or behaviour that lead to unfair treatment of individuals or groups because of their identity or perceived identity. It can be intentional or unintentional and may be direct or indirect.



Diversity Describes the diverse nature of society. It includes all minority groups, as well as the dominant community in society. Minority refers to issues of gender, disability, marital status, race, family status, membership of an ethnic group, sexual orientation, religious belief, age and/or social status.



Diversity Education A range of educational approaches that address the issue of diversity.



Emigrant Person who has left his/her country of origin to live and work abroad.

Equality Equitable treatment between individuals or groups; recognising different individual needs, and ensuring equity, both institutionally and individually, in terms of access, participation and outcomes.

Equal Opportunities The right of access for every child and family, full participation in childcare services, and equitable outcomes among groups.

Equality-proofing Screening of policies, procedures, information and materials, as well as the physical environment and curriculum activities, to ensure that every child can participate on equal terms. Also eliminating bias, stereotyping and discrimination, and giving priority to equality considerations.

Equity Fairness for individuals and groups, institutionally and individually.

Ethnic Used to describe minority ethnic people or items (e.g. traditional dress, food, shops, hair products etc.) The term, when used in this manner, may fail to acknowledge that we all have ethnicity.

Ethnic Group "Is an involuntary group which shares a common ancestry, culture, history, tradition and sense of belonging and that is a political and economic interest group. Ethnicity is a way of



categorising people on the basis of self-identification and ascription by others."

(Platform against Racism: *Glossary of Terms*.)

Gender-bias

Attitudes, opinions, messages, encouragement, organised activities or design of play materials which, being unequal for boys and girls, influences unequal preferences, use, or participation between boys and girls.



Immigrant

An individual who has left his/her home country and travelled to another to live and work.

Identity

An internal concept of who you are, how you regard yourself, and how others see you. Identity encompasses what you have in common with others, and what makes you different.



Indigenous

Describes people who are native to the country in which they live (e.g. Aborigines in Australia; Native American Indians in the USA).

Inclusion

A process involving a programme, curriculum or educational environment where each child is welcomed and included on equal terms, can feel that he/she belongs, and can progress to his/her full potential in all areas of development.

**Institutional
Discrimination**

Discrimination that has been incorporated into the structures, processes or procedures of organisations, either because of prejudice or a failure to take on board the needs of a particular individual or group. Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional and includes areas such as gender, disability, marital status, race, family status, membership of an ethnic group, sexual orientation, religious belief, age and/or social status.



**Institutional
Racism**

Racial discrimination which has been incorporated into the structures, processes or procedures of organisations, either because of racial prejudice or because of a failure to take into account the particular needs of black and minority ethnic people. Institutions have power to sustain and promote racial injustice by providing opportunities for some people and not others, by providing career opportunities or training, or through measures that influence attitudes or affect an individual's self-esteem, for example. Institutional racism occurs when the activities, practices, policies or laws of an institution lead, intentionally or unintentionally, to less favourable outcomes for minority ethnic groups.





Majority Group

The predominant culture in society (e.g. white, settled, Catholic, able-bodied etc.)



Minority Ethnic

Groups who are identifiably different from the ethnic majority. May have a distinct ethnic identity and may stand out because of a different appearance, dress, language, accent or religion. In Ireland, for example, such groups may be long-established (such as the Travellers) or newly arrived.



Minority group

Any minority community or culture within society such as Traveller, Chinese, Jewish, disabled etc.



Mixed Heritage

More acceptable than 'mixed race' to describe a person with one white and one Black parent, who is visibly identified as embodying two or more world views. 'Mixed race' implies that there is a pure race.



Multicultural

A recognition of the many minority cultures within a society. Refers to an educational approach that includes looking at minority cultural experience.

Negro

An outdated term with racist and colonialist connotations to refer to Black people.

Participation

Being involved at some level, taking part in a group or activity, or being consulted on views about policies that affect one directly.

Prejudice

"Prejudice involves pre-judgement and the formation of opinions without regard for evidence or reason. Prejudice is a negative belief about, or attitude towards, a person who belongs to a group simply because she/he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable characteristics ascribed to the group."

(Platform against Racism: *Glossary of Terms.*)

People of Colour

Term used in the US to refer to people who experience discrimination and racism on the basis of visible skin colour.

