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Caring and Learning Together



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*A cross-national study of integration  
of early childhood care and education within education*

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A cross-national study on the integration of early childhood care  
and education within education

Yoshie Kaga, John Bennett, Peter Moss

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# Foreword

**E**arly childhood care and education (ECCE) policy is a complex area. It is concerned not only with childcare and early education, but also the child's health, nutrition, social welfare and protection, women's employment and equal opportunities, and poverty issues. Given its multi-sectoral nature, developing and developed countries alike face difficulties in achieving coordinated and coherent approaches to ECCE that ensure the child's holistic development. Recognising the crucial role that governance plays in determining the access, quality and equity of ECCE provision, UNESCO has paid particular attention to the issue over the last years. It has published a number of works on governance-related matters, such as *An Integrated Approach to Early Childhood Education and Care* (Haddad, 2002), *Cross-sectoral Coordination in Early Childhood: Some Lessons Learned* (Choi, 2003), *Implementation of the Integrated Early Childhood Care and Education in Senegal* (Rayna, 2003), and *Inter-sectoral Co-ordination in Early Childhood Policies and Programmes: A Synthesis of Experiences in Latin America* (UNESCO-OREALC, 2004). To further build the knowledge base on the subject and provide policy recommendations, UNESCO has undertaken a new study titled *Caring and Learning Together: A Cross-National Study on the Integration of Early Childhood Care and Education*.

This research *Caring and Learning Together* is focused on a current, major development, namely, the integration of early childhood care and education through the transfer of responsibility for the sector to education ministries. The study has been designed to generate better understanding and to evaluate this development from the perspectives of countries and local authorities that have adopted this policy option and those that have not. As such, it draws on the experiences of Brazil, Jamaica, New Zealand, Slovenia, Sweden and the city of Ghent (in the Flemish-speaking Community of Belgium) in opting for integration-within-education; and on those of the Flemish-speaking Community of Belgium, France, Finland and Hungary taking a different approach to governance, namely either integration of ECCE within social welfare (in the case of Finland) or multiple-agency arrangements (in the case of Belgium Flanders, France and Hungary). This report presents a synthesis of the historical contexts, rationales, processes and consequences of integrating ECCE within education, the views of the countries that apportion ECCE responsibility differently, and some reflections and policy recommendations on the issue.

The present report could not have been realised without the generous contributions, advice, assistance and commitment of a number of people. I would like to thank Patricia Corsino,

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1 Professor Christa Preissing from Berlin provided the authors with valuable insights into the profound change in early childhood organization that took place in East Germany after re-unification with West Germany, i.e. the transfer of responsibility for 3-6 year old children from the East German Ministry of Education to the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The authors did not possess, however, sufficient information concerning the change or its consequences to include the former East German Länder in this report.

# Executive Summary

## Chapter 1: Background to the project *Caring and Learning Together*

**E**arly childhood care and education (ECCE) services embody two different traditions: care and education. The former was often developed as a welfare measure for working-class children who needed care while their parents were at work; the latter as kindergarten or pre-primary educational activities prior to formal schooling. Today, these traditions are expressed in most countries as ‘split systems’ of ECCE. Typically, the two sectors in these split systems are governed, in terms of policy making and administration, by social welfare and education ministries respectively, and are also structured in very different ways with respect to types of service, workforce, access criteria, funding and regulation (including curriculum). Given their distinct historical roots, ‘childcare’ and ‘early education’ services in these split systems embody different visions and understandings of children, programme goals, approaches and contents.

Split systems have been the subject of critical discussion since the 1970s and analyses have identified several core problems. For example, education is considered to begin when children are aged 3 or 4, with younger children defined as needing only minding or care while their parents work. Governments assume greater responsibility for education for children over three years, thus investing more public funding in early education than in childcare services for younger children. Differences between services in welfare and education in key areas such as access, regulation, funding and workforce, lead to problems of inequality and lack of continuity for children, parents and workers.

To reduce the adverse effects of split systems, two main strategies have been employed: greater coordination and integration. The former involves creating inter-ministerial mechanisms to promote coordinated approaches to ECCE provision. One such mechanism is a coordination body, within or outside line ministries, consisting of representatives from relevant sectors. Evidence shows that such intersectoral coordination has generated some positive results, such as improved public awareness of ECCE, and increased use of comprehensive services. Coordination mechanisms have been found to work well when they are established for a specific purpose or to focus on a target population; however, they have



proved less successful in promoting a coherent overall policy and administrative framework across sectors.

Other countries have adopted a more integrated response, by assigning national responsibility for all ECCE to a single ministry. Potential advantages of integration have been documented. For example, it may promote more coherent policy and greater quality and consistency across sectors in terms of social objectives, regulation, funding and staffing regimes, curriculum and assessment, costs to parents, and opening hours. It may also facilitate greater and more effective investment in the youngest children, enhanced continuity of children's experiences, and improved public management of services. It can be argued that it matters less in which ministry ECCE is integrated than that the ministry in question has a strong focus on young children's development and education. In practice, however, integration today occurs largely within education, a trend that started in the 1980s. Countries having opted for integration-within-education include Botswana, Brazil, England, Iceland, Jamaica, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, the Russian Federation, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Viet Nam and Zambia.

Despite the importance of overcoming the split between care and education and the number of countries that have adopted integration within education, there is no up-to-date comparative research assessing this option. For this reason, the present study focuses on integrating ECCE services within education. The aim is to contribute to a better understanding of this policy option by looking at selected countries (Brazil, Jamaica, New Zealand, Slovenia and Sweden) with very different conditions that have made this move. The study also considers the experience of a municipality (Ghent, Belgium Flanders) that has integrated responsibility for its own ECCE services within education, to gauge the possibility for local initiative.

As the study treats integration-within-education as one response to the need to create more coordinated ECCE systems, it therefore includes a country (Finland) that has integrated childcare and early education very successfully within social welfare. It also includes three countries or regions that have chosen to continue with split systems (Belgium Flanders, France, Hungary), in order to provide a better understanding of the case for not adopting integration-within-education. This opening chapter also outlines the study's aims and objectives, methodology, and provides background to the cases studied.

## **Chapter 2: Integrated systems: history and process**

The historical process of transferring responsibility for ECCE to education has varied considerably among the five case countries studied. Sweden and Slovenia already had a wholly or partially integrated system before the transfer to education in 1996 and 1992 respectively. In New Zealand, Brazil and Jamaica, integration and transfer to education took place in 1986, 1996 and 1998 respectively, and were part of the same process. In all cases,

the transfer has been based on a consensus, at least among experts, that care and education are inseparable; in two cases the process involved a wider campaign involving diverse groups in civil society. The rationale for change varies between countries but in all cases it has been strong and principled, rather than a purely pragmatic concern, for example, to cut costs or boost school readiness.

The extent of integration – how far the process has gone beyond transferring government responsibility for ECCE into education – varies considerably across the countries: it has gone furthest and deepest in Sweden and Slovenia. In their integration efforts, Brazil and Jamaica face the biggest challenges, as they started their reform within the last few years, with deeply split systems and significantly fewer resources than the other richer countries; nevertheless they have made progress by undertaking curricular and regulatory integration and by upgrading the workforce. Locating the responsibility for ECCE within education is important as the education framework highlights access, affordability, concern for a (relatively) well trained workforce, and curriculum as a basic tool for practice. Except in one case country, there is no evidence that integration within education has brought about ‘schoolification’ of ECCE services.<sup>2</sup>

The experience of Ghent, Belgium Flanders, demonstrates the possibilities and limitations of reform at local level. Ghent has brought ECCE services into one administration and promoted a common pedagogical approach across all municipal early childhood services. However, it has not been able to bring about other structural changes due to the municipality’s limited competence. Finland, which has a welfare-based system, is a highly successful integrated system and points to the possibility of a non-education option, though this may be more feasible in Nordic welfare states.

### **Chapter 3: Consequences and lessons from the cases that have integrated within education**

The consequences of integration within education have been positive, particularly for children under 3 years and for services and staff that cater for this youngest group. Four of the five countries now have curricula covering children under and over 3 years – a clear consequence of integration within education. The fifth country, Jamaica, is aligning its separate curricula for under and over 3 years. Four of the five countries also have an integrated early years profession, a graduate level worker educated to work with both under and over 3 years olds. Jamaica, the fifth country, retains a split workforce, with a separate and higher status group working with older children, though some improvements are being made in the training of

2 The concept of ‘schoolification’ denotes the downward pressure of primary school approaches (classroom organisation, curriculum, teaching methods, child:staff ratios and conceptions of childhood) on early childhood pedagogy.

workers in 'day care' centres. The same split remains in Ghent, which as a municipality does not have responsibility for the ECCE workforce, though integration into education has led to improved conditions for workers in municipal 'day care' centres.

Access to services has increased in all cases, though by very varying amounts, and it is not always possible to decide how much is accounted for by the reform process. However, in Sweden and Slovenia, a universal entitlement to services, at least from 12 months, has resulted from integration, with clear evidence in Sweden of a narrowing of inequalities in access as well. Increased government funding has also supported increased participation in New Zealand and enabled a large improvement in staff qualifications and pay. Brazil has set targets for access, and attendance has risen, although the level of services for children under 3 lags behind that for services for the over 3s, as is also the case in Jamaica. By contrast, the difference between under and over 3s – in terms of level and quality of provision – is much less in Sweden, Slovenia and New Zealand. Except in Sweden, there is no clear evidence that integration within education has resulted in 'schoolification', while in Jamaica, the reform is reported to have eased the grip of compulsory education on early years services. In Ghent, the risk was averted by keeping 'day care' centres and infant schools separate, while working to develop a shared pedagogical approach. In some respects, the consequences of integration within education have been greatest in New Zealand. Overall, there are few negative comments on education-based integration and there is widespread support for the reforms with no significant body of opinion arguing for going back to split systems and/or welfare system involvement.

Three broad lessons are identified. First, alliances, advocacy based on strong arguments, and leadership are needed in order to get reform in the first place. Second, to get change deep into the system, there is a need for action at all levels of government and strong and integrative concepts on which to build substantive reform. Third, to get change into actual practice a strategy is necessary – including resources and materials, support workers and training, and time, not least to reflect on practice.

## **Chapter 4: Countries that have not integrated ECCE: another perspective**

While integration within education is a growing trend, many countries maintain split systems for governing ECCE. It is therefore important to understand why an integrated system may not seem either an obvious or even possible direction to take. For this reason, this chapter looks at three countries – Belgium Flanders, France and Hungary – that have retained split ECCE systems. All cases represent a particular kind of split system, i.e. a split based on the age of children and with an education sector dominating the ECCE system, offering three years of full-time school or kindergarten to nearly all children over 3 years old. Some general

criticisms of split systems have been confirmed in the cases studied, including inequalities between the childcare and early education sectors and lack of continuity from the child's perspective during the transition from one sector to the other. Despite this, in none of these cases is there a strong demand for integration. One reason is the separate culture and tradition of the childcare and early education sectors; this is particularly strong in Belgium Flanders and France. Another is fear of the childcare sector being overwhelmed by, and lost in, education. There are also economic implications, in particular, the costs of upgrading the childcare workforce and other investments in services for children under 3.

Although no apparent steps are being taken to replace the split system, improvements to the level and quality of ECCE provision are evident in all three cases. Hungary seems more likely than Belgium Flanders or France to move towards integration – not so much for pedagogical or equity reasons, but because it needs to provide more places in nurseries for children under 3. While tensions exist between sectors and their workforces, Hungary does have two potential advantages if it enters into reform: a common local administration of services with a common funding system in place; and an integrative concept of *nevelés*,<sup>3</sup> which provides a common approach and perspective for both nurseries and kindergartens.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the six cases of integration in education all reported positive consequences, in terms of integration and of situating the integrated service in education. Positive results can be seen especially in the situation of children under 3 and for the workforce, but also in other respects such as curriculum development or pedagogical work as, for example, the most positive assessment from New Zealand illustrates. There were no widespread or substantive negative consequences. One concern – ‘schoolification’, the downward pressure of the school system and its methods into the ECCE system – was only raised in one case, Sweden. On the other hand, there was little evidence of one potential benefit of integration, that is the ECCE system having influence on the school system through the development of what the OECD *Starting Strong* review has termed ‘a strong and equal partnership’.

The process of integration in education can take place in different ways. In some cases, such as New Zealand, but also Brazil and Jamaica, the start of the integration process *and* locating all ECCE services in education have occurred at the same time; in other cases, such as Sweden, services have first been fully integrated into another system (typically welfare),

3 The term *nevelés* has a central role in early childhood work in Hungary. It does not have an exact English equivalent, the closest translation being ‘upbringing’. It is a holistic concept, including not just care and education (considered as very closely related, if not inseparable), but also health, behaviour and social skills – everything needed in life. It has, therefore, much in common with the concept of ‘social pedagogy’ (as used, for example, in Denmark or Germany) or ‘education in its broadest sense’.

then at a later date transferred to education. Sweden illustrates how the transfer of a fully integrated system to education can still lead to further substantial reform.

The four other countries reported on – with different ways of organising ECCE – had well developed services. The system in Finland is fully integrated, and though located in welfare has good relations with education. All five Nordic countries have long had fully integrated ECCE systems and, until recently, four located these systems in welfare. The recent transfer of these services to education in Norway and Sweden leaves only Denmark and Finland with ECCE in welfare.

The main conclusions about the integration of ECCE services within education are summarised in five areas: (1) concepts and processes; (2) assessing the impact of integration in education; (3) potential benefits; (4) potential drawbacks; and (5) the relative merits of integration in education or elsewhere:

- The issue is not a simple binary choice of ‘split’ versus ‘integrated’. ‘Integrated’ systems can vary in depth (i.e. the extent of conceptual and structural integration) and location of integration (e.g. in welfare or education). Integration is therefore better understood not as a state – either achieved or not – but as a continuum, ranging from minimal to full integration.
- Integration is not an inevitability but a possibility, depending on the interplay of barriers to change and drivers for change. Integration can take place at different levels but is most effective when all levels are committed. It requires re-thinking as well as re-forming structures, such as funding, regulation and workforce.
- Assessments drawn on for this study are partial due to an absence of comprehensive, long-term national evaluations of system change; a lack of opportunity to supplement national reports with site visits; and the impossibility of knowing what would have happened if reform had not taken place.
- There are no inevitable consequences of moving responsibility for ECCE into education; what matters is *why* integration has been undertaken and *how* it is implemented.
- Integration is not a magic solution but a reform that can be both beneficial and dangerous. Depending on why and how integration is implemented, the reform may deliver some or all of the following benefits: rethinking the purpose, provision and practice of ECCE across all age groups, including children both under and over 3 years; changed perceptions of ECCE among the workforce, parents and the wider public, including greater recognition of its pedagogical value; a higher valuation given to staff working in ECCE; the creation of a stronger ECCE system that enjoys parity with and can influence compulsory education; greater coherence in policy; the reduction or elimination of inequalities between services for children under and over 3 years; and increased resourcing for ECCE through merging administrations and eliminating duplication.

- Depending on why and how integration is implemented, the reform may bring all or some of these drawbacks: 'schoolification', although this is a risk under any system – split or integrated; poorer relations with other services (e.g. health, protection); and increased costs, needed to undertake major structural changes, e.g. to create a better qualified and paid workforce, to increase access and participation, to lower fee income, to introduce a new curricula).
- ECCE services can be integrated within a number of policy domains. If the benefits sought from an integrated system include (1) universal entitlement, (2) affordable access, (3) a unified and well educated workforce, (4) enhancing learning for all ages, and (5) smoother transitions for young children, then the education sector is more likely to deliver such benefits, as exemplified by the cases studied. Finland, with services integrated in welfare, also delivers these benefits. But Finland (like Denmark) is an example of a Nordic welfare system that shares a number of key principles with education, such as universal access and the importance of learning; welfare systems in other countries do not generally do so, making them less suitable locations for an integrated ECCE. The question of whether the education sector can provide a supportive environment to family day care (a form of individual ECCE provision where an individual carer provides for a small number of children in her own home) depends on how education is understood and the capacity of education to think more broadly.

The study provides broad policy propositions and recommendations, which refer to higher income countries but which may not necessarily extend to lower income countries. These propositions are:

- There is a need to adopt strategies to address the challenges arising from split systems;
- It is likely that education is the best location for an integrated ECCE system if integration is chosen as an option;
- Simply moving administrative responsibility for ECCE into education is not enough – great attention has to be paid to the subsequent process; integration requires both re-thinking of concepts and understandings and re-structuring;
- Re-thinking the meaning of education and the relationship between pre-school and school is an opportunity arising from integration; relationship with other services and policy fields must also be re-thought and restructured if necessary;
- Integration in education provides an opportunity to explore new types of provision;
- Deep integration requires careful thought about the conditions needed;
- Countries interested in changing from a split system can gain support from developing dialogues with other countries;

- More and deeper studies of integration are required across a wide range of countries, including low income countries.

# 1. Background to the Project Caring and Learning Together

## The Issue: Split ECCE systems and their adverse effects

In every country, early childhood care and education (ECCE) services embody two different traditions: care and education. The former was often developed as a welfare measure for working-class children who needed care while their parents were at work; the latter as kindergarten or pre-primary education, providing middle-class or all children with enriched educational activities prior to formal schooling. For example, in France, *crèches* and *écoles maternelles* were both established during the period of industrialization with the aim to take care of poor children while their parents worked in factories. However, *crèches* evolved into services with a strong medical orientation focusing on children's health and hygiene. They became part of government responsibility only after the Second World War, and have always been fee-paying. By contrast, *écoles maternelles* were integrated in the education system in 1886 as a vehicle for constructing the French nation and disseminating the French language, and increased in number rapidly thereafter (Rayna, 2007). In Sweden, the first nurseries were established in the 1850s for children with evident social needs, funded by charitable organisations, while the first kindergartens were set up in the 1890s to offer part-time early education for middle class children (Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar, 2003).