Race

A political concept which categorises people into biologically distinct, superior or inferior species or 'races.' It has been used to justify cruelty, exploitation and discrimination, but, in fact, has no scientific basis.

Racism

"Any theory which involves the claim that racial or ethnic groups are inherently superior or inferior, thus implying that some would be entitled to dominate or eliminate others,



presumed to be inferior, or which bases value judgements on racial differentiation. It has no scientific foundation and is contrary to the moral and ethical principles of humanity," (UNESCO general conference, 27 November 1978, Declaration on race and racial prejudice).



Refugee

A person outside of his country of origin, who, on the basis of personal circumstances, including fear of persecution, has attained the legal status 'refugee' as stipulated in the 1951 Geneva Convention.

Sexism

Any attitude, action or institutional practice that oppresses or undermines people because of their gender.



Special Educational Needs

A child has special educational needs (SEN) if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child has a learning difficulty if he /she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age or has a condition or impairment that prevents or hinders the child from using educational facilities or materials.

Stereotype

An over-simplified generalisation about a particular group, 'race' or gender, based on widely-held assumptions and offering a rigid view that can be difficult to change.

Traveller

Member of the Traveller community, which is a distinct minority ethnic group with a shared language, heritage and nomadic culture.



Values

Qualities that individuals believe to be important and worthwhile for themselves and for others. Values guide your goals, choices and how you live and work. Values are personal. Individuals acquire their values growing up within their home culture. Values will differ depending on that culture.

Visible Minority

Term used increasingly as an alternative to ethnic minority to describe 'non-white' groups.

Xenophobia

Extreme feelings of fear or hostility towards outsiders, expressed through attitudes, views or actions in response to individuals or groups from different national, ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds.



The political context

1. Understanding the Legal Framework

When working with Diversity and Equity Education and Training, it is important to be aware of national, European and International Law in relation to racism and equality, as well as laws specific to the needs and rights of children. Global initiatives are vital for raising awareness of children's issues, for the improvement of the quality of life for all children and for the improvement of training courses and provisions that affect their lives.

Domestic law must be adapted, amended or developed to comply with any law developed in Europe. Before it can come into effect, the law must be signed by the Member State. UN Treaties must also be signed before becoming laws.

Knowledge of the political context in which we work is crucial for supporting children and families. These laws and conventions support our role in ensuring the implementation of equitable and non-discriminatory practices for children. Many trainers and trainees, however, are not familiar with these laws or conventions.

Knowledge of this area can be used to:

- support practitioners and raise their awareness of the vital role they play in supporting all children;
- inform practitioners or trainers who are not aware of, or convinced about, the necessity of diversity and equity work.

2. International Law

2.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

This convention sets out the rights guaranteed to children and young people under 18 years of age in all areas of their lives. In this regard it also imposes obligations on the parents, the family, the community and the state.

The Convention is based on four guiding principles (Articles 2, 3, 6, 12.):

1. The Convention's rights must be guaranteed to all children without discrimination.
2. The child's best interests must govern all actions concerning the child.
3. The child has the right to life, survival and development.
4. The child has the right to be consulted in all matters concerning him or her in accordance with age and maturity.

By signing and ratifying the Convention, governments make a commitment to all children that they have a right to be respected, supported, listened to and valued in society. The three articles highlighted below address some of the key rights every child should be entitled to which are most pertinent to diversity education. For instance, Article 29, gives practitioners a mandate to teach and live according to certain values, to provide an educational environment which is non-discriminatory in curriculum content, teaching methods and in the physical and emotional school environment.



Article 2. Non-Discrimination

All rights apply to all children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.

Article 29. Education of the Child

Education should be directed at developing the child's personality and talents to their fullest potential, preparing the child for active life as an adult, fostering respect for basic human rights in a free society in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality among all people: developing respect for the child's own cultural, linguistic and national values and those of others: and, developing respect for the natural environment.

Article 30. Children of Minorities or Indigenous Populations

Children of minority communities and indigenous populations have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language.

(see full text of articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.)

2.2 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: United Nations (1948)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations:

that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive, through teaching and education, to promote respect for these rights and freedoms, and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of the territories under their jurisdiction.