In most countries, whether in the North or South, this division between care and education strongly influences the organisation of ECCE services. Typically, the two sectors in these 'split systems' are governed, in terms of policy making and administration, by social welfare and education ministries respectively, and are also structured in very different ways with respect to types of service, workforce, access criteria, funding and regulation. Given their distinct historical roots, 'childcare' and 'early education' services in these split systems embody different visions and understandings of children, programme goals, approaches and contents.



For example, in the Flemish-speaking Community of Belgium, there is a clear division of responsibility for childcare and early education. Childcare services, including family day care, for children aged 0 to 3 years and out-of-school provision are under the responsibility of *Kind en Gezin* (Child and Family), an agency that reports to the Flemish Ministry for Welfare, Public Health and Family. The responsibility for *kleuterscholen* (public pre-school provision) for children aged two and a half and above is with the Flemish Ministry of Education. Subsidised childcare services are open at least 11 hours daily for the whole year, facilitating working parents, whereas *kleuterscholen* operate seven hours daily during the academic year. Nearly all (98 per cent) children aged 3 to 6 years attend *kleuterscholen* while about 65 per cent of children aged 0 to 3 years are in formal childcare arrangements on a part-time or full-time basis or else have started attending *kleuterschool*. In terms of staffing, subsidised childcare centres engage certified *kinderverzorgsters* (childcarers) with a post-secondary (1 year) professional diploma, and are paid modest salaries. *Kleuterscholen*, on the other hand, have *kleuteronderwijzers* (nursery school teachers) with 3-year tertiary qualification, and receive salaries equivalent to primary and lower secondary teachers. As for funding, 96 per cent of the costs of *kleuterscholen* are covered by public funding and the rest by parental contributions. By contrast, subsidised crèches and family day care services are funded by public subsidies and parental fees which are set according to family income (parental fees come to 26 per cent of the total budget for crèches and 60 per cent for family day care) (OECD 2006).

To take another example, in Indonesia, kindergartens (*taman kanak*) catering to children aged 4 to 6 years are under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education and are provided two hours daily (Islamic kindergartens are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Affairs). The Ministry of Social Welfare supervises playgroups (*kelompok bermain*) for children aged 2 to 6 years, which are available 2 hours daily and three times per week, as well as childcare centres (*taman penitipan anak*) for children from 3 months to 6 years, which are open 8 to 10 hours daily. *Posyandu* (Integrated Service Post) and *bina keluarga balita* (Mothers' Programme) are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Women's Affairs respectively, and offer 2 hours twice every month. The required qualification level for the ECCE workforce is a two-year teacher training college diploma for kindergartens; upper secondary education with job-related special training for playgroups and childcare centres, and lower secondary education with job-related special training for integrated service post and mothers' programme. The main purposes of these ECCE services differ: pre-primary education and school readiness for kindergartens; play-based education and social and emotional development for playgroups; childcare for working parents combined with child development for childcare centres, health combined with parenting education for *integrated service post*; and parenting education and activities for children during the mothers' programme (UNESCO, 2005).

Split systems have been the subject of critical discussion since the 1970s. The OECD report *Care of Children of Working Parents*, published in 1974, concluded that

...it is no longer desirable, at a policy level, to maintain any degree of separation between planning for full day care and planning for pre-primary education. The existence in most OECD member countries of administratively separate traditions – ministries of health or social work on the one hand, and of education on the other – will render difficult the process of integration (OECD, 1974, p. 11).

Soon after, UNESCO's *World Survey of Pre-school Education* (1976), in which 67 member states responded to a questionnaire sent by the Secretariat, referred to the fragmentation of policy-making responsibility across government ministries, especially education, social welfare and health (Mialaret, 1976, cited in Kamerman, 2006, p.8). Two decades later, the European Commission's Childcare Network concluded that 'high quality services accessible to all children can only be achieved within a national policy framework' and that 'at national level one department should be nominated to take responsibility for implementing the policy' (EC Childcare Network, 1996, pp.10-11). More recently, actual or potential problems of split systems are noted in *Starting Strong I and II: Early Childhood Education and Care* (2001 and 2006), reports compiled on the basis of ECCE policy reviews in 20 OECD countries.

These and later analyses have suggested that the following problems may be more common in split systems:

- Fragmentation of services between those within the welfare system, which are predominantly for the youngest age group, and those within the education system, predominantly for older children.
- Education seen to begin from the age of 3 or 4 years, with younger children defined primarily as needing only minding or care while their parents work; at the same time, strong 'schoolification' of services in the education system, leading generally to junior schools for children 3 to 6 years and educational neglect of children under 3 years.
- Government assuming greater responsibility for education services for children over 3 years than for welfare services for children under 3 years, with correspondingly weaker funding and less availability for the younger children. This can be especially adverse for children from more disadvantaged families.
- Differences between services in welfare and education in key areas such as access, regulation, funding and workforce, leading to inequalities, discontinuities and problems for children, parents and workers. For example, levels of training and pay for workers in services in the welfare system are usually lower than those for workers in the education system, though group sizes and staff ratios are often worse in the latter; services in the education system are free of charge to parents but parents must pay at least part of the cost of services in welfare; services in the education system are available for shorter hours than those in the welfare system, requiring many parents to make additional care arrangements.

## Responses to the Issue

The continuing split within ECCE systems in most countries owes more to traditional divisions than to the developmental needs of children and the practical concerns of their families. Faced by the apparent problems, many countries have sought to reduce the adverse effects of a split system, through two main strategies: greater coordination or integration.

### Coordination

One response to these problems has been to create inter-ministerial mechanisms to promote more coordinated approaches to ECCE provision. One such mechanism is the creation of a coordination body, within or outside line ministries, consisting of relevant sectors. A UNESCO-OREALC study (2004) on the experiences in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba and Mexico reports that improved public awareness of ECCE, increased coverage of comprehensive services, and development of a shared vision of comprehensive ECCE were the major accomplishments of their efforts to implement inter-sectoral coordination.

For example, in Chile, the *Inter-institutional Commission on Curricular Reform of Early Childhood Education* was set up under the leadership of the Ministry of Education with the task to develop a new early childhood education curriculum for children from birth to 6 years old. The Commission consisted of specialists and representatives of the main public organizations serving young children at the national level and of institutions from various fields. The result was a holistic curriculum, to be applied (with necessary adaptations) to all formal and non-formal settings, that covers not only 'classical' educational components but also elements of health, drug prevention, environment, healthy life styles, diversity, special education needs, and intercultural perspectives. The *De la Mano* programme of Costa Rica, established in 2000 with the aim to coordinate institutional efforts and promote alliances between different sectors, has also been successful in expanding coverage of services through coordinated approaches based on a shared vision of ECCE. It strengthened the credibility of the sector vis-à-vis the financial institutions, enabling it to attract increased resources.

However, Choi (2003) provides evidence that, while coordination mechanisms can work well when they are established for a specific purpose (e.g. to coordinate a particular early childhood task) or to focus on a targeted population, they are not successful in promoting a coherent overall policy and administrative framework across sectors. Limitations of coordinating bodies and cross-sectoral cooperation are also reported in *Starting Strong II* (OECD, 2006): in countries such as Ireland and the Republic of Korea, ministerial boundaries remain an obstacle in achieving a coordinated and coherent approach to ECCE provision, despite a growing understanding of programme objectives for young children across government departments. While coordinating and working together among different sectors is real progress, 'the cultures and aims of different government departments can make it difficult to

achieve co-ordinated policies in favour of the development and education of young children' (ibid., p. 48). In sub-Saharan Africa, while coordination bodies have had some success in coordinating pilot projects, formulating policy or conducting situational analyses, their impact may be limited due to their undertrained staff, their role as adviser more than decision-maker, and the lack of engagement of all stakeholders (UNESCO, 2006).

## Integration

Some countries have adopted a more integrative response, starting by consolidating national responsibility for ECCE into a single ministry – though as we shall discuss in the next chapter, there is considerable variation in how far countries go in the integration process: integration should be seen as a dimension ranging from limited through to complete. The Nordic countries pioneered the policy approach of administrative integration into a single government department in the 1960s and 1970s, bringing together national responsibility for ECCE within social welfare (with the exception of Iceland, which integrated within education from the start). Since the late 1980s, the trend has been toward integrating ECCE within education (Neuman, 2005; UNESCO, 2006). The overall national responsibility for ECCE in Sweden and Norway was moved from social welfare to education in 1996 and 2005 respectively. Other countries that have adopted the approach of integrating ECCE within education include Botswana (1994), Brazil (1996), England (1998), Jamaica (1998), Iceland, New Zealand (1986), Romania (2009), the Russian Federation, Scotland (1998), Slovenia (1996), Spain (1990), Viet Nam (1986) and Zambia (2004).

Only Denmark and Finland still have ECCE services fully integrated within social welfare<sup>4</sup>. Responsibility for ECCE at federal level is also integrated within social welfare in Germany (Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth), but arrangements vary at Länder and municipal levels, which play a leading role in ECCE. Some Länder have integrated responsibility – in education or social welfare; some operate split responsibility, with children under 3 years under social welfare and 3 to 6 year olds under education.

A range of analyses, including the OECD reviews (2001, 2006) and some studies published by UNESCO (e.g. Choi, 2005), has put forward possible advantages of integrating ECCE responsibility within a single ministry:

- More coherent policy and greater equality and consistency across sectors in terms of social objectives, regulation, funding and staffing regimes, curriculum and assessment, costs to parents, and opening hours, in contrast to high fragmentation of policy and services.
- Greater and more effective investment in the youngest children (under 3 years), producing higher quality services for them.

4 In Denmark and Finland, pre-school classes for 6-year-olds are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

- Enhanced continuity of young children’s experiences as variations in access and quality are lessened under one ministry, and links at the services level – across age groups and settings – are more easily forged.
- Improved public management of services by reducing the time spent on coordinating initiatives of different sectors, leading to better quality and increased access by parents.

OECD (2006) has argued that it matters less in which ministry – education, social welfare, family affairs or gender equality – responsibility for ECCE is integrated than that the ministry has a strong focus on young children’s development and education. In practice, though, integration today is largely within education. One purpose of this report is to analyse why this is so with a variety of reasons given for and against.

On the one hand, ECCE is considered as the foundation of lifelong learning, and there is growing recognition that children are learners from birth and not just from 3 or 4. Placing ECCE in the education system facilitates linkage and continuity between early childhood and primary education and encouraging a smooth transition and successful schooling later. It also provides an opportunity to develop a coherent policy framework for regulation, funding, training, and service delivery across the different stages of the education system (OECD, 2001; UNESCO, 2006). Ministries of Education are equipped with many of the subsystems necessary for a quality ECCE system, e.g. training and pedagogical support, curriculum design, inspection, monitoring and evaluation (OECD, 2006; Choi, 2006). Furthermore, education is seen to offer a stronger basis than welfare for developing the provision of ECCE services as a universal entitlement, i.e. as a public good, as in the case of Sweden (Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar, 2003).

On the other hand, integration within education is not without risks and challenges. It may render *all* early childhood services more ‘school-like’ in terms of opening hours, staffing, adult-child ratio, pedagogy and physical setting: in short, ‘schoolification’ may be intensified and extended even further down the age range. Rather than closing the gap between services for children under and over 3 years, integration within education may exacerbate it, if education authorities prioritise education for children over 3 years and neglect provision for younger children (Haddad, 2002). Integration within education may also result in separating ECCE services from child welfare, health and other policy areas for children, and in undermining attention to the whole child. Last but not least, bringing childcare services into line with public schooling standards may raise serious cost issues (OECD, 2001). In a developing country context, the additional resource pressure created by a Ministry of Education’s move to embrace early childhood education could be criticised in view of the dire situation facing primary schools, as has happened in Zambia (Thomas and Thomas, 2009).

There are then conflicting arguments and ambivalent feelings about integrating ECCE services in education.

## The situation today

Although the split arrangement of ECCE is dominant, a significant minority of countries have opted to integrate within education. These countries include Botswana, Brazil, England, Iceland, Jamaica, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, the Russian Federation, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Viet Nam and Zambia,. There has been some earlier work on this policy option, including national reports on New Zealand and Sweden for UNESCO (Meade and Podmore, 2002; Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar, 2003), a comparative study of the integration process in England, Scotland and Sweden (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2004), and some useful discussions in the OECD *Starting Strong* review. However, despite the importance of the issue and the number of countries that have adopted integration within education, there is no up-to-date comparative research assessing this option, in and beyond Europe. The observation by Neuman (2005) that the organisation of ECCE settings for children from birth to compulsory school age under the auspices of education is a trend 'that calls for further investigation' (p. 134) remains valid.

The present study seeks to address this knowledge gap. It focuses on the particular policy approach of integrating ECCE services within education, contributing to a better understanding of this policy option by looking at selected countries with very different conditions that have made this move; it also considers the experience of a municipality that has integrated responsibility for its own ECCE services within education, to gauge the possibility for local initiative. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that the study is not intended as advocacy for the integration-within- education option: it treats it as *one* response to the need to create a better coordinated ECCE system. For this reason, the study also includes a country that has adopted the integration-within-welfare option and countries that continue with split systems.

## The present study

### Aims and objectives

The starting point of the present study is the unsatisfactory nature of split ECCE systems and the need to develop more coordinated approaches. The main aim of the study is to evaluate one significant policy response, the integration of ECCE through a transfer of responsibility for the whole sector to education, whilst at the same time seeking to understand why this response may not be generally viewed as desirable or feasible. Focusing on the policy approach of integrating ECCE within education, the study further aims to:

- Understand the rationale, processes and consequences of integrating ECCE within education;
- Provide policy recommendations and other information useful for policymaking at national, regional and local levels; and
- Promote policy dialogue at various levels by disseminating and communicating the results of the study through existing fora and networks.

Policy recommendations and lessons to be learned include, for example, the advantages and disadvantages of integration within education; effective processes for implementing integration of ECCE services within the education system; and the conditions that favour the adoption of different approaches to more coordinated ECCE services, e.g. when is integration within education to be considered and when are other approaches more desirable or feasible? It addresses ECCE from a systemic and lifelong learning perspective, and, as the Convention on the Rights of the Child recommends, gives special attention to issues of inclusion, quality, learning and relations with the education system and other sectors concerned with the development and well-being of young children and families. The full brief for the research project can be found in Annex A.

## **Methodology: ways of working**

The study investigates two sets of countries. One consists of countries that have moved the responsibility for ECCE into the education sector ('integration-within-education countries' hereafter); we also look at an example of a municipality that has taken this step, within a split national system. The other consists of countries which organise ECCE in a different way ('alternative approach countries'). These countries include one with ECCE integrated within the social welfare system and three that maintain split systems. Their role in the study is to provide other perspectives on the organisation of ECCE services, and to help place the integration-within-education option into a wider context. They also enable a better appreciation of the conditions that favour or obstruct the adoption of different policy options, thereby improving the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Researchers were identified from integration-within-education countries, either through the concerned UNESCO field offices or ECCE networks, and were commissioned to compile a report on the country's or (in the case of Ghent) the municipality's experience of adopting and implementing the decision to integrate ECCE within education. They did this with the help of guidelines prepared by the Steering Committee of the study (see Annex B). Since New Zealand and Sweden had been the subject of previous reports for UNESCO, prepared 7 or 8 years earlier, the same researchers who had compiled these original reports were invited to update them. Reports for this study were written with the help of guidelines prepared by the Steering Committee of the study (see Annex B) and examine the historical context, rationales, aims, processes, progress, consequence, lessons, implications and remaining

challenges of integrating ECCE within education. Researchers were requested to include any formal evaluations of this policy reform, and cover any evidence of the consequences for children, families, service quality and the achievement of wider social objectives.

National and municipal reports are being processed for publication. As the final layout has not yet been completed, it is not possible to give page numbers when citing these reports in subsequent chapters. When cited, “NR” indicates a national report (for Brazil, Jamaica, New Zealand, Slovenia or Sweden), while “MR” indicates the municipal report for Ghent.

The study of the alternative approach countries was achieved through interviews with policymakers and/or national researchers. The interviews were conducted either by telephone or face to face according to an interview guide, developed by the Steering Committee. The interview notes were compiled by the Steering Committee, and the interviewees were requested to check and validate the content. Input from these countries includes information about their current ECCE systems, whether consideration has been or is being given to adopting the approach of integration within education; their views about the feasibility and desirability of the approach; and whether there are currently discussions underway about greater coordination or integrating ECCE within education.

The report has been prepared mainly based on the information generated in the national and municipal reports and interview notes, but also has drawn on other early childhood sources.