Member states pledge to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2.3 The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)

The most important international document in relation to racism, this convention sets out the rights guaranteed to all human beings to live free of racial discrimination. Each state reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

The Convention establishes three procedures to make it possible for CERD to review the legal, judicial, administrative and other steps taken by individual states in fulfilling their obligations to combat racial discrimination.

Under the Convention, states are pledged:

- to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against individuals, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that public authorities and institutions do likewise;
- not to sponsor, defend or support racial discrimination by persons or organisations;
- to review government, national and local policies and to amend or repeal laws and regulations which create or perpetuate racial discrimination. To prohibit and put a stop to racial discrimination by persons, groups and organisations, and
- to encourage integrationist or multi-racial organisations and movements and other means of eliminating barriers between 'races', as well as to discourage anything which tends to strengthen racial division.



Article 7. Education and Information

Governments should take immediate and effective action in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information to combat racial prejudice and promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and among different racial and ethnic groups.

2.4 UN World Conference on Racism (2001)

The 2001 World Conference Against Racism in South Africa was key in aiding participating governments in establishing National Actions Plan Against Racism

3. European Law

3.1 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995)

The Framework deals with the protection of individual member national minorities as well as minority community groups. It is applicable to national minorities, but it also applies to Travellers and Gypsies.

3.2 The Amsterdam Treaty (1998)

Promotes action against racism and xenophobia and many other social issues through Article 13 of the Treaty, which states:

Without prejudice to the other provisions of this Treaty and within the limits of the powers conferred by it upon the Community, the council, acting unanimously on a proposal for the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

3.3 EU Directive Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment Between Persons Irrespective of Racial or Ethnic Origin (2000)

Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty has provided a new directive on the Principle of Equal Treatment between Persons Irrespective of Racial or Ethnic Origin which has been adopted by Member States. The directive is significant in that it will legislate against indirect discrimination (i.e. instances where an apparently neutral provision or practice results in discrimination).

It will apply to both the public and private sectors in relation to:

- Access to employment
- Access to training
- Employment and working conditions
- Membership of trade unions and other bodies
- Social protection
- Social advantages
- Education
- Access to goods and services, including housing

The Directive also places the burden of proof on the respondent, rather than the claimant (except in criminal cases). States report to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe on the application of the directive.



3.4 The Council of Europe

The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) (1993) was established under the aegis of the Council of Europe. Comprising independent members with recognised expertise in dealing with racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance, the Commission's activities are multi-disciplinary. Its role is based around terms of reference which allow the Commission to examine and assess the effectiveness of measures taken by member states to combat racism and to propose further action at local, national and European levels. Their work is ongoing.

3.5 European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities of Women and Men. (1986)

Established to monitor developments, evaluate policy options, collect and disseminate information and establish criteria for the definition of quality in childcare services, the Network has published eighteen reports.

In their publication *"Quality Targets in Services for Young Children"* (1996), the Network proposed a ten-year action programme with 40 targets to be achieved by 2006. Targets 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 34 and 36 are concerned with access to services "which positively assert the value of diversity: i.e. language, ethnicity, religion, gender and disability and challenge stereotypes" as well as providing for diversity and equality training and provision.

4. Useful Websites

- Council of Europe: www.coe.int
- European Union: europa.eu.int
- International Labour Organisation (ILO): www.ilo.org
- Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD): www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/6/cerd.htm

Description of DECET partners institutions

ACEPP, Association of Children-Parents-Professional Collectives, created in 1981, is a national non profit organisation, gathering today nearly a thousand local initiatives mainly focused on early childcare (0 to 3 or to 6 years old), distributed on the whole territory of France, in urban as well as in rural environment. ACEPP is a network with 30 organisations in the departmental levels helping the local initiatives.



Childcare centres and other local parental initiatives are characteristic : they are set up, managed and led by parents who are actively involved in their children's education, and qualified salaried professionals.

These small autonomous associations are responsible for neighbourhood services welcoming children and families (mainly childcare or play groups but also leisure centres, out-of-school care, game libraries, childminders/parents resource centres..).

The ACEPP network's fundamental values are : parents as first educators, openness to everyone and respect of social and cultural diversity, parents/professionals partnership, parents as active citizens...