## **The cases studied**

Table 1.1 provides basic information about the nine countries included in this study, including population, fertility rates, GDP per capita, income inequality and ranking on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index. All but two of the countries are, by World Bank classification, ‘high income’ countries, with Brazil and Jamaica classified as ‘upper middle income’ countries. These last two countries have per capita GDP below US\$10,000, while in four countries (Belgium, Finland, France and Sweden) it is over US\$33,000; New Zealand and Slovenia are somewhat lower (around US\$27,000), with Hungary, at US\$18,755, midway between Brazil and neighbouring Slovenia. These averages conceal considerable variations in income distribution, with very high rates of inequality in Brazil and Jamaica and, at the other end, lowest rates in the two Nordic countries, Finland and Sweden. Brazil and Jamaica come well behind the other countries on the Human Development Index of the UNDP, the remaining seven countries being ranked between 7 and 29 on the Index. Brazil is by far the most populous country, followed by France; the remaining countries have much smaller populations of 10 million or less. Fertility rates are mostly around or slightly above replacement level, except for the two former Communist countries – Hungary and Slovenia – where they are much lower.



**Table 1.1: Basic information on countries included in the study**

	Population (millions), 2007	Total Fertility rate, 2005-10	GDP per capita (PPP US\$), 2007	Income inequality (gini index)	Human Development Index ranking
Brazil	190.1	2.3	9,567	55.0	75th
Belgium	10.5	1.8	34,935	33.0	17th
Finland	5.3	1.8	34,526	26.9	12th
France	61.7	1.9	33,674	32.7	8th
Hungary	10.0	1.4	18,755	30.0	43rd
Jamaica	2.7	2.4	6,079	45.5	100th
New Zealand	4.2	2.0	27,336	36.2	20th
Slovenia	2.0	1.4	26,753	31.2	29th
Sweden	9.2	1.9	36,712	25.0	7th

Source: United Nations Development Programme, 2009.

### Integration-within-education countries

The integration-within-education cases include five countries – Brazil, Jamaica, New Zealand, Slovenia, and Sweden. They consist of two upper medium and three high income countries, offering some balance of representation from the developing and developed worlds. Included are a mix of economies and welfare states (including former communist, social democratic and liberal) and federal and unitary states. Such differences may have considerable implications for the reform process. An attempt was made to include lower income countries from Africa and Asia in this study, but the potential partners in the countries approached were unable to participate; these are significant omissions and require further attention.

In addition to the five countries, one case of integration-within-education at the local level has been included; this has been done to examine the potential for local action in reforming services. Ghent, situated in the Flemish part of Belgium, is an example of a local administration or municipality integrating responsibility for its own ECCE services within education, despite the wider national (or, in this case, regional) system remaining split; the regional system, Flanders, figures as one of the ‘alternative approach countries’. Ghent is not an isolated example of a local decision to integrate ECCE services in education without a matching regional or national reform. One of the earliest was Strathclyde, a large local authority in Scotland centred on Glasgow that now no longer exists, which adopted this organisation of its services in 1986. A number of other municipalities in Scotland and England followed suit in the 1980s and 1990s, prior to both national governments integrating responsibility in 1998. Similarly, in Italy, where the national responsibility is still divided (unlike England and Scotland), the municipality of Reggio Emilia has integrated early childhood services for children from birth to 6 years within education for several decades, as have a number of other Italian municipalities which place very high value on education. Other examples can be found

in Germany, with some Länder and municipalities integrating ECCE within education, though the federal responsibility is with the welfare sector.

The six national and municipal case studies have at least 10 years experience of integration of ECCE within education, enabling an evaluation of well-established policies.

### Alternative approach countries

As alternative approach countries, Belgium (Flanders), Finland, France, and Hungary have been studied. Finland represents a country with an integrated system under social welfare. The other countries retain a split between childcare and early education, including the separation of administrative and policymaking responsibility, which is still the dominant model of ECCE organisation worldwide.

## The Structure of the Report

The current chapter provides the background to the study. Having introduced the main issue of the study, this chapter refers to the aims and objectives, methodology and cases studied. Chapter Two describes the reform process within the six cases that have integrated ECCE within education, including the rationale, drivers and process of integration and how deeply the integration process has proceeded. How far has integration gone beyond administration and policy making, into areas such as access, workforce, funding, regulation and type of provision? Is structural integration matched by conceptual integration? These experiences are contrasted with those of Finland, which still has its ECCE services integrated within the social welfare system. Chapter Three considers the consequences of integration within education under five headings: (1) children and families; (2) the workforce; (3) the services; (4) resourcing for ECCE; and (5) the relationships between ECCE and other services, including compulsory schooling. The chapter also looks at some lessons learnt from the reform process. Chapter Four examines the perspectives of regions and countries that have maintained split systems of ECCE: Belgium Flanders, France and Hungary. Lastly, Chapter Five offers lessons learned from the cases studied and recommendations on the planning and implementation of the policy option of integration within education. It concludes with some reflections on the way forward in ECCE and, more broadly, education.

## 2. Integrated systems: History and processes

The starting point of the Caring and Learning Together project is, to quote the project proposal, “the unsatisfactory nature of split early childhood education and care (ECCE) systems and the need to develop more coordinated approaches, in particular, administrative integration of ECCE within the responsibility of one agency or ministry”. Our particular interest, because this has been the most common development in recent years, has been the integration of ECCE within the education system, whilst recognising that integration within the social welfare system is another option. The main focus of this chapter, therefore, is the history of integration within education, the when, why and how it has happened, but also how far the integration process has proceeded, beyond simply moving administrative and policy-making responsibility for all ECCE services into one government department or ministry. For as we shall see, how far integration has been taken represents a continuum from very limited to the creation of a completely integrated system or from shallow to deeper integration.

It is useful to think of the process of integration within education as having two elements that are linked but can be considered separately. Firstly, there is the *integration of a previously split system of ECCE*, and how far the previously two parts have been brought together into one common service. Unified government responsibility is a precondition for any integration process. But after that, there are a number of other areas where integration can be applied; how far and in what way these areas have been integrated can be taken as a rough indication of the depth of the integration process. These areas can be divided into the structural and the conceptual. The structural covers five key areas:

- Policy making and administration
- Access to services
- Funding (including what parents pay)
- Regulation (including curriculum or similar guidelines)
- Workforce (including structure, education and pay).

A sixth structural area is type of provision. To what extent have different forms of provision, for different age groups or purposes, been replaced by more integrated forms of provision, for example centres including children under and over 3 years? But while this area may be a defining feature of a national system, it does not determine the depth of integration; it may

be possible to have a deeply integrated system that yet retains a diversity of provision. Thus Sweden and Finland have well integrated systems based on a single type of age-integrated centre; Denmark and New Zealand also have well integrated systems, but both have more types of provision, some age-segregated.

Important as structural areas are for defining integration, equally important is conceptual integration. To what extent does the whole ECCE system share an understanding of what it is for and what it is doing, and how far is this expressed in a common language? In short, has the system got beyond thinking and talking about 'childcare' and 'education'? Of course, thinking and talking need not convert into policy and practice, so we might best consider this as a necessary but not sufficient condition for deep integration of the whole system.

This proposed analysis of the extent or depth of integration can apply equally to a system brought together within education or social welfare. The second element of a study of integration within education concerns *the effect on ECCE of being situated in education*, alongside compulsory and post-compulsory education. What are the implications of being integrated there rather than in, say, welfare? To what extent does the whole ECCE system assume the values and principles of the education system? Does an education perspective shape the reform of individual structural areas, for example the workforce? Is there any rethinking of the meaning of 'education', either in ECCE or in schools? Overall, does the relationship between ECCE and the school change and, if so, in what direction? Towards a 'strong and equal partnership' or towards 'schoolification' reaching down even into work with the very youngest children?

In this chapter we consider both of these elements: the process and extent of integration of the ECCE system; and the implications of integration within the wider education system. We focus on our five case countries and one case municipality and begin by mapping out the history of these cases leading up to initial integration within education – when, why and how the decision has been taken to move all ECCE services within one policy and administrative domain. We then describe what the transfer meant for policy- making and administrative structures, before going on to consider how far the integration process has continued *beyond* this administrative and policy- making stage – how deep integration has gone, and the implications of integration taking place within the education system. We conclude by considering the experience of one of the two countries that has an integrated system, but within welfare. This will further help us to understand better the implications of where integration is located – education or welfare.

# When, why and how? Integrating responsibility for ECCE within the education system

## Brazil

Brazil is very different in scale and governance compared with the other four case countries studied. It has a population of 190 million (the other four have populations below ten million), of great ethnic diversity and spread over a vast area. It is a federal state, with three levels of government relevant to ECCE policy – federal (Union), state (27 states plus a federal district) and municipal (5,654 municipalities). The Union establishes general rules and principles; states and municipalities implement them. In the field of ECCE, municipalities are responsible for policies and programmes, within a framework of principles and guidelines from Union and state, and also with technical assistance and financial resources from these higher levels of government. Municipalities may choose to provide their own education system, otherwise they must opt for their education services to be part of the state system.

A wide range of departments and organisations have taken an interest in ECCE throughout the 20th century; and a diverse range of services and providers developed, broadly divided between nurseries for children up to 3 years and pre-schools or kindergartens for children over 3. However, within this complex situation can be seen the growth of ideas favouring the adoption of an integrated and education-based approach to ECCE. A split system of nurseries providing ‘care’ to ‘minors’ (the dispossessed, mainly black) while kindergartens provided ‘education’ for the ‘child’ (middle class, mainly white) – which, as the national report observes, was not unfamiliar in Europe – came to be challenged increasingly by arguments for a holistic and inclusive approach based on rights, as the following examples illustrate.

In 1922, the first Congress for the Protection of Children proposed ‘the creation of laws regarding children’s rights to life and health’ (NR), while at the 1933 Congress the educator, Anísio Teixeira, ‘drew attention to the need for transcending the approach towards pre-school children considering only their physical features and health, because development implied the evolution of mental capabilities and socialization, both of which were attached to education’ (NR). In 1940, the federal government created the National Department of Childhood (*Departamento Nacional da Criança* - DNCr), linked to the Ministry of Education and Public Health (MESP), with the aim of coordinating activities related to motherhood, childhood and adolescence. In 1952, still under the MESP, the DNCr published a booklet about suitable material for the education of young children in nurseries. While in 1967 the same Department (now located in the Ministry of Health) issued a Plan of Assistance to Pre-School, for children up to 2 years-old, including the principle of nurseries as institutions intended to help families in the education of their young children. The concern here is for a broad service, linking education and care, including health.

The main catalyst for integration within education was the drafting of the new Constitution, following the end of 20 years of military dictatorship in 1984. The deliberations of the National Constituent Assembly were accompanied by ‘intense debates among social movements interested in a new model of society and of the State...a great national event (that) highlighted dreams and aspirations which were denied for 21 years [of dictatorship]’ (NR). The place of children in this society and state was a major issue, stimulated by an inter-ministerial committee established to organize ‘a movement and (coordinate) studies and proposals on the child to be submitted to the National Constituent Assembly’ (NR). The Committee organized the Children and Constituent National Movement, ‘which spread across the country, sponsored by branches established in all states...The extent and depth of the movement generated an intense participation, interest and political pressure in favour of the child’ (NR).

The consequence was a Constitution (agreed in 1988) that recognized the child as a citizen with rights, including the right to education from birth (Article 2.2.1d). Nurseries for children under 3 years ‘have a new role: education...the task concerned with younger children is an educational activity’ (Article 2.2.1e). Further the State ‘has a duty to ensure early childhood education to children up to 5 years in nurseries and pre-schools’ (Article 2.2.2b). The Constitution, therefore, not only defined a right to education from birth but also nurseries, mainly for children under 3 years, as educational institutions. Through these articles, education became a constitutional right of ‘new citizens’, and the State acquired the duty to provide such early childhood education.

This approach was consolidated by the 1990 Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA), which defined the legal status of the child as citizen, replacing the former authoritarian legal approach, and established a system to assure children’s rights – including the right to education from birth. The National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), adopted in 1996, sets out certain key principles: early childhood education (from birth to 6 years) as the first stage of basic education; early childhood teachers to have a degree related to education; and nurseries to be integrated into local educational systems. It provides a clear concept of early childhood education, ‘aiming at the development of children aged up to 6 years, as regards the physical, psychological, intellectual and social aspects, in a way that complements the actions of the family and the human setting’ (Article 29) (NR). The law also laid down a deadline of three years for transferring administrative responsibility for nurseries to the education sector.

The decision to integrate ECCE into education in Brazil seems to have been driven by three main influences:

- A concept or image of the child as a citizen with rights, whose development is indivisible: ‘this child cannot be seen only as a physical body that needs care, neither as a mind without a body or an intelligence that develops in a neglected body...(but) as a whole being’ (NR).

- A concept of universal public policies, albeit combined with some more targeted policies. ‘These two concepts – of child and of public policies – reinforce the argument in favour of including early education as part of the education policy: (a) it is a universal right of every child, from birth, and (b) it aims to develop human beings as a whole...in a process that incorporates physical, social, emotional and mental aspects’ (NR).
- An important and singular political process: re-democratization after authoritarian rule with the active participation of social movements.

## Jamaica

Responsibility for ‘day care’ transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Education in 1998, following several years of research, advocacy and discussion. As the national report highlights, two major pieces of research – the one an evaluation of day care services (1993, for the Ministry of Health and funded by UNICEF), the other an evaluation of early childhood education (1995, for the Ministry of Education and funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation) – paved the way for this move to integration-within- education. Rising interest in change was further stimulated by UNICEF, which had a strategic role with government in the development of services. At a conference of early childhood experts convened in February 1995, UNICEF made it clear that addressing fragmentation of services ‘would appropriately fit its mandate for the next 5-year cycle’ (NR).

An Integration Task Force representing key ministries, NGOs, international funding partners and others, with many participants from the preceding conference, was set up in 1995 and met regularly. From its first meeting, the Task Force situated its work

[w]ithin the context of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child which Jamaica has ratified (1993), and in particular Articles 6 and 24, good early childhood care and education provide much, much more than a school readiness programme for 0-6 year olds. They reflect a comprehensive vision of support for child development, health and well being, encompassing educational practice/techniques, relationship/partnership with parents and connections with other community agencies and institutions (NR).

The Task Force was also guided by a UNICEF-commissioned concept paper by Dr. Kerida McDonald, ‘Rationale and Recommendation for Integration of Early Childhood Education in Jamaica’.

The discussions of the Task Force were further influenced by two concurrent developments: the launch of a government ‘poverty eradication’ strategy, and the argument that improved early starts for children could play a key role in this; and the Caribbean Plan of Action (CPOA) for Early Childhood Care, Education and Development, prepared by a Jamaican team, endorsed at a regional conference and adopted by Heads of State in 1997. CPOA

was a 'seminal document which undoubtedly prodded integration' (NR). It assumed that 'a comprehensive framework [was] essential and spelled out the full range of elements needed within such a framework – legislation, policies and standards, training, prenatal and other early health requirements, parenting and community support, financing etc' (NR).

The Task Force agreed a broad and ambitious definition of integration, including not only unitary management of ECCE services, but stronger linkages across health, education and welfare and incorporation of early childhood interests in all government policies. It also adopted some ambitious strategies:

1. A programme of sensitisation of key persons in the Ministries and in the wider field of early childhood organisations providing services.
2. A work plan for the development and implementation of an early childhood policy, which would address training and curriculum requirements; accreditation and remuneration systems linked to training; pilot testing of integrated service models (with inclusion of children with disabilities as one objective); the development of standards, tools and systems for registering, regulating and monitoring the sector; and projected resources needed for national implementation.
3. The establishment of a national resource centre for early childhood information, based at the Centre for Early Childhood Education, established by the Bernard van Leer Foundation in conjunction with the University of the West Indies.
4. To plan for the establishment of a National Council on Early Childhood Education, Care and Development linked to the National Council on Education, to ensure representation of Early Childhood interests on all national policy making bodies.

The Task Force became 'the de facto preparatory committee for integration' (NR), as the integration process in government began to gain momentum. In October 1996, the Ministry of Health agreed *in principle* to the transfer of the staff and budget of its Day Care Unit to the Early Childhood Unit in the Ministry of Education. In May 1997, a new integration programme was officially announced by the Ministry of Education, and the Task Force was formally adopted by the Ministry as an advisory committee. This Integration Advisory Committee then put forward a model for integration across the birth to six sector, covering: common standards; financing; pay scales and training, and piloting integrated services in two parishes. Meetings between the Ministries of Education and Health began in August 1997 and the 'instrument of merger of the administrative structures of the Early Childhood Unit [in Education] and Day Care Unit [in Health]' was signed a year later, with the latter moving into education soon after.

Summarising the process, the national report highlights four initial drivers for unitary government responsibility:



- Assessment of poor quality in day care and early education sectors, leaving young children inadequately prepared for formal schooling.
- The uneven treatment of the sectors in terms of financing, training and curriculum support, with particular concern for very young children.
- The conviction that improved quality of service delivery in the early years would contribute to the government's goal to reduce poverty.
- A strong body of expert opinion, led by UNICEF and including key NGOs, academics and international funders.

To which might be added the influence of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and strong support for a broad approach to work with young children and their families that would span many policy and service areas, not just ECCE services.

## **New Zealand**

The pathway to integration of ECCE at government level, implemented in 1986, can be picked up in the 1970s, a decade of rapid development in 'childcare' services and the emergence of a national constituency advocating for more and better services. Helen May, in her account of the post-war history of ECCE, describes much of the activism for better services in this decade coming from 'middle-class women, who returned to the workplace, sought further education, maintained or established careers and tentatively explored the idea of childcare being a good place for children and a support for family life' (May, 2001, p. 138). A series of meetings and conferences in the 1970s created forums for people to speak for ECCE and 'it was possible for a network of early childhood advocates in the community to develop a discourse, advance it and keep it moving in a variety of places' (ibid., p. 122), supported by a network of allies – women's and political groups, trade unions and other education sectors. In 1979, childcare workers formed an Early Childhood Workers Union, alongside the existing kindergarten teachers union (the two unions were to combine in 1990 to create a union covering the whole ECCE workforce).

From the second half of the 1970s, this growing body of advocates was calling attention to the need for administrative reform, and in 1980 the government-appointed State Services Commission working group called for the re-allocation of departmental responsibilities between the Departments of Education and Social Welfare, giving to the former inspection, advisory, funding and training functions across the whole of ECCE. It also proposed the principle of 'equitable funding for childcare....and a funding policy [to be] developed...based not on the welfare principle, but on the principle of contribution to a recognised service' (NR). Four years later a group of national early childhood leaders, convened by the Ministry of Education, reaffirmed the need for equitable funding, that a common core of training be explored – and that all ECCE be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Momentum for an integrated education-based responsibility for ECCE built up after the election of a Labour government in late 1984. 'Childcare' was on its agenda and pledges had been made in response to lobbying from the strong constituency developed since the 1970s. The new government 'recognised that education and care for children are inseparable in everyday practice and conceptually, and that an education emphasis results in better outcomes for children' (NR). It pledged to address funding inequalities, improve training of all early childhood workers, and transfer administration of childcare to the Department of Education. In 1986, in line with the 1980 recommendations of the State Services Commission working group, legislation was amended and childcare transferred from Social Welfare to Education.

Change in New Zealand had three main drivers:

- A broad-based and unified body of opinion, including a strong voice from women, effectively organised to influence government policy, and a political party influenced by this opinion coming to power.
- A sequence of working groups and national forums, where proposals for reform took shape.
- A commitment to greater equity between the 'childcare' and 'kindergarten' sectors.

## Slovenia

Movement towards a closer relationship between services for children under and over 3 years goes back to the 1960s, when age-integrated centres began to be established; the whole ECCE sector had its first independent law ('on the activities of education and care for pre-school children') in 1971. From 1977, the Slovenian 'Community of Childcare' (reporting to the Secretariat for Family and Social Protection) funded all ECCE centres. But the 'Community of Education' (reporting to the Secretariat for Education) cooperated in, for example, the development of a 1979 *Programme for preschool education and care*, the first national document about the contents of working with children across the early childhood period (from 8 months to 7 years); and in legislation, such as a 1980 *Law on preschool education and care* that governed centres (for example, specifying the organisation of children into age-defined groups) and recognized them as a part of the overall education system. Moreover from 1981, it was obligatory for children to have pre-primary education in the year before entering compulsory schooling (then set at age 7), usually in ECCE centres for 25 hours a week.

In the 1980s, centres were established and financed by municipalities, who in turn received funding both from the Community for Education (for the educational part of the work) and the Community of Childcare (for care, health and nutritional aspects). What was emerging,

therefore, was a dual involvement of childcare and education authorities across the ECCE system, which was based on all-age centres that, however, were:

...internally divided into classes for babies and toddlers, in which the emphasis was on care and nursing and the classes for older pre-school children, including the pre-primary school, in which the emphasis was on education and learning. In classes, which included toddlers aged up to 2 years, the professional workers were pre-school teachers with a medium or higher professional education or paediatric nurses with a secondary education; in other classes within the day care centres, only the pre-school teachers were implementing the Programme for pre-school education and care, while in the classes of the pre-primary school the school teachers could also be employed (NR).

After Slovenian independence in 1990, all of these centres were initially placed in the social welfare system, as the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. During their brief stay there, some tendencies to divide age-integrated centres into age-segregated parts became apparent. But the major political changes in this period also led to a period of reflection about the division of ECCE into two parts. In a process of analysis and debate, a range of experts were invited to reflect on this issue, including at a 1990 Colloquium – *Preschool care and education in the system of a wider social care for the child*. Although a split system of responsibility – under 3s with health, over 3s with education – was considered, the conclusion was that centres – ‘pre-schools’ – should not be (re)divided into two parts, care and education:

The professionals working within different levels of education (faculty, institutes, pre-schools), especially emphasised that the dividing of day care centres into early childcare centres and educational pre-schools is inappropriate as (the) child’s development and learning represent continuous processes going on from the period of infancy till the child’s entry into compulsory school; that it is important to provide the children an easy transition into compulsory schooling through several years of attending the pre-school; that not only child’s preparation for entering the compulsory school, but also the preparation for learning is important and that the cooperation between the day care centres and parents is important in all developmental periods (NR).

Despite some expressions of concern about ‘schoolification’ if the whole system was given over to the Education Ministry, the decision was made in 1992 to place ECCE, overall, under the Ministry of Education and Sport.

In Slovenia, three main influences can be discerned working towards full integration within education:

- A longstanding recognition of the close relationship between care and education, which facilitated the development of an age-integrated centre as the main form of

ECCE provision and as the first part of the education system, as well as combined funding and regulation of this provision.

- Major political change (independence), which stimulated consideration about the future structure of ECCE, whose division was already put under question.
- Public debate and expert consensus that early childhood centres should be under education.

## Sweden

Unlike the other case countries, Sweden has had integrated responsibility for ECCE for a long period, decades before these services were transferred to the education system. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs was given overall responsibility in the 1940s, following 'heated arguments over whether school or social authorities were best suited to supervise the institutions' (NR). A 1968 Commission argued for bringing together two traditions and types of provision in Swedish ECCE - half-day pre-schooling (*Kindergarten/lekskolan*) and full-day day care (day-care centres/*daghem*) - into one institution and concept, the 'pre-school' (*förskola*) that has subsequently become the basic ECCE service in Sweden. The aim was 'to close the gap between the institution based solely on pedagogical learning activities (*lekskola*) and that based mainly on care (*daghem*), and create the ideal union of care and pedagogy' (NR).

The huge expansion in ECCE services that began in the 1970s therefore took place within the context of a single integrated system and political responsibility, under the auspices of social welfare, and was based on a service that was expected to provide both care and education through an age-integrated centre. However, the question of whether ECCE should be in welfare or education remained, as did the relationship between ECCE and compulsory schooling, which began at 7 years.

Several developments took place in the early 1990s that set the scene for the transfer of responsibility for ECCE in 1996 from social welfare to education. In 1990, as part of a broader process of decentralisation, municipalities took over from central government the employment of school teachers, and so assumed full responsibility for schooling. With municipalities now being fully responsible for both ECCE and schools, a strong trend developed to integrate local responsibility for both services, under the direction of one board and managed by one local office. The relationship between ECCE services (mainly 'pre-schools') and schools began to change, first with parents being allowed to decide on whether to start their children at school at 6 or 7, then by the development of 'pre-school classes' in schools for 6 year olds, which eventually all municipalities were legally required to provide.

By 1996, therefore, many 6 year olds had already left the social welfare system, entering school a year before the start of compulsory education. But the main driver of change of the

transfer into education at national level was strategic: the government's belief that ECCE had a key role to play in Sweden's future as a 'knowledge society' based on lifelong learning, which was understood to begin from birth. The earlier report for UNESCO on Swedish integration (Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar, 2003) emphasises this strategic aim:

With today's information society and global competition for knowledge and skills, interest has also focused on the youngest members of society. The integration of pre-schooling and schooling into one ministry, with 100 per cent financial and pedagogical responsibility, was logical in the lifelong learning perspective, particularly given the scope of the services involved. The merger offered a more coherent command of the issues, which were less in danger of 'falling between two stools,' says Barbara Martin Korpi, Senior Adviser in the Ministry of Education (Korpi, 2001) (p. 17).

Sweden, unlike the other countries considered here, first fully integrated ECCE, then moved this fully integrated services into education. The key drivers of transfer were:

- A longstanding debate about the rightful place of ECCE, in a system that had long recognised the close relationship of care and education.
- Local government taking the initiative, increasingly integrating responsibility for pre-school and school within one administration.
- Recognition of the important role of ECCE in a broad education policy deemed essential to national survival in an increasingly competitive world.
- A belief in some quarters that an education-based service, drawing on education values and principles, including universal entitlement and free access, would make it easier to include the relatively small minority of children not using ECCE.

## Ghent

Our sixth and final case differs from the ones preceding it, being a large municipality in the Flemish-language community of Belgium (Flanders), seeking a more integrated approach within a national (or, more recently, regional) policy on ECCE based on a split system (we examine this regional situation in more detail when we discuss Flanders in Chapter Four).

With a population of nearly 250,000, Ghent is the second largest municipality in Belgium. The ECCE system in Flanders is divided between childcare centres and family day carers in welfare, and nursery schools (*kleuterscholen*) in education. Whereas much ECCE provision in Flanders has been provided by the church and charities (NGOs), the city of Ghent has invested in public provision of both childcare centres and *kleuterscholen*, as well as its own municipal compulsory schools mostly situated in working class areas. Today, there are 86 childcare centres in the city with 2,618 places, of which the municipality is responsible for 24 centres with 1,014 places; a further 14 centres are subsidised by the municipality and 48

run privately, mostly for profit. There are 124 *kleuterscholen* in the city, with the municipality providing 40, with 3,231 children attending.

Back in the 1960s, the municipal compulsory schools began to lose pupils and at the end of the decade, the socialist party in Ghent decided to stem the flow (this was in the context of a fierce struggle between, on the one hand, Catholics wanting to expand subsidised Catholic schools and, on the other, liberals and socialists seeking more state or municipal education). Two measures were taken. First, to attach ‘out of school’ services to municipal *kleuterscholen*. Second, to expand municipal provision for children under 3 years, from a handful of centres to 25 by the end of the 1970s. To support this expansion, ‘childcare’ was brought in to the education department of the city, controlled by the socialist party, in 1970. As the report on Ghent puts it:

The rationale for the creation of childcare centres inside the education direction was very pragmatic. At that time the number of working mothers was increasing and the city invested in crèches and in out of school facilities...The city schools ‘lost’ many pupils in this period and the alderman (lead politician) of education saw in the creation of services for young children...a way of attracting new children for the schools. The children of the crèches were seen as potential pupils for the *kleuterschool* (MR).

Integration of responsibility for ECCE was in this case partial, limited to the services provided directly by the municipality. It also, as we have seen, arose out of a political struggle for ‘the soul of the child’, in which ‘childcare’ was initially recruited to come to the aid of the municipal school system.

## Integration: Policy making and administration

In this section we consider how integration of ECCE into education is expressed in national and local structures for policy making and administration: the forms of integrated governance.

### Brazil

As a federal state, the role of the federal government is to set general principles and guidelines, leaving education authorities (states or municipalities) to implement them. Municipalities may choose between providing their own education system and using the state system. Around 2,000 municipalities (37 per cent) now run their own education systems, though many that use the state system have established a Municipal Council of Education (CME) (56 per cent), whose role includes the regulation of ECCE services. There is great diversity between the many municipalities, including inequalities in social and economic conditions, and in education provision and systems. But overall there is a trend towards the formation of local

education systems, though there remains great variation between municipalities in how they conduct this work.

At the federal level, each stage of basic education – early childhood, elementary and secondary – has an office within the Secretariat of Basic Education in the Ministry of Education. The Early Childhood Education Coordination Office (COEDI) is responsible for coordination with other stages of education, for supporting national policy and for providing technical assistance to states and municipalities in developing the early childhood sector in their education systems. The COEDI also sponsors public debates and documents that provide guidance and inspiration on integrating the ECCE system and developing the relationship between education and care. The documents it has prepared include: ‘For a training policy of early childhood education teachers’ (1994); ‘Integration of childhood institutions to school systems: a case study of five cities which have faced challenges and made achievements’ (2002); ‘Children’s Education National Policy: the right of children 0 to 6 years to education’ (2005); ‘Programme of initial in-service training of teachers in childhood education – Proinfantil’ (2005); ‘National parameters of quality for childhood education’; and ‘Basic parameters of infrastructure for early childhood education institutions’ (2006).

Another federal institution, the National Fund for the Maintenance and Funding of Basic Education and Teaching (FUNDEB), was established in 2006 to supply a new model of public financing for all three stages of basic education, including early childhood. FUNDEB is financed by a fixed proportion of state and municipal taxes, plus a federal contribution (10 per cent of the total amount delivered by the states and municipalities), the Fund then being redistributed to states and municipalities according to their numbers of pupils. The original proposal for this fund, made after the integration of all ECCE into education, excluded nurseries for children under 3 years. But this was reversed following ‘an extensive social mobilization of organisations engaged in the struggle for the right to early childhood education’ (NR). This struggle had other benefits: ‘there was a widespread debate about the significance of education in the first three years of life. The political debate on the role of nursery as an educational institution has given it a new status in the social and educational Brazilian scene’ (NR). Nurseries, therefore, are part of this educational funding system, an important example of administrative integration.

Each state and municipality has defined its own way of implementing the integration of ECCE within education. Some made an immediate transfer of responsibility from social welfare to education, including buildings, staff and financial resources. Others carried out the integration gradually, based on the capability of education departments to take on the new responsibilities. While in some municipalities, the transfer process is ongoing or stalled, and nurseries, or ‘day care centres’, still remain the responsibility of social welfare departments.

## Jamaica

The Day Care Unit (DCU), which had been responsible since 1975 for registration, inspection and monitoring of day care services, transferred into Education in late 1998, moving to a large Ministry of Education campus of several units, including the Early Childhood Unit (ECU). Having suffered serious cuts in the 1980s, the DCU was by this time reduced to six Day Care Coordinators (DCCs), including the Director, and though retaining its separate identity reported in this new regime to the ECU. Established in 1972, the ECU had 30 Early Childhood Education Officers (EOs) and worked with basic schools<sup>5</sup>; these community-owned schools, operated by an individual, Trust, or faith-based institution, cater for approximately 83 per cent of the total enrolment of 3 to 5-year-olds in Jamaica and play a critical role in early childhood education.

In 2003, an Early Childhood Commission (ECC) was established, as a stand-alone body accountable to Parliament through the Ministry of Education, consisting of a Board of 20 Commissioners, representing 'a broad cross-section of stakeholders from several Ministries, the University of West Indies, the NGO sector and the private sector'. According to the strategic review of early childhood, commissioned by the Planning Institute of Jamaica and supported by UNICEF, the ECC would review the purpose and objectives of an integrated early childhood programme that went beyond just linking day care with pre-schools to include health and family support services as well. The ECC's stated mission is 'an integrated and co-ordinated delivery of quality early childhood programmes and services, which provide equity and access for children zero to eight years within healthy, safe and nurturing environments' (NR). The functions of the ECC include: advising the Cabinet on early childhood matters; assisting in preparing, monitoring and evaluating plans and programmes; coordinating ECD activities; convening consultations with stakeholders; analysing the resource needs of the sector and identifying alternative financing; regulating early childhood institutions [ECIs]<sup>6</sup>; and conducting research. The ECC has its own staff and operates a sub-committee structure (e.g. Training and Development; Legal and Regulatory Affairs; Parenting and Community Outreach).

Since 2008, the inspection function of the ECU has been transferred to the ECC within the new regulatory framework for licensing ECIs. The remaining functions of the ECU, its developmental and training roles, will also be transferred to the ECC but this has been delayed, causing some confusion within the sector, particularly for the ECU staff who will not automatically transfer with the functions. In February 2009 the ECC, in its policy role, published a long-term National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (2008-2013). This plan:

- 5 Under the 2005 Early Childhood Act and Regulations, all schools have to apply for registration and inspection for licensing purposes. The Act broadly defines a 'basic school' as any 'school that offers a course of educational training for students under the age of six years' (p. 8).
- 6 The term 'early childhood Institutions' was introduced by the 2005 Early Childhood Act to cover all forms of ECCE provision, including day care centres, home-based day care, Infant and basic schools



recognizes the early childhood period to include the cohort of children from zero to eight years, with zero acknowledging the importance of early childhood development from the ante-natal period. It also recognizes the difference in models for implementation of plans and programmes for children 0-3 years, the majority of whom are not in early childhood institutions but who access state health services regularly during this period; children 3-6 years the majority of whom are in ECIs; and children 6-8 years, who attend primary level schooling and are governed by the Education Act. The plan is for ECC to work in a multi-sectoral partnership with other Ministries and agencies to support the child and its parents from antenatal clinics through birth to child health clinics, early childhood institutions and the transition to primary school in grades 1-2 (NR).

The ECC is, therefore, emerging as a key national agency for the development and implementation of an integrated ECCE policy and its administration. Local government plays little role in ECCE policy and administration, being historically weak and never involved in the education system. With the exception of building, planning and fire regulations, local municipalities - Parish Councils - have never had any responsibilities for early childhood services and this is unchanged since integration.

## **New Zealand**

Childcare administration was transferred from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education in 1986. This involved a change in legislation, records being shifted to the Department of Education, and the merger of field staff responsible for childcare services (previously under social welfare) with those responsible for kindergartens and play centres (under education). The Department of Education became the new employer of these officials who licensed and monitored childcare centres. This caused some concern amongst Department of Social Welfare managers related to the transfer of staff and the loss of a positive component of their work.

There were new structures and lines of report for all ECCE field staff, as they were assigned to the Regional Offices of the Department of Education that previously had had no jurisdiction over any ECCE services. Formerly, officials responsible for advising kindergartens and play centres had been located in provincial Education Boards. The merged teams were accountable to a new senior regional manager in each of the three regional offices of the Department – managers who had to have knowledge and experience in ECCE were appointed. They reported to the Director of Early Childhood Education in the head office of the Department of Education.