Since 1986, with the help of Bernard Van Leer Foundation, ACEPP has been carrying out a programme of an intercultural childcare provisions creation in the neighbourhoods with social housing. This program led ACEPP to work on the accessibility of the care centres and on the pedagogical practices which support respect for diversity. Now, ACEPP develops some others activities about diversity and parents involvement :

- **Trainings**
- **Action-research**
- **Conferences**
- **Edition and dissemination of pedagogical documents intended for actors about respect of diversity**
- **Lobbying to the partners to promote the accessibility**

Those activities go towards parents, professionals and politics partners.

ESSSE Ecole Santé Social Sud-Est

The South-Eastern Regional Social Services Training School (ESSSE) is run by the statutory regulations of an Association recognized under the 1 st July 1901 Law. The missions of the school are the following :

- The training for social, educational and health-care professions
- The co-ordination of initial, on-going and further training provision
- The organization of and support to all actions liable to promote the development of social, educational and health-care work
- Social promotion



The ESSSE provides professional training preparing for nationally accredited diplomas in the following fields :

- Child-care assistant
- Health-care assistant
- Community education facilitators
- Early Childhood Educators
- Nurses
- Social Workers

The ESSSE also caters for the pre-qualification and up-grading of professionals in the following categories : Community-education facilitators, home-based-care, health care, social welfare.

The ESSSE Charter (<http://www.essse-formations.com>) and the Trainers Programme established within the French social and education sector (April 1999) both explicitly stress the respect for diversity as prime objective in all child-care service missions and in all professional training programmes.

Fundamental principles of the ESSSE Charter :

- To foster knowledge acquirement and consolidation
- To promote empowerment
- To sustain an ethical attitude encompassing all the demands that this implies in terms of respect of everyone's rights and duties
- To develop a spirit of initiatives
- To develop awareness and innovation capacities as social observers
- Capable of anticipating future social developments be they probable, hoped for or necessary

The name of the project is :
"Respect for diversity"



Objectives

- Integration in initial and on-going training programme the concept of Respect for Diversity (in theory and practice, and according to the context and professional position of each individual).
- Diversity at different levels :
- cultural, family situation, and the varying abilities (physical and mental) of children, equality on gender.
- The goal of the diversity project is to initiate the children with the help of the adults (practitioners and parents) into a process of socialisation without excluding the differences.

Our specific activity is :

- Initial and on-going training of educators and child care assistants.

Institut für den Situationsansatz (ISTA)



INTERNATIONALE AKADEMIE
an der Freien Universität Berlin
Institut für den Situationsansatz

The Institut für den Situationsansatz (ISTA) is an institute for teaching, research and development. It is part of the International Academy for Innovative Education, Psychology and Economy (INA gGmbH), an NGO which is linked to the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology at the Free University of Berlin. Directors of ISTA are Dr. Christa Preissing and Rita Haberkorn.

Mission: The *Situationsansatz* is based on the premise that children inherently possess individual rights and realise their development themselves. Adults are responsible for supporting children in providing accountable relationships and a stimulating environment in which the children can strive towards further development. The pedagogical goals of the *Situationsansatz* — autonomy, solidarity, competence — are based on basic democratic values and societal changes. Children and their developmental needs must be understood in the context of their concrete life situation. Practitioners respect the diverse experiences of children and encourage them to participate in shaping the social process. Uniqueness and solidarity belong together.

Activities: Developing the "Situationsansatz" (a contextual and developmental approach in Early Childhood Education) in Theory and Practise; Initiating and run Research and Development Projects to connect scientific and practical competencies and experiences (like KINDERWELTEN Anti-Bias-Work in Kindergartens/ Berlin; LIVING DEMOCRACY in kindergarten and primary school/ Eberswalde); Evaluating projects and educational practise in Early Childhood Education (like "Qualität im Situationsansatz", a national research project on quality in childcare centres); In-Service-Training for and with Practitioners and Professionals in Qualification and Administration; Teaching at University with a focus on Intercultural issues in Early Childhood Education and Social Work; Consulting; Networking on local, national and international levels; Publishing.



Center of artistic and educational training "SCHEDIA"

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About "Schedia"

Schedia in Greek means "Raft"

"Schedia," founded in 1987, is a not-for-profit organization seeking to:

- Promote educational research and artistic experimentation.
- Improve the living conditions of marginalized social groups.

Since 1994, "Schedia" has focused its activities primarily on the use of art as a means to promote respect to diversity.