In 1989, there was a wholesale reform of education administration in New Zealand, and early childhood officials and advisers were assigned to positions across the Ministry of Education or took jobs in different education agencies, such as the department responsible

for early childhood development and the department providing special education. Both these education agencies merged again with the Ministry of Education after 10 or more years of separation.

In 2008, a reorganisation within the Ministry regrouped early childhood administrations together, rather than, as formerly, distributed across divisions. There is now a Group Manager ECE, at a third tier of management within the Ministry of Education, 'in recognition of the significance of ECE in the education system'. A different government department – the Education Review Office – remains responsible for monitoring and evaluating schools and early childhood provision.

Policy for ECCE has been taken forward on an integrated basis, with two key policy documents covering the whole spectrum of provision. Following a green paper in 1988 (*Education to be More*), and accepting most of its recommendations, a government policy paper, *Before Five*, was published in the same year. This was a significant document, as the national report notes:

These reforms proved to be an important opportunity for improving the status and resources for childcare as most of the new policies made no distinction between different types of ECCE services. For example, the 1989 Budget announced that all ECCE services would receive the same per child, per hour grant, with an extra weighting for children under 2 years of age, as ECS were required to have a higher ratio of educators for the youngest children... Funding equity for childcare services had come at last. A new innovation was the introduction of charters to be developed by each ECCE service (setting out its objectives, policies and practices) wanting the new government funding. (Charters also became a feature of schools and tertiary institutions after 1989. They were part of the education reforms.) (NR).

Then in 2002, again broadly based on recommendations from a working group of 31 members, the government adopted *Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki, a 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education*, which 'clearly signalled government commitment to continued generous access to quality ECE for infants and young children (Te One, 2005)' (NR). The 10-year plan has three key goals: to increase participation in quality ECE services, to improve the quality of ECE services, and to promote collaborative relationships. In between these two major policy plans focusing on provision, an early childhood curriculum was published in the mid-1990s.

Reform in New Zealand has involved national government and individual providers and services, with no recognised role for local government, which (as in Jamaica) plays a relatively minor role in the country with respect to ECCE, only focusing on buildings and planning.

## Slovenia

With the transfer of responsibility in 1992, staff responsible for ECCE in the Ministry of Health were transferred to education. When in health, there was no separate section for ECCE, but one developed quickly within education. Other 'functional units' connected with the new Ministry of Education and Sports included ECCE within their remits and work. Inspection of ECCE services, previously undertaken locally, was transferred to an 'arms length' agency, the Inspectorate of Education and Sport, which also has responsibility for schools; the Board of Education assumed responsibility for advice and continuous professional development, establishing a department for pre-school care and education; while the Education Development Unit supported policy development. The integration process was consolidated through the inclusion of ECCE in a number of education reforms in the 1990s, including a *White Paper on Education* and new educational legislation (1996), a *Pre-school law* (1996) which defined two age groups in pre-school (1- 3 and 3-6), and the adoption of a *Pre-school Curriculum* (1999).

In 1990, 'local communities of childcare' were abolished and their role taken over by elected local authorities – municipalities. Therefore, unlike the previous two countries, municipalities play an important role in ECCE provision, providing funds and managing a large number of pre-schools (in 2007/8, there were only 24 private pre-schools in the whole country). The integration process was carried out in parallel at national and local levels, with municipalities adopting a range of administrative arrangements for discharging their ECCE responsibilities. For example, in urban areas there may be a 'Department for social services', including responsibility for ECCE, school, culture, sport, social affairs and health, within which a Unit for education has responsibility for ECCE and schools; while in larger urban areas, the municipality may have a separate Department for ECCE.

## Sweden

The transfer of responsibility for ECCE from social welfare to education involved an already fully integrated ECCE system and only a few ministry staff, as general responsibility had already been strongly decentralised to municipalities. At national level, the Ministry of Education shares responsibility for ECCE with the National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) – which took over responsibility for ECCE from the National Agency for Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) in 1998. Today, ECCE is in the Division of Schools, one of five divisions within the Ministry of Education; and *Skolverket* has a subdivision dealing with ECCE within a Division for Education.

Municipalities (*kommuns*) are responsible for funding pre-schools (plus the relatively few family day carers) and directly cover more than 80 per cent of costs. In nearly all municipalities (over 95 per cent), responsibility for ECCE is integrated with schools and out-of-school (free-time) services within one department. There is, however, greater variation in how the leadership

in pre-schools is organized. In some authorities there is a head exclusively for pre-schools, named pre-school leader or principal; in others there is a head both for pre-school and school and then named principal.

Following integration in 1996, and the transfer of legislation from the Social Act to the Education Act (in 1998), there has been no overall ECCE policy document, but a number of more specific policy measures, e.g. curriculum, funding, access, workforce, discussed further below.

## **Ghent**

Transfer of responsibility for 'childcare centres' into education involved a much smaller scale exercise than for the five countries discussed above, including responsibility in 1970 for just eight centres. The responsibility focused solely on municipal services – centres and nursery schools – not the whole range of other public and private services in the city. Moreover, as we shall discuss further below, some key issues in services, such as the workforce, remained beyond the competence of the municipality, as a regional responsibility. In these circumstances, the municipality's scope for reform was limited, and it focused its effort on a specific and highly significant initiative to develop support for improved pedagogical work across all ECCE services, for children under and over 3 years; we will discuss the establishment and work of this Pedagogical Centre further

However, the administrative integration process has continued within the municipality. Before 2002, there was no middle management for the childcare centres inside the Education Department. The staff at the Pedagogical Centre responsible for childcare took on the role of the middle management but this was sometimes in conflict with their guidance role. In 2002 a Service of Childcare was created inside the Education Department, which today has the same status as the Service for *Kleuterschool* and Primary School or the Service for Secondary School. The Director of the Service for Childcare has the support of a well qualified (graduate) middle management team of five people.

## **Other indicators of integration: Beyond administration and policy making**

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the extent to which ECCE services have been integrated structurally, taking the six areas mentioned above (but dividing regulation between curriculum *and* standards and inspection). The more of these areas that have been integrated, the deeper the process has gone. There can be other areas, such as 'support services', as we shall illustrate when discussing Ghent where the main integration action following administrative

**Table 2.1: Depth of integration among case countries and municipality**

Country	Policy and administration	Integrative concept	Entitlement to access	Funding	Curriculum	Regulation	Workforce qualifications	Provision
Brazil	1996 ►► Ministry of Education	Yes, in Constitution: 0-6 education as a right for 'new citizens'	✓ but not fully implemented	✓ Common system of state, municipal and federal funding to service providers	✓ National Curricular Guidelines for 0-6 (1999)	✓	✓ teacher with degree or lower level qualification	✗ mostly separate services for under and over 3s
Jamaica	1998 ►► Ministry of Education	Yes, in the term 'early childhood institution' but integration of access, funding, workforce not achieved	✗	✗	✓ Separate but aligned curricula for 0-3s and for 3-6s (2009) both based on shared development goals across six common outcome domains	✓	✗	✗ mostly schools for over 3s of different types; some 0-6 centres
New Zealand	1986 ►► Ministry of Education	Yes, expressed in term 'early childhood education' but right to access not achieved	✗	✓ Common funding formula introduced; 3-5 year olds get period of free attendance	✓ Curriculum for 0-5 ( <i>Te Whāriki</i> ) (1996)	✓	✓ 3 year degree qualification for 0-5 workers (1987); 100% qualified staff as 10 year goal (2002); move to pay parity	✗ mixture of age-integrated centres and other services, especially kindergartens, for children over 3
Slovenia	1992 ►► Ministry of Education	Yes	✓ from 12 months of age	✓ Common funding formula for all ages	✓ Pre-school Curriculum for 1-6 (1999)	✓	✓ degree qualification for 1-6 workers +assistant	✓ age-integrated centres
Sweden	1996 ►► Ministry of Education	Yes	✓ from 12 months of age	✓ Common funding formula; 4-6 year olds get period of free attendance; ceiling on parent fees	✓ Pre-school Curriculum for 1-6 (1998)	✓	✓ degree qualification for 1-6 workers + assistants	✓ age-integrated centres
Ghent	1970 ►► municipal education department	Yes, but only for (local) administration and pedagogy. Services, funding, workforce etc. remain divided.	✗ from 2.5 years. No right to child care.	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Finland	Ministry of Social Affairs <sup>1</sup>	Yes	✓ from birth	✓ Common funding formula; 6 year olds get period of free attendance; ceiling on parent fees	✓ National Curricular Guidelines for 0-6 (2003); Core Curriculum for Pre-school Education (2000)	✓	✓ degree qualification for ECCE workers +assistants	✓ age-integrated centres

transfer has been the development of an innovative system for promoting and supporting the development of pedagogical work in both 'childcare' centres and nursery schools. The Table includes integration of provision, in the sense of how far one basic form of provision has emerged for under and over 3 year olds, combining care and education, akin to the form taken today by elementary or primary schools. But we repeat our earlier comment: this seems to us to be of a different order to the other integration areas. These other areas, it can be argued, are about equity across the system and attaching equal value to all children and workers; by contrast, integrated provision is just one of several ways in which services can be delivered, within an equitable system.

Taking account of all areas, Sweden and Slovenia appear to be the most deeply integrated of the five countries and one municipality covered in this study. In the case of **Sweden**, the transfer to education involved an already fully integrated system, the product of years of sustained commitment and work within the social welfare system; a visitor to Sweden just before transfer would have found a system based on a single age-integrated form of provision (the 'pre-school'), a 0 to 6 graduate professional (a 'pre-school teacher'), a common funding system and access as of right to all children from 12 months – at least if their parents were employed or studying. From the 1940s, pedagogical work in pre-schools, with older and younger children, had been influenced by documents based on a number of major government investigations, culminating in the 'educational programme for pre-school' (1987).

The introduction of a 'pre-school curriculum' followed transfer in 1998, but this was an example of transfer bringing a closer relationship to the education system, and its core values and principles (including the principle of curriculum), not of deeper integration; we will consider this educational influence in the next section.

Structural integration prior to transfer into education was also matched by a well-established conceptual integration: as the national report notes, 'The pre-school is founded on a holistic view of the child where different aspects of child's development and learning are closely integrated to each other... pre-schooling should be organised so that learning, care and upbringing should be interwoven in daily pedagogical practice and form an entirety' (NR). By 1996, therefore, the whole ECCE system was already based on a broad concept of pedagogy (which might be termed education-in-its-broadest sense), in which care, education and upbringing were viewed as inseparable and necessary; the division of services and thinking between 'kindergartens' (education) and 'daghem' ('day care') had been worked through some decades before. As the authors of the earlier UNESCO report on Sweden put the matter:

Enrolling children from age one in full-day pre-schools has become generally acceptable. What was once viewed as either a privilege of the wealthy for a few hours a day, or an institution for needy children and single mothers, has become, after 70 years of political vision and policy-making, an unquestionable right of children and

families. Furthermore, parents now expect a *holistic pedagogy that includes health care, nurturing and education for their pre-schoolers*. In addition, acceptance of full-day pre-schooling and schooling has complemented the idea of lifelong learning and the understanding of education as encompassing far more than imparting basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics. (Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar, 2003, p. 27, emphasis added).

The post-transfer 1998 pre-school curriculum further highlights this concept of pedagogy when it states that 'the pre-school should be characterised by a pedagogical approach, where care, nurturing and learning together form a coherent whole' (NR).

**Slovenia** today has a deep 'integration profile' very similar to Sweden, and has gone through similar processes, although administrative integration, in 1993, was some decades after Sweden's initial integration within social welfare. As in Sweden, during the 1960s separate services for under 3s and over 3s (nurseries and kindergartens) began to give way to new age-integrated centres – then called 'day care centres' – which for the first time included children of all ages and, as noted above, were supported by both welfare and education organisations; in 1971, these centres achieved their first law, followed by their own Programme for pre-school education and care (1979). At the same time, there was the development of a professional worker, working with children both under and over 3 years-old, the pre-school teacher, and whose education was steadily upgraded, with a programme of higher education first introduced in 1984. The teacher was accompanied by a 'practical nurse', who began to receive a vocational training in 1975. Last but not least, centres had a common funding regime and parents paid the same fee, whether their child was under or over 3 years.

Transfer of responsibility to education was followed by a number of developments, but as in Sweden most of these followed from assuming education values and principles, rather than any need to integrate the ECCE system more deeply; we will return to these later.

The integration process in Slovenia, preceding transfer to education, was underpinned by a concept of 'care and education' as inseparable functions. But the 1996 *White Paper on Education* replaced this concept (*predšolska varstvo in vzgoja*) with 'pre-school education' (*predšolska vzgoja*), a broad concept of education as the national report explains:

Pre-school education includes both the activities concerning care and the activities concerning education, which are interwoven and complement each other. The solutions, both on the level of the system and on the level of the curriculum, were based on the modern concepts of childhood and education, which emphasise the important role of development and learning in all developmental periods (NR).

Interestingly, the authors add that the White Paper and other policy documents of this time were influenced by foreign experience: they were 'based on the comparative analysis of various indicators of high-quality pre-schools in countries with a long tradition of integrated

approach to pre-school care and education, e.g. in the Scandinavian countries, New Zealand, as well as on the analysis of weaknesses, vulnerabilities and the positive aspects of Slovenian pre-schools' (NR).

Sweden and Slovenia are cases of countries where deep integration of the ECCE system preceded transfer to education. The other three countries featured in this study are cases of countries bringing both parts of deeply split ECCE systems into education. The process of further systemic integration followed this reform of responsibility, rather than preceding it.

The transfer of responsibility for ECCE to education in **New Zealand** in 1986 led to a number of measures to integrate a previously split system, divided between 'childcare' services in welfare and kindergarten and play centre services in education. The result today is a diverse system – in terms of types of provision and providers – combined with deepening integration. Indeed apart from diverse forms of provision, the only separation remains one of funding support: 3 and 4 year olds, but not younger children, are entitled to a period of 20 hours per week of free early education, intended (the national report says) to “reduce the cost barrier” and thereby increase enrolments and/or the number of hours that children are able to attend ECE' (NR). No similar entitlement exists for children under 3 years. The fees for children in services that cater for children aged 0-5 years drop markedly when the child turns 3, and sessional kindergartens for 3 and 4 year olds may be free.

Integration was deepened in three main ways, after the initial transfer of responsibility: an integrated funding system, based on a common funding formula for all services, which takes account of children's ages and numbers of qualified staff; an integrated system of regulation, including a 0 to 5 curriculum; and an integrated workforce, based on a graduate level 0 to 5 teacher and a staged movement towards parity of pay for all qualified staff, irrespective of type of provision. There have also been major initiatives to provide pedagogical support and encourage innovation across all services. The *Learning Stories* approach to assessment (Carr, 2001), like the curriculum *Te Whāriki*, 'positions children as confident and competent learners and emphasise their strengths and interests' and has been elaborated in a series of resources – *Kei Tua o te Pae: Early Childhood Exemplars* (Ministry of Education, 2004) – that by 2007 were being worked with in 80 per cent of ECCE services.

The Centres of Innovation action research programme, implemented since 2002 as part of the quality goal of the strategic plan, challenges teachers' practice and fosters teachers' research development. Five rounds of this programme have been organised involving 20 practitioner teams working with research associates to 'promote a deeper exploration of innovative teaching and learning processes' ([www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz)). However, in May 2009, the New Zealand government announced the termination of the programme as a cost cutting measure, with the two current rounds of research on innovative pedagogy having to end within five weeks.



Like Sweden and Slovenia, New Zealand's structural integration has been supported by an integrative concept: the inseparability of care and education expressed in the term 'early childhood education'. Establishing this concept played an important part in preparing the ground for the integration of childcare into the Department of Education in 1986. The State Services Commission working party, reporting in 1980, played a key role in the process of concept-building, stating that:

The working group accepts that whatever is provided for young children is in one sense care, and in another sense education. The two things in relation to young children cannot easily be distinguished. One cannot provide care for young children without their learning ideas, habits and attitudes; nor can one educate them without at the same time providing care. (State Services Commission Working Group Report, 1980, p.3-4)

As the national report comments, 'their argument – once accepted – was to become an important part of the rationale for the policy changes that occurred from the mid-1980s' (NR). Initially, this integrative concept of education and care as being inseparable was expressed in the term 'early childhood care and education'. But by the 1990s, around the time the draft version of *Te Whāriki* (the early childhood curriculum) was released in 1993, 'early childhood education' (ECE) had become the official term, as people took for granted that early education involved care as well – education is, again, understood as a broad, holistic concept, concerned with all aspects of well-being and development. 'Early childhood education' continues to be used as the generic term covering the diverse range of types of ECE services in New Zealand. Since the release of *Pathways to the Future*, 'childcare centres' have become officially known as 'education and care centres', getting beyond 'childcare' to express a broader concept of purpose.

Integration in **Brazil** has not gone quite so deeply as in Sweden, Slovenia or New Zealand, but nevertheless has developed on a broad front. The national report suggests there has been 'progress in the organisation of the State...., in the organisation of educative systems, in the definition of financing rules, the expansion of access, in the discussion of quality parameters....and teacher professionalization' (NR).

Following integration of responsibility for ECCE in education in 1996, National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (*Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação Infantil*) were launched in 1999, covering services for children from birth to 6 years. A year earlier, the National Curricular Reference for Child Education - RCNEI (Brazil, 1998) was published, a document in three volumes designed, 'to serve as a guide to educational thinking with concerns for goals, content and directives for those educators who work directly with children of 0 to 6 years, respecting their teaching styles and the Brazilian cultural diversity' (vol.1 p.3). It has been used by municipalities as a starting point to prepare their own curricular proposals and by schools to prepare pedagogical projects. Indeed, a policy goal has been the development of such projects with the participation of educators, and the integration of

early childhood education into education systems has stimulated the municipal departments of education to support all ECCE services in developing their projects.

One of the goals set in the 2001 National Plan for Education (PNE) was preparing minimum standards for early childhood services. This was achieved in 2006 when, after several regional seminars and forums sponsored by the MEC, two documents were published. 'Basic parameters of infrastructure for institutions of child education' is intended to guide the construction and adaptation of premises for early childhood education and help municipalities to regulate institutions. 'National parameters of quality for child education' deals with quality education in a comprehensive way, including results of surveys on the subject and quality parameters to be met by institutions.

A highly significant development has introduced a degree of financial integration. The introduction of the FUNDEB system has integrated all 0 to 6 services into a national funding framework covering the whole of basic education. As noted above, FUNDEB includes services for children under 3 years, but only after a struggle that insisted on their place in the education system; their resultant inclusion deepens the integration of ECCE.

At one level it could be said that the Constitution, by making early childhood education a right for children from birth, has already applied an integrated approach to access across the ECCE system: every child is entitled. However, in practice, there is insufficient provision to make the right, as yet, a reality. The 2001 PNE does, however, set down targets for ECCE growth: goal 1 is to provide places for 50 per cent of children from 0 to 3 years and 80 per cent of children from 4 to 6 years, by 2011.

Targets have also been set for the workforce, which assume parity between those working with children under and over 3 years. The LDB of 1996 specified that early childhood teachers, working with children from birth to 6 years, should have a university degree, though a lower level of qualification – at a secondary level – is currently accepted as a minimum standard for workers; the PNE set a target of 70 per cent teachers with higher education by 2011. The LDB also established parity between these early childhood teachers and teachers in elementary schools. This has been extended from 2008 by a national minimum wage for all teachers in public basic education; the initial minimum wage set at 950 BRL a month (approximately US\$522)<sup>7</sup> would have benefited a substantial number of early childhood teachers.

In 2007, the federal government introduced *ProInfancia*, a national programme that supports the construction of new early childhood services and the purchasing of equipment. Between 2007 and 2008, the programme opened 1,024 services, and in 2009 and 2010 the target is a further 500 new services each year. Faced by the problems of continuity in a system still largely split between services for different age groups (0 to 3 and 4 to 6), the national report says that there is growing interest in the idea of creating 'child education establishments' for children from birth to 6 years: 'the intention is to avoid a break in the path of early childhood

7     \$S1 = 1.82 BRL (1 February 2010, UN exchange rate).

education. To the extent that this type of educational establishment is inserted into the municipal education systems, nursery and pre-schools will cease to exist as separate units' (NR).

On the other hand, the tendency in practice is to continue providing more split services. Municipalities have prioritised the development of pre-schools for 4 to 5-year-olds and signing partnerships for centres for under 4-year-olds. These priorities are directly linked to public funding, as stated in federal law EC 59/2009. *ProInfancia* itself also seems mostly to encourage providing nurseries rather than age-integrated centres.

Underpinning this process of integration have been integrative concepts about the child and early childhood services. The understanding of the child as citizen with rights has already been mentioned. The PNE also expresses a clear concept of integration based on a holistic and inclusive approach:

In order to have a pedagogical practice consistent with scientific data and respecting the full process of child development, it is important to overcome the dichotomies day-care/pre-school, assistance or assistencialism/education, services to the poor/education for middle and upper classes, all of which were produced throughout history by misleading political guidances and social practices...Education and care are an indivisible whole for indivisible children in a development process characterized by steps or stages in which the breakthroughs are the bases and possibilities for the follow-up (NR).

As this excerpt indicates, there is recognition that an integrative concept needs to be supported and the pressure of divisive concepts resisted. In its conclusions the national report emphasises this point again, calling for 'continuous work of reflection...To pursue an identity for the educational services that can repel the sanitariat and assistencialist models, as well as the instructional and preparatory school models, dualities that represent barriers to change' (NR).

Integration in **Jamaica** has made considerable progress, focused to date on institutional developments (e.g. the Early Childhood Commission), developing a cross-sectoral training, and regulatory and curriculum changes. The National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training has developed occupational standards for early childhood workers, linked to the new EC regulations contained in the Early Childhood Act and Regulations (2005), which specifies the requirements that an EC institution (ECI) must meet in order to be registered. The regulations require at least Level II (of three pre-diploma/degree levels) for most personnel: the national report finds that 'following integration...many day care centre and basic school staff took the opportunity to get training with certification' (NR).

Curricula are being developed for under and over 3s, the former fully introduced in 2008, while the latter is being piloted in 2009; they are described by the national report as 'one

of the most direct consequences of Integration’ (NR). Though separate documents, they are aligned by working to a common set of six outcome domains (wellness, effective communication, valuing culture, intellectual empowerment, respect for self, others and the environment; and resilience). As the national report comments ‘for the head of the Early Childhood Unit, integration is realised via the curriculum: integration means the twinning of day care and basic schools into a seamless stimulation programme with curricula that would support that activity’ (NR).

There has been less impact on issues of access, funding and workforce restructuring, all of which require substantial additional resourcing especially when starting from a low base. Both day care centres and educational services for 3 to 5 year olds are overwhelmingly private and depend heavily on parental fees, and there has been little change in this respect. Nor has there as yet been the development of a professional early childhood worker across all services; thus the present target of the Ministry of Education is for a trained teacher with college diploma or degree in each basic school, i.e. for children over 3 years – but this goal is not extended to day care centres, nor are teachers qualified to work with younger age groups.

Nor has reform led to integrated types of provision, covering care and education or under and over 3-year-olds, with the existing types – day care centres, basic school, kindergarten etc – remaining very much as before. However, the 2005 Early Childhood Act does introduce a new common term for all these separate types of provision: the ‘early childhood institution’ defined as ‘a setting that provides developmentally appropriate care, stimulation, education and socialisation, for children under the age of six years, including day care centres and basic schools’. This term is now used by the Ministry of Education and the Early Childhood Commission for all settings subject to inspection under the Regulations, and provides a potentially integrative concept. There is, however, no piloting or development of new forms of early childhood provision beyond the occasional private centre which caters to children from birth through age five/six and may also offer an after-school programme for early primary students.

Reform has also been underpinned by a broad and integrative concept of education: ‘the original concept, and the one being still pursued by the Early Childhood Commission, is that early childhood learning is a continuous process from pre-birth to eight and involves much more than ‘schooling’ approaches – parents, communities, schools, health services, government and the private sector are all partners in achieving broad developmental goals for children’ (NR). More specifically this process requires ‘both care and stimulation’ (NR).

Part of the integration process has included a Pilot Integration of Early Childhood Development Project undertaken in two (out of 14) parishes between 1997 and 2002 to test the ‘Integration Model’. The major strategies of the project were: administrative restructuring; development and alignment of curricula; strengthening of inter-sectoral linkages; establishment of a health and education training partnership; strengthening and broadening of service delivery (to

improve quality and expand coverage); and strengthening of community. The project was to be immediately followed by an evaluation in 2003, then rolled out across the country. The national report is, however, very critical of the evaluation, which is seven years late, concluding that because 'it makes a list of general recommendations that take no account of the existence and enormous amount of work undertaken by the ECC since 2004... (they) make 'little sense' (NR). Although the Pilot project had considerable success in coordinating the delivery of parenting education/health support services in the pilot parishes, the long delay in evaluating its impact has contributed to its low visibility and led to 'demoralisation and demotivation'.

Administrative integration of municipal ECCE services in **Ghent** has had limited follow up. Childcare centres and *kleuterschool* have remained separate in key respects, such as funding, workforce and access. The scope for major change has been restricted by the limited powers of a municipality over these key areas, where first the Belgian government then (following decentralisation) the Flemish government have had the main responsibility. In the workforce, for example, 'the city lacks the tools to break down the difference in status between the two professions'.

However, one development has been highly significant, the decision by the municipality in 1977 to establish a 'pedagogical guidance centre' (PGC) for the municipal schools, in response to poor pedagogical quality in these services and a desire to improve the results of working-class children. The Centre began with three highly qualified staff, a pedagogue and two developmental psychologists, and addressed itself to municipal childcare centres as well as schools, with important consequences described by the local report:

With the start of the Pedagogical Centre the rationale for the integration of childcare and *kleuterschool* changed dramatically, from a pragmatic one to a pedagogical one in which the well-being of the child was central. The three staff members of the Pedagogical Centre had an impact on the discussions on integration which cannot be overestimated. They set up a research in 1979 with funding from the Bernard van Leer Foundation. The results of the research showed an extreme emphasis on medical-hygienic aspects in the childcare centres which lead to the exclusion of parents and to a very child unfriendly approach. One of the leading members of the staff, Armand De Meyer, stated in an interview that the scientific background of the three staff members, (each) having a PhD, served as a leverage in the process of change that the Pedagogical Centre introduced. It gave them a legitimation to direct the childcare sector, that then was very dominated by a hygienistic approach towards a more pedagogical approach. Additionally, their status helped them to argue with the general inspection of the governmental organization NWK (the predecessor of *Kind en Gezin*) about gradually leaving the medical approach behind (MR).

Rather than seeking structural changes, by integrating childcare centres and *kleuterscholen*, the PGC worked to develop a common approach to pedagogical work across both services,

more child-centred and holistic. This meant tackling the ‘medical’ orientation of childcare centres, including the replacement of the ‘head of the childcare sector, who had a medical vision...by the same inspector as the *kleuterschool*’ (MR). It also meant working to create a more pedagogical practice, mainly through action research with staff in the centres (and *kleuterschool*) and giving more autonomy to centres and their staff groups.

Innovations conducted in pilot centres have been disseminated to other services – centres and schools – on the policy and practice level, for example the introduction of diversity-based curricula. Another example is an experimental project in one childcare centre, situated in an area with predominantly ethnic minority families (mostly with a Turkish background).

The aim was to transform the traditional day care centre (operating rather isolated from its neighbourhood) into community based- childcare with a strong emphasis on accessibility and parents participation as well as on respect for diversity and social inclusion. In the following year the pilot expanded to four day care centres, all situated in more deprived areas. The project was successful: multilingual and diverse staff was recruited, and enrolment of children from ethnic minority families increased. Also, in contrast to many other day care centres and *kleuterscholen*, these pilot projects succeeded in collaborating closely with parents, including parents from ethnic minorities who actively participated in the life of the centres (MR).

This experimental project, started in particular childcare centres, has influenced other services in Ghent – both childcare centres and schools, demonstrating that extensive involvement of parents is possible.

The report concludes that ‘the influence of the Pedagogical Centre on innovations and local policy can hardly be overestimated’ (MR). Today, the PGC has a team of 5 pedagogical counsellors for the childcare centres, all graduates (three Bachelor and two Master level) and six for the *kleuterschool*.

## **The Impact on ECCE of being integrated within the education system**

As noted in Chapter One, the debate about where to locate integrated ECCE services is marked by considerable ambivalence. Many will concede that education systems offer some important values, principles and possibilities, for example universal entitlement, free or ‘affordable’ provision, well qualified staff and curricula. Yet many will also express concerns. There is a widespread mistrust among the early childhood community of schools and their ways of thinking and working, and one concern is that too close a relationship with education risks inappropriate goals and methods being pushed down into ECCE services from the

powerful school system, a process that some have termed 'schoolification'. Another concern is that closer relations between 'childcare' and 'education' may erode relations with other important services, such as health.

In this section, we consider the consequences of integrated ECCE services being situated in education systems, in terms of the six areas we have defined above as contributing to deepening integration. What impact did this location have for issues like curriculum, workforce and access? In Chapter Three, we weigh up the evidence for integration-within-education leading to 'schoolification' and other adverse effects on relations with other services.

## Curriculum

What were the implications, positive and negative, of transfer to and integration within *education* for the ECCE services in our case studies? Most obviously, in all five countries, the introduction of ECCE curricula: one document covering the full early childhood age range in Brazil, New Zealand, Slovenia and Sweden; and two documents (one implemented, the being piloted), for under and over 3 year olds, in Jamaica, though both sharing common goals. In all countries, these developments have been seen as positive developments.

In **Slovenia** and **Sweden**, the new curricula were preceded, under the former systems, by guidelines or programmes providing direction for pedagogical work across the whole 0-6 age range. However, in both countries, the new curriculum was not just a new label for existing guidance, replacing 'programme' by 'curriculum'; it provided an opportunity to introduce new ideas about education and to enhance the status of pre-school as an integral and important part of the education system. This is clearly described in the Slovenian national report:

(The) *Pre-school Curriculum* was adopted in 1999 as a replacement for the *Programme for preschool education and care*. The concept of curriculum was introduced as it is broader and more complex [than] the concept of a programme as well as it implicates the shift from the traditional emphasis on the contents to the emphasis on the process of pre-school education as well as the shift to the complexity of interactions and experiences from which a child can learn within a pre-school setting... The *Pre-school Curriculum* is established as an open and flexible national document, intended for children aged from 1 to 6 years. The introduction defines the basic principles and goals of pre-school education, followed by the chapter *Child in pre-school*, which describes the characteristics of child's development and learning in the pre-school period, the routine activities in pre-school, social learning, space as an element of pre-school curriculum and the cooperation with parents. The central part of the *Preschool Curriculum* introduces the six areas of activities: movement, language, art, science, society and mathematics (NR).

The Swedish national report comments that ‘many looked upon the curriculum as a document which put words on the activities that were already carried on in the pre-school’. But it does so in a way that marks a shift of emphasis. The 1998 pre-school curriculum introduces the concept of ‘learning’ for the first time into pre-school regulation: ‘In the curriculum learning has the same status as development which was an important shift in Swedish pre-school’ (NR).

The pre-school curriculum also served another purpose, to ‘increase the status and as a support in the pedagogical work’ (NR). An earlier study of the reform process in Sweden emphasises the role of the new pre-school curriculum in enhancing the status of ECCE:

A senior civil servant and educationalist told us the pre-school curriculum had been very important for pre-school teachers and for parents. For both it had placed the pre-school firmly in the education system. Under the Ministry of Health and Welfare, there had been a curriculum – or at any rate an educational programme for pre-schools – but this had been guidance rather than a statutory instrument. Now the pre-school had its own curriculum, alongside curricula for compulsory school and the non-compulsory upper secondary school: ‘The aim is that the three curricula should link into each other and take a common view of knowledge, development and learning’ (Cohen et al., 2005, p.159)

The Swedish national report develops this further point about the role of curricula in making linkages across the education system: ‘The aim is that the curricula should link into each other... The curriculum for pre-school and the curriculum for the compulsory school are based on a shared view on knowledge, development and learning’ (NR). At the same time, and in part as a defence against schoolification, the pre-school curriculum differs to the school curriculum in an important respect: ‘To emphasize the character of pre-school the curriculum has, in contrast to compulsory school, no goals for children to achieve’ (NR), nor should children be individually assessed. Instead, the focus is on goals that, in the words of the Pre-school Curriculum, ‘the pre-school should strive to ensure that each child develops’. This, as a history of Swedish ECCE makes clear, was also an acknowledgement of the particular identity of the sector:

The idea that the curriculum for the pre-school should set up goals for the individual child’s learning was hardly in line with the existing pedagogical traditions and cultures in the Swedish pre-school. This was an easy decision for the Minister for Schools to take. The pre-school curriculum would only contain goals to strive for (Korpi, 2007, p. 64).

A leading expert in **New Zealand** has concluded that the introduction of New Zealand’s early childhood education curriculum was ‘an important step in making the integration of early childhood services a reality. A curriculum provides a theoretical basis, goals, and philosophies for early childhood practice. ...A curriculum model promotes a shared



understanding and language in early childhood...' (Smith, 2003, p. 2). Previously 'childcare centres, the kindergarten movement and Playcentre associations had developed their own distinct approaches to curriculum' (Te One, 2003, p. 21); now *Te Whāriki/Early childhood curriculum* provided a shared approach. Had 'childcare services' not been brought into education, this curriculum, in the view of the authors of the national report, 'probably would not have applied to them.' *Te Whāriki* is also noteworthy for being a bicultural, bilingual curriculum, which makes it an integrating document in yet another way.

In **Jamaica**, a curriculum for 4 and 5-year-olds was produced in 1973, consisting of 24 volumes of nearly 5,000 pages, which guided basic school teachers systematically through a range of subjects. But this curriculum covered only to older pre-school children. Integration of all services in education extended this principle to under 3s and childcare services, as well as leading to the development of a new curriculum for over 3s. This new curriculum, currently being piloted, aims for learning activities to enable each child to reach stated developmental goals that derive from six learning outcomes, outcomes that also shape the curriculum for children under 3 years, a new development for this sector and now fully introduced into day care centres. The new curricula, following integration within education, provide an opportunity for introducing new ideas and approaches and to express shared concepts and goals underlying reform across the whole early childhood field.