Up to the present, these activities include:

- Artistic expression workshops for children and for adults
- Teacher training sessions and seminars for professional development
- Planning and implementation of pilot social intervention projects in Greece and abroad
- Development of educational material both printed and audiovisual
- Organisation of national and international cultural events and conferences

"Schedia" is an N.G.O. officially recognized by the Greek Ministry for External Affairs and is a member of the European Network D.E.C.E.T. (Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training.)

The center of artistic and educational training

"Schedia"-which in Greek means "**Raft**"- is a not-for-profit organization seeking to improve the living conditions of marginalized social groups and applying a pedagogic approach which is based on ***the use of art as a means to promote respect to diversity.***

VBJK



Expertisecentrum voor Opvoeding & Kinderopvang

VBJK is partner van Kind & Gezin

The Resource and Research Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education – VBJK – was established in 1986 through a collaboration of three Flemish universities with the field of child care. Actually it is connected with the department of Social Welfare Studies at the Ghent University.

The work and the research agenda of the Centre is filled with new themes that fit seamlessly into the current situation, such as: respect for diversity, involving and listening to young children, the relationship between childcare and the family, men in childcare and social exclusion. In the Centre, the work on diversity has therefore a broad meaning: it designs action-research on topics including ethnic minority groups as well as newcomers, gender and inclusion of children with special needs. VBJK is also producing publications and training materials, including the Dutch language version of Children in Europe.

Stimulated and supported by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation and developing later into a partnership with Kind en Gezin (Child and Family), the Flemish governmental agency for child care, the Centre has done pioneering work in the areas of research, methodology, educational theory and training.

VBJK

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Université de Liège

Liège, Belgium

The General Pedagogy and Preschool Education unit is responsible for the initial training of students seeking a degree in Educational Sciences, in particular in the domain of "Pre-school education and integrated childcare policies". It also takes part in the initial training of future psychologists.

Through an action-research-training process, it contributes to the continuing education of co-ordinators of pre-school professionals, and to research in that field. Our action contributes to develop innovative systems and training processes centred on « Regulating Accompaniment of Educational Practices » (ARPE) engaging all concerned partners (ground professionals, co-ordinators, training organisations and politico-administrative decision makers) in a dynamic process for change.



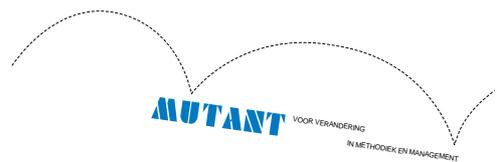
Bureau MUTANT

Utrecht, The Netherlands

The agency MUTANT is a small independent firm supporting professionals and institutions in early childhood education, welfare and health care in innovative methods, in training and consulting. The agency was started in 1989. Three partners collaborate in the firm with a pool of free lance trainers and consultants. A council of experts, based in universities, local policy and migrant organisations, advises the MUTANT agency annually. The agency publishes a newsletter twice a year and runs a website.

The agency runs projects by order of local governments and national or local non-governmental organisations. Respect for diversity is a key issue in all projects. MUTANT sees its mission in contributing to equity in society by supporting and empowering professionals and institutions in early childhood education, welfare and health care in innovative methods, in training and consulting.

One of the focuses of attention are pedagogical issues on Early Childhood, supporting child care centres and preschools, providing written information to professionals and students through books, manuals, brochures and providing training on the job.



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Pavee Point – Dublin, Ireland

Pavee Point Travellers Resource Centre is a national non-governmental organisation, which is committed to the attainment of human rights for Irish Travellers.

It was established in 1983 and is based in Dublin, Ireland. One of the twelve programmes within the organisation is early childhood (which includes the 'éist' project). Racism in Irish society is identified at

an individual and institutional level as a key issue which all of the above programmes seek to challenge and address. All forms of racism are challenged and Pavee Point acts in solidarity with other minority ethnic organisations. The organisation is a partnership of Travellers and settled people working together to address the needs of Travellers as a minority ethnic group who experience exclusion, marginalisation and racism.



Target Group: The target group includes policy makers, trainers, practitioners/teachers and families. The programme has a specific focus on the needs and rights of Traveller and Roma Gypsy children. The 'éist' project should benefit children from different backgrounds, cultures and minority groups and children from the majority or dominant society.

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