Curriculum developments, encompassing the whole early childhood age range, followed the integration of ECCE services in education in **Brazil**. In 1999, the National Council of Education prepared the *National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* and *Operational Guidelines for Early Childhood Education*, as part of the process of establishing early childhood as the first stage of basic education. The *Curricular Guidelines* were designed to regulate 'the work in nurseries/ day-care centres for children aged 0 to 3 years and in pre-schools for 4 to 6 years-olds, in addition to guiding the proposed curricular and pedagogical projects, providing paradigms for the design of these programs of education and care with quality'. They emphasize the need for a holistic approach, with pedagogical projects promoting 'in their education and care practices, the integration of the child's physical, emotional, affective, cognitive/ linguistic, and social aspects, considering that the child is an integral being, complete and indivisible.' They also recognize the importance of relationships, the fourth guideline stating that 'By considering children as integral human beings who learn to live with themselves, with others and the environment in a gradual and coordinated way, the Pedagogic Proposals to be applied by the child education institutions should pursue the interaction between the various areas of knowledge and aspects of citizenship, as basic contents for the creation of knowledge and values.' (NR)

The *Operational Guidelines* deal specifically with the integration of day care centres into education. They set rules for linking them to the educational system and also cover pedagogic proposals, preparation of early childhood teachers, teaching materials and spaces, always taking into account education and care as a whole.

## Workforce

The move to education has also had some effects on the workforce, most notably in **New Zealand** and **Sweden**. In the former case, the 0 to 6 profession that has been established following integration is that of teacher, with a Diploma of Teaching (early childhood education), a 3-year programme already the model for primary school teachers, coming to be regarded as a 'benchmark' early childhood qualification for teachers working in both kindergartens and childcare centres. The early education Diploma programmes were designed to be comparable with Diploma programmes for primary teachers. Increasingly teacher education programmes have become bachelor degree programmes.

Being in an education system has also had workforce implications in New Zealand for pay, with school teachers becoming the reference point for improving the pay of early childhood teachers, whether working with children under or over 3 years of age:

In 2002, kindergarten teachers began a staged process to attain pay parity with school teachers, which has been fully implemented. Then in 2004, ECE teachers in community 'not-for-profit' education and care centres also began a staged process towards pay parity. Later in 2009, the process for these teachers will be complete. Private owners of centres usually match the pay scales of those who have achieved pay parity via their union's actions in order to recruit qualified and registered early childhood teachers. It is unlikely that the pay parity process and improved pay for childcare teachers would have occurred if the Ministry of Education had not been responsible for all ECE services (NR).

But perhaps most striking of all is the consequence of ECCE being in the education system for overall qualification levels. New Zealand was unique in the world in setting itself the target of a fully qualified, graduate-level and registered teaching workforce in EC services, as part of its 10-year strategy. The policy decision that all teachers in education and care centres should be ECE qualified and registered (like kindergarten teachers) by 2012 required a range of initiatives to make it achievable, such as scholarships and Ministry payment for relief staff whilst partially-trained staff attend teacher education courses. The former Minister of Education, Trevor Mallard, explained this unique decision in terms of parity with compulsory schooling: 'we decided that children in early childhood services should not have staff with lower qualifications than primary schools' (personal communication, March 2009).

There has, however, been some retreat from this ambitious goal. In October 2009 the Minister of Education altered the target from 100 per cent to 80 per cent by 2012, on the grounds that the expansion of provision is absorbing the increasing numbers of qualified ECE teachers. Even at this reduced level, New Zealand's target for graduate-level workers across the whole early childhood age range puts it ahead of any other country.

In **Sweden**, a fully integrated early childhood workforce already existed before transfer to education in 1996, based on a 0-6 professional, the 'pre-school teacher' (who accounted for 54 per cent of pre-school staff in 2007, up from 51 per cent in 2002), with the remaining staff consisting of 'children's nurses' (*barnskötare*). But following transfer, the education and qualification of pre-school teachers was changed as part of a wider reform of the education workforce. Previously, pre-school teachers, school teachers and free time pedagogues (workers in out-of-school or free-time services) had been educated separately, each following their own professional courses. In 2001, a new teacher education programme created a single educational and qualification framework for the three professions, in which all students shared 18 months of common courses, before specialising for the remaining period of the 3 to 5-year course. All students qualified as teachers, but each has a distinctive profile defining their particular area of specialisation, for example age group of children, subject field or pedagogical approach.

This reform, which has integrated the education of pre-school teachers into a single framework for all pre-school and school professionals, has received some criticism. In particular it is argued that the common framework gives insufficient attention to the particular needs of pre-school work (i.e. there is too much generic content, too little specialist work); and that it has led to a growing shortage of pre-school teachers, as students entering the common framework have opted for the higher status and rather better paid job of school teacher, rather than that of pre-school teacher or free-time pedagogue. The government, elected in 2006 and in opposition when the earlier reforms were introduced, established an inquiry into teacher education. One recommendation in its 2008 report 'Sustainable teacher education' is for the reintroduction of a separate education for pre-school teachers and for other defined groups of teachers: 'Belonging to a profession does not only lie in being a teacher, you must be a teacher with a special orientation to a special age group or to subject unit' (NR).

But the inquiry has gone further than proposing greater specialisation. It has proposed that the education for pre-school teachers should be a 3-year course, pitched at a bachelor level – while education for all other teachers should be 4 years, and at a Masters level. In effect, the proposal is not only to separate the education of pre-school teachers from other teachers, but to offer them an inferior level of education. The national report expresses concern that this may be the beginning of a process to weaken the place of pre-school in the education system, and move it towards a more limited function:

In the Inquiry on a new teacher education programme the arguments for reducing the length and qualification of pre-school teacher is not so distinctly expressed. But you can find out at least some reasons. In spite of the intention in the curriculum for the pre-school (Lpfö98, 1998), you can see the beginning of a political expression with a main focus on pre-school as a service for care. In the proposal of the content for the specialization for pre-school (teacher) the concept 'learning' is infrequently used. The main focus on learning and also learning related to school subjects will be

concentrated in the specialization on (pre-school class to grade 3 in school) and the training education is therefore four years (NR).

Like **Sweden, Slovenia** already had a pre-school teacher before integration within education in 1993, a professional working across the 0-6 age range. Pre-school teacher education in Slovenia was reformed further after transfer into education. But although the new graduate level of education was located in Faculties of Education, the national report does not consider it to be a consequence of integration into education:

The reform of the educational programmes for pre-school teachers and their assistant was not directly related to the reforms of the pre-school education but is a result of a continuous effort of different experts to increase the level of formal education for the professional workers in pre-schools. This trend still continues today and is resulting in the new Bologna programmes for pre-school teachers' education...(under which) the pre-school teachers will be able for the first time to study on the 2<sup>nd</sup> (master's degree) and the third (PhD) level of education (NR).

Despite the education transfer and the reform of pre-school teacher education, the pre-school teacher in Slovenia, unlike New Zealand, continues to have a lower level of initial education compared with school teachers. Also unlike New Zealand, transfer to education has not led to a move towards pay parity. Although transfer did bring pre-school teachers into the same system of collective contracts as school teachers, pre-school teachers earn less than school teachers, as is also the case in Sweden. In short, it is only in New Zealand that transfer to education has brought about the principle of a pre-school teaching workforce with parity to school teachers.

In **Brazil**, the 1996 National Education Guidelines and Framework Law set a standard for all teachers of children from birth to 10 years (i.e. ECCE and the first four grades of primary school): they should be graduates of higher education institutions or of secondary Normal schools for teachers (entered after 8 years of compulsory schooling, i.e. at around 14 years). To implement this standard and increase the level of formal education for the workforce in nurseries and pre-schools, the Ministry of Education created a special programme: *Proinfantil*. But though the 1996 Law recommends teachers to work in nurseries and pre-schools, with each group or class to include a teacher, this has not yet happened. Actual levels of qualification vary. Poorer areas are more likely to accept lower (secondary level) qualifications as are services for children under 3 years; in 2006, 34 per cent of teachers in nurseries had higher education qualifications and 46 per cent in pre-schools. A goal of the National Education Plan is that 70 per cent of teachers in basic education should have a higher level qualification by 2011.

All the preceding countries have moved towards a common 0-6 professional (an early years teacher), working in all settings. In **Jamaica**, there is a paraprofessional certification for 0-6 years (now required under new regulations) while early childhood teachers are licensed to

teach from 0-8 years. However, very few trained early childhood teachers (versus trained paraprofessionals) are found in the 0-3 sector and even in the 3-6 years sector there are less than 10 per cent, although every year now the numbers are increasing.

## Access and funding

In the case of **Sweden**, the transfer into education had a clear impact on access and funding. In 1995, a year before transfer to education, an entitlement for children to attend ECCE from 12 months was introduced, but with the qualification that their parents should be working or studying. Subsequent to transfer, this qualification was removed, making ECCE a universal right from 12 months; in 2001, entitlement (though for part-time attendance only) was extended to the children of unemployed parents, then in 2002 to children whose parents were taking parental leave. Like schooling, therefore, attendance at ECCE is now a universal right of the child, although not compulsory.

A parallel development reduced, and to a limited extent, removed, parental fees. From 2002, a ceiling – or maximum upper limit – was placed on parental fees, followed the next year by a period of free attendance – 525 hours per year – for 4 and 5-year-olds. These moves were explicitly linked to bringing ECCE into line with education principles: '[this change will] bring pre-school closer to the principle underlying all schools, that they should be free, available to all and provide equal services to all, a principle which, for schools at any rate, is now hardly questioned' (Regeringens proposition 1999/2000, p. 119). From July 2010, the free period of attendance will be extended to 3-year-olds. But, as the national report notes, no further moves have been signalled: 'There are no signs yet in political documents saying something about a goal of total free pre-school' (NR).

However, a new funding policy is at odds with education values and principles. As from July 2008, the government has introduced a childcare allowance, a monthly payment (approximately €230 or US\$322 a month<sup>8</sup>) available to parents of children from 1 to 3 years on condition they do not use the system of publicly-funded ECCE. It may be used by a non-employed parent to boost income or by employed parents to pay for private services. Rather than supporting access to educational services, this measure in effect pays parents not to use them, the equivalent of paying parents of school children not to use public schools.

The other cases included here have not gone so far as Sweden in adopting educational principles on access and funding, but there have been some notable changes. The Pre-school law in **Slovenia**, adopted in 1996, requires that pre-schools 'should be available to all children and directs the municipalities to provide for pre-school care by opening additional classes or units or to grant a concession in cases, when the number of parents, who have expressed the interest to enrol their children into pre-school, is high enough to open at least one pre-school class.' (NR) In practice, that is not always the case. There are several reasons:

8 US\$1 = 0.714 EUR (1 February 2010, UN exchange rate).

high demand from parents in the last few years, especially for toddlers aged from 1 to 3 years; insufficient space for new classes that meet design standards; and lack of funding within a municipality along with inadequate resources from the state to support the new provision.

In **New Zealand**, a universal entitlement to 20 hours per week of free attendance for children enrolled in 'teacher-led services' was announced in 2005 and implemented in 2007, the aim being to 'reduce the cost barrier' and thereby increase enrolments and/or the number of hours that children are able to attend ECE (Ministry of Education, 2007b)' (NR). The current government has pledged to extend the 20 hours payments to play centres and *ngā kōhanga reo* by 2011.

In **Ghent**, access to child-care places has been reformed, through developing the 'Tinkelbel' procedure.

Every parent, wishing to enrol his/her child in childcare [organised by the city administration of Ghent] needs to contact a central office and will have the equal opportunity in his attempt to find a childcare place according to a common set of social criteria. In so doing the Tinkelbel procedure finished the traditional concept of 'first in, first served' that favoured higher educated two income families (as it continues to favour these families in the rest of Flanders). Tinkelbel is taking into account specific priority criteria that favour single mothers, parents that speak another language, parents with low incomes, parents in crisis situations. The latest figures show that the Tinkelbel system is succeeding in making the childcare facilities accessible for those target groups (MR).

This is a long way from universal entitlement for children under 3 years, which exists for children over 3 years in *kleuterscholen*, though a marked improvement from an equity perspective. It is difficult to judge whether this is a consequence of responsibility for childcare being moved into education, or of a strong general commitment to greater equity by the authorities in Ghent.

## **Integrating responsibility for ECCE in the welfare system**

As already emphasised, integrating ECCE systems and which system they are integrated in are different issues. Most countries today that have begun to integrate their services, or indeed already have fully integrated services, have chosen to situate them within the education system. But another option is integration within the social welfare system. Currently systems fully integrated in this way, at all levels of government, are found in Denmark and Finland (we

have also already noted integration in Germany, but at federal level and only partially at lower levels); here we consider the case of Finland.

It should be noted from the beginning that both Finland and Denmark, the other country that has fully integrated ECCE within welfare, are Nordic countries. The significance of this is the particular welfare tradition in the Nordic states of universal, well funded services, a tradition unlike that of many other countries where welfare systems place strong emphasis on targeted or residual services. There is also a strong pedagogical tradition in these and other Nordic countries, which emphasises the importance and inseparability of learning, care and upbringing. In some key respects, therefore, the values and principles of Nordic welfare have more in common with education than with welfare in much of the rest of the world. This (and the small number of countries involved) makes generalizations about this experience of integration within welfare more than usually difficult.

Finland has much in common with the Nordic country included in our education-based cases above, Sweden. Responsibility for the whole system, though very modest at that time, was allocated to welfare at an early stage, in 1924 in Finland's case. A fully integrated system, based on an age-integrated centre or family day care, emerged in 1973, following the Act on children's day care. This Act brought together nurseries and kindergartens, with the former's focus on care and social objectives and the latter's emphasis on education; introduced a uniform funding and fee system; and defined 'day care' as a social service available to all those in need, introducing the principle of universality. The Act was subsequently amended, in 1983, to include specifically educational objectives.

Today, as Table 2.1 shows, the Finnish ECCE system is as fully integrated as Sweden's. Parents have an unconditional right to day care after the parental leave period (children are about 10-11 months old) either in municipal services, or by receiving an allowance to pay for private services or to care for their children at home. There is a common funding system across the ECCE system, including a contribution from parental fees, with a ceiling of 233 Euros (US\$326)<sup>9</sup> for the first child, sibling reductions and free of charge for low-income families. Pre-school education for 6-year-old children for 18 hours a week is free of charge. There is an integrated workforce, based on a 0-6 professional, a graduate kindergarten teacher (drawn from two separate educational backgrounds; some are educated as social pedagogues (Bachelor of Social Science), others as teachers (Bachelor or Master of Education), as well as 'children's nurses', with a secondary level vocational qualification, and some assistants.

Although located in welfare, the Finnish ECCE system has had increasingly close connections with education. The ECCE system addresses care and educational needs, and since the early 1990s, there has been the development of educational guidelines. In 1994, the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES) and the National Board of Education presented a joint policy document entitled *Premises for Planning Pre-school Education*, which was intended to be used as a tool for planning pre-school education for

9 US\$1 = 0.714 EUR (1 February 2010, UN exchange rate).

children under school age. *The Core Curriculum for Pre-school Education* was completed in 1996, again as a result of co-operation between the National Board of Education and the STAKES; it steered pre-school education for six-year-olds provided by schools and was used as a recommendation in day care. The first *National Curriculum Guidelines* for the whole ECCE system was published in September 2003. The second, refined edition of these guidelines was published in October 2005. The guidelines serve as a basis for the design of the municipal (local) curricula for children 0–6 years of age, and stress the importance of care, upbringing and education as an integrated whole for young children. They also emphasise the importance of ECCE in the educational continuum as part of lifelong learning.

Unlike Sweden where 6-year-olds go to pre-school classes in schools, 6-year-olds in Finland largely use ECCE services, but receive ‘pre-school education’ there for a part of their day. The first ‘pre-school education’ experiments were launched in 1971. However, it was only in 1999 that the government stated that free pre-school education should be introduced for all six-year-olds from August 2000. At the same time, a right to pre-school education and a comprehensive obligation of provision by local authorities was announced, to take effect by 1 August 2001.

At national level, the administration of pre-school education for 6- to 7-year-olds is under the Ministry of Education. Children’s parents have the opportunity to choose whether they wish to take advantage of pre-school education offered to the family free of charge, which must be for at least 700 hours a year, or about 18 hours a week. Provision can be made in various settings, but most children receive ‘pre-school education’ in their day care centres (*päiväkoti*), where they spend the rest of the day if they need day care service. Provisions on pre-school education for 6-year-olds are to be found in the Education Act, which also prescribes that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Education are to cooperate for the development of pre-school education and that the National Board of Education and STAKES are to collaborate for the development of a pre-school curriculum.

Other collaboration between the welfare and education systems has been developing in recent years. In February 2005 the government set up an Advisory Board on Early Childhood Education and Care. The first mandate period lasted from February 2005 to December 2007, and the second started in March 2008. The members of the advisory board represent the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education, National Board of Education, STAKES<sup>10</sup>, social partners, research and educational institutions, NGOs, and the local authorities. Originally the idea was to establish a forum or a working group of professionals. However, the former Minister of Social Affairs and Health wanted an advisory board, that is, a high-level working group focusing on issues of early childhood education and care (parental leave excluded). The advisory board convenes four to five times a year on the initiative of Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and during its first term (2005–2007) the board had four subgroups focusing on specific topics: family daycare, multicultural issues, staff training, and

10 From January 2009, STAKES has been merged with the National Public Health Institute to form the National Institute for Health and Welfare.



research and international issues. During the current term (2008–), the advisory board is to follow up the proposals drawn up by the subgroups and the advisory board as a whole.

Municipalities are responsible for organising ECCE services and can use public or private provision; in general, most ECCE services are provided directly by municipalities. When statutory pre-school education for 6- year-olds was introduced in Finland in 2001, municipalities could choose where to place administrative responsibility; about one third decided to place this responsibility in their education departments, one third chose social welfare, and one third opted for a combination of social and education administration.

For the remainder of ECCE, the local administration of these services was situated, by legislation, in social welfare departments. Since 2007, municipalities have been able to make their own decision. In 2008, 79 per cent still placed ECCE in their social welfare departments, the remaining 21 per cent opting for education. From the beginning of 2009, the situation has changed again, partly due to a large restructuring project of local government and services, which has reduced the number of municipalities. From the beginning of 2009, 54 per cent of municipalities have placed ECCE under the welfare sector, 40 per cent under the education sector, and the remaining 6 per cent with other arrangements. ‘Other arrangements’ mainly refers to merging social and education sectors in a given municipality into one single department.

At the time the fieldwork was undertaken, the future location of Finland’s fully integrated ECCE system seemed uncertain – whether it would remain in social welfare or, following Norway and Sweden, transfer to education. The topic came onto the policy agenda in 2007, when the government that took office in that year proposed the administration of ECCE should be evaluated. The Minister of Education maintained that ECCE should become a part of the education system, and the Director of the National Board of Education concurred.

The proposed evaluation of the ECCE administration is linked with current restructuring of municipalities, which is destined to reduce the number of municipalities; services and municipalities must be restructured to form bigger entities to ensure that all municipalities are able to provide high quality services. Because municipalities play a key role and have substantial autonomy in the provision of ECCE services, the restructuring has great implications for these services. Accordingly, the Minister of Social Affairs and Health wanted to wait for the completion of the restructuring before taking a position on ECCE administration.

## Concluding comments

Looking at the five cases of countries that have transferred responsibility for ECCE to education, the process has varied considerably. In two cases, Slovenia but particularly Sweden, the country already had a partial or wholly integrated system before the transfer to education. In Brazil, Jamaica and New Zealand, integration and transfer to education were part of the same process.

In all cases, the transfer has been based on a consensus, at least among experts, that care and education are inseparable, emphasising the dysfunctionality and inequity of the split system; in New Zealand and Brazil the process has involved a wider campaign involving diverse groups in civil society. The other side of this coin was an absence of strong political, sectional or other opposition to change. Indeed, the national reports mention no major obstacles to agreeing transfer into education, though this does not mean there have been no disagreements on subsequent developments.

But the rationale for change is somewhat different – although in all cases it has been strong and principled, rather than purely a pragmatic concern, for example to cut costs or boost school readiness. In Brazil, the educational move was framed in terms of children’s citizenship and rights, in particular a right to education from birth; in Jamaica the need for early and holistic intervention to tackle child poverty was important; in Sweden, lifelong learning was a key driver, in particular the idea that this meant education from birth; while in New Zealand, there was a strong emphasis on the inequity of the existing split system. In two cases, Brazil and Slovenia, major political change – the end of a military dictatorship in the former case, independence in the latter, democratisation in both cases – provided an impetus for change, though Slovenia was further down the integration path than Brazil. In New Zealand, a new government influenced by the campaign for change provided an opening for major reform.

The extent of integration varies considerably across the countries covered. It has gone furthest and deepest in Sweden, Finland and Slovenia, where there is no longer any sign of the historically split system, even down to a single age-integrated form of provision. New Zealand was the first of our case study countries to move the whole of ECCE into education, but did so from a very split system; it has, however, made strong headway in creating an integrated framework consisting of common regulations, funding, workforce, curriculum and external evaluation, whilst retaining diverse provision and providers.

Brazil and Jamaica face the biggest challenges, starting their reform within the last few years with a deeply split system and significantly fewer resources than the other richer countries. Regulation and curriculum are early areas of integration, as are some steps to upgrade the workforce; Brazil has also taken some steps on funding. Neither, yet, has attempted to make changes to their split and diverse services, leaving both countries with two forms of provision, one for children under 3 years, the other for children over 3 - though in Brazil, both services share a common framework of principles, guidelines and plans.

Location in education is important. It highlights access and affordability, with education's tradition of free and universal schooling (though it should be noted that no country has as yet introduced universal *and* free ECCE, for children over *and* under 3 years). It provides the (relatively) well qualified and paid school teacher as a point of reference for the ECCE workforce; given the often poor levels of education and pay of many ECCE workers, this is an important lever for reform. It assumes a curriculum as a basic tool for practice, without specifying what content or form that curriculum should take. The school provides an example of an age-integrated form of provision that may be one model for the development of ECCE services.

Is there a down side? So far, only Sweden provides pause for thought with recent evaluations providing some evidence of 'schoolification' in some places – but not all. Recent policy proposals by government may point in the same direction in the longer term, but are still on paper, not implemented. All we can say is that the issue of the relationship between ECCE and school is a key one, whatever the ECCE system, and that it needs particular attention where ECCE is integrated within education. The relationship needs to be analysed, reflected upon, discussed and constantly evaluated, and there needs to be a clear appreciation that there are alternatives: schoolification is a possibility, not an inevitability; a 'strong and equal partnership' is another possibility but difficult to achieve, since it means the conservative school being open to dialogue and change. We discuss this issue further in the next chapter.

Evaluating education-based integration is complicated by the lack of alternatives with which to compare this option. As noted, the two examples of welfare-based integration are both Nordic countries, and therefore very atypical; ECCE services in Denmark and Finland have been integrated a long time and the welfare systems in these countries share some important values and principles with the education system. When Sweden transferred ECCE services from welfare to education, it required no major reform of ECCE, though some incremental changes have flowed from being in education. The situation could be very different if, to take an extreme situation, a country like France were to integrate ECCE – and at the same time locate it within the social welfare system. Indeed to offer this example suggests the implausibility of such reform in many countries, not least because the education part of split ECCE systems is often deeply embedded and far more extensive.

Finally, the experience of Ghent shows the possibilities and limitations of reform at local level. Municipalities can bring all their own ECCE services into one administration, but they have limited competence to make other structural changes, for example to funding, the workforce and regulation. What they can do, as Ghent illustrates, is to promote and support a common pedagogical approach across all of their own services, undertaking what one Italian municipality has termed a 'local cultural project of childhood'. In other words, they can explore and experiment with what it means to provide an education service for all young children, bringing different types of service and worker into this project. Reform needs to combine concepts, structures and practices; there is an important role for local communities that work with concepts and practices.

# 3. Consequences and lessons from the cases that have integrated within education

**A**t least ten years have passed since the decision to integrate ECCE within education in all six national and municipal cases, so they are well placed to offer insights into reform, not only in terms of the process but also consequences. In the previous chapter we considered the process of integrating ECCE services within education and the ‘depth’ of integration that has occurred in our five case countries and one case municipality. The question was: how far has the integration process gone? In this chapter we turn to assessment. What have been the consequences of integration within education and what lessons can be drawn from the experience of our case studies?

We start the chapter by looking at the evidence base available for assessment. We then assess consequences of integration on a country-by-country (and city) basis covering five main areas: children and families; workforce; services; resources; relationships between ECCE and other services, especially schools. We then review the lessons about the process and consequences of systemic reform drawn by the experts who prepared the case reports. We end by drawing some general conclusions from these disparate national and municipal cases.

## Evaluations of the change

Before beginning this assessment of reform, it is necessary to consider some important issues about the evidence available and interpreting that evidence.<sup>11</sup> The first issue is what evidence is available to assist an assessment of change. None of the cases considered here – national and municipal – set up a system of evaluation at the time of instituting reform,

<sup>11</sup> Evidence, of course, does not tell us anything directly, but needs interpretation and without mediation.

nor do we know of any other case of integration within education where such an ongoing evaluation system has been put in place; evaluations typically come into play well after the event. This does not mean that no evaluative work has been done that is of relevance to the subject of this report, but that evaluations have been undertaken well after integration was instituted (without the possibility of developing a before-reform baseline) or else have focused on particular subjects, providing welcome but partial evidence.

**Sweden** is the only country that has undertaken systematic formal evaluation of integration within education. The Swedish Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) has conducted two national evaluations so far, in 2004 and 2008. The aim of the first evaluation was to provide ‘a progress report on the consequences of the reform’ and to raise ‘questions concerning the direction in which the pre-school is moving some years after the introduction of the reform’, as well as to highlight ‘important paths the pre-school can take in its future development’ (Skolverket, 2004, in foreword). The 2008 evaluation is a follow-up to the results of the 2004 evaluation, examining ‘how the pre-school has developed in different aspects almost ten years after the reform’ (Skolverket, 2008, in foreword). Skolverket has also undertaken a more focused evaluation of certain changes that occurred after integration within education, namely setting a maximum parental fee, extending entitlement to children over 12 months old whose parents are not employed and introducing a period of free attendance for all 4 and 5-year-olds. The remit also included following up a grant for quality assurance measures in pre-school activity and leisure-time services for school children; four interim reports have been produced (Skolverket, 2003, 2004b, 2005a, 2006b) and a final report (Skolverket, 2007a).

**Slovenia** has conducted work focused on the *Preschool Curriculum*, introduced in 1999, involving two approaches: advisors for pre-school education, employed at the Board of Education, monitored its introduction into pre-schools, producing reports for the Minister of Education; while an external evaluation was undertaken by experts appointed by the same Minister in 1999.

**New Zealand** has undertaken no systematic evaluation of the administrative changeover per se. But key policy reforms since the transfer of childcare to education, most notably initiatives in the *10-year strategic plan for early childhood education*, are undergoing a series of external evaluations (King, 2008; Mitchell, Royal Tangaere, Mara & Wylie, 2006; Mitchell, Royal Tangaere, Mara, & Wylie, 2008) (NR).

Formal evaluations have been very limited in our remaining case studies. There have been none undertaken in **Brazil** or **Ghent**. While in **Jamaica**, formal evaluation has been limited to a pilot project for more integrated working undertaken in two geographic areas, the *Integrated Early Childhood Development Programme*. However, this evaluation is, as noted in Chapter Two, of very limited use. The authors of the national report observe that for reasons they have been ‘unable to ascertain this evaluation is seven years late, giving rise to a host of problems including the difficulty of distinguishing the impact of the pilot versus the impact of

other inputs, particularly the work of the ECC... For these reasons the final report is not only seriously compromised but has lost much of its relevance’.

Important as they are, evaluation studies are not the only source of evidence. Statistical data, for example of changes in access or workforce, can be important. So too can be the assessments of experts, including the authors of our national reports, to which we frequently refer. These and other sources build up an evidence base that can contribute to an assessment of the consequences of integration within education.

But that evidence needs careful interpretation. Among the cases, the national move to education has taken place at different times. It was made earliest in New Zealand in 1986 – which is over 20 years ago – and 12 years later in Jamaica. It is important, too, to keep in mind the contextual diversity among *and* within our cases as well as whether they moved to an education-based integrated system from a split situation (Brazil, Jamaica, New Zealand, Ghent) or from a welfare-based integrated system (in the case of Sweden and briefly in Slovenia). Cases varied, too, in levels of resourcing prior to and subsequent to integration and/or moving into education, from high levels of funding in Sweden to low levels in Jamaica; this has given Sweden the possibility to implement major changes after administrative transfer, reforms requiring resources of which Jamaica can only dream.

Governance is another potentially significant variable. Brazil is a federal state with three levels of government, each playing an active role in ECCE services. Sweden and Slovenia have two key levels, including a strong role for municipalities. Jamaica and New Zealand also have two levels, but with the municipal level playing little part. By contrast, Ghent is a municipality, but is constrained by its lack of influence over a number of key areas, where responsibility rests mainly with the regional government of Flanders (general policy-making and organisation of the early childhood field) and, to a lesser extent, with the Belgian federal government (for example, tax reductions to parents for fees paid for child care, the employment status of family day carers, and compulsory school age).

There are also other problems of interpretation. Might some of the recorded changes have happened without reform? What consequences are due to integration and what to being in education? What difference would integration within welfare have made? These and other considerations highlight the challenge of undertaking evaluation of ECCE systems and systems change, a challenge that to date has been very largely ignored. In these circumstances, we are unable to give a comprehensive, coherent and conclusive assessment of consequences. What we are left with is building a partial picture from various pieces and attempted interpretations, which hopefully will open some spaces for productive discussions and focus attention on the evaluative challenge.

## What are the consequences?

In this section, we review the evidence for the consequences of integration within education on a country-by-country basis, ordered according to the depth of integration so far achieved. We start with Sweden and Slovenia, which have achieved the deepest integration and which were well integrated before transfer to education. We then move to New Zealand, which has deepened integration substantially since transfer of responsibility for a split system to education. Brazil and Jamaica integrated responsibility later than New Zealand and their process of integration has furthest yet to run. We finish with Ghent, a municipality that has integrated responsibility for ECCE within education, but which operates within a split regional system.

### Sweden

**a) *Children and Families.*** The proportion of 1 to 5-year-olds attending ECCE rose by 13 per cent – from 68 to 77 per cent - between 1995 (the year before transfer to education) and 2005. Access, therefore, increased, though at a slower rate than the preceding 10 years (1985-95), when the proportion attending rose 24 per cent. But more significantly, the period after transfer, and especially after the changes reducing fees and extending entitlement to children with non-employed parents, have seen a reduction in geographical and social differences in attendance levels. The *Skolverket* evaluation of these measures concludes that ‘the proportion of enrolled children has become more evenly distributed among Swedish municipalities after the introduction of the reform. So whereas in 1998, there was a spread of over 20 percentage points in the proportion of 1 to 5 year olds enrolled in ECCE services between rural municipalities and metropolitan areas, that spread had reduced to less than 10 percentage points by 2004’ (*Skolverket*, 2007, p.18).

As well as the urban/rural attendance gap closing, the influence of socio-economic factors on attendance has declined leading to greater equality. In 1999, children with higher educated parents (i.e. with tertiary level education) were more likely than other children to attend pre-schools. By 2005, this had changed and there was only a small difference in attendance by parental level of education; the highest level of attendance at formal services was actually for children whose mothers have medium level education, the lowest for children whose mothers have high level education, but the spread is quite small. In 1999, about 60 per cent of children with parents who were unemployed or had a long-term illness were attending pre-school; by 2005, this had risen to around 90 per cent. In 1999, children with foreign-born parents were less likely to be at pre-school, but these differences had disappeared by 2005. A major reason for this convergence is because pre-schools are now an entitlement for children with non-employed parents; in theory and practice, they are now accessible to all children. This led *Skolverket* to conclude that ‘the (funding) reform has above all led to an increase in the availability of pre-school for children whose parents are on parental leave with younger siblings, but also for children whose parents are unemployed’ (*ibid.*, p.18-19).

The changes in criteria for attendance and in payment have also had other consequences for parents and families. The maximum fee has led to a major improvement in the finances of family with children, with particular benefit to low income families; low salaried single parents are the group to benefit most from this reform. At the same time, the proportion of parents who want some other form of care for their children than they currently have has diminished – in other words, parental satisfaction with the service they get, already high, has improved (Skolverket, 2007a). If parents stay home with their children this is now more likely to be because it is their own choice and not because of other factors, such as the unavailability or cost of the service.

The evidence, therefore, seems to point to the adoption of educational principles (e.g. low or no cost attendance, universal entitlement) having had a substantial impact on children and families, benefitting in particular families with low incomes and in more remote communities.

**b) Workforce.** Sweden already had, before reform, a relatively well qualified ECCE workforce based on a graduate pre-school teacher profession. The education of this profession underwent major change following integration into education, bringing it into a common framework that encompassed education for other educational professions: school teacher and free-time pedagogue. Within this common framework, students could decide on their specialisation after beginning their courses. One consequence of this has been a growing shortage of pre-school teachers, as students, now with a choice of which profession to follow after qualification, have opted for school teaching rather than for pre-school teaching and free-time pedagogy. Reforms under discussion, which would again separate out specialisations in basic education, may rectify this problem, but (as currently proposed) at the expense of down-grading the qualification level of pre-school teaching compared to teaching older children (the two are not necessarily linked: specialist pre-school teaching could be re-instituted, and maintained at the same qualification level as school teaching).

Despite the problems of recruiting pre-school teachers, partly because they continue to have lower status than school teachers, the reform process has supported and enhanced the status of work in pre-schools. With transfer into education, the pre-school is recognised as a type of school in its own right with a recognised place in the education system; and the head of a pre-school is recognised as equivalent to the head of a school in terms of title, responsibility and authority.

**c) Services.** Integration into education brought with it a curriculum for the pre-school, which was widely welcomed by the pre-school workforce. The *Preschool Curriculum*, introduced two years after the transfer of the responsibility for ECCE into the Ministry of Education and Science, reflects the view of early childhood education and care as the first stage of the education system and an integral part of lifelong learning. Its structure is consistent with other curricula in the school system, with a common view of knowledge, development and learning. The *Preschool Curriculum* is built on a long tradition of pedagogy



that adopts a holistic approach to the child and understands care, learning and upbringing as inseparable: 'the pre-school should provide children with good pedagogical activities, where care, nurturing and learning together form a coherent whole. Children's development into responsible persons and members of society should be promoted in partnership with the home'.

*Skolverket* (2008a) concludes that the curriculum, even five years after the reform, has had a positive impact in the pre-school. The new curriculum not only reflects the long tradition of pedagogy but also embodies and promotes trends already under way, putting into words activities common in the pre-school while at the same time supporting an increased emphasis on children's learning apparent after the reform. Having a curriculum has both supported the pedagogical work in the pre-school and contributed to increasing its status.

The *Skolverket* evaluations also show a positive development in the way pre-schools work with documentation. An earlier evaluation by *Skolverket* (2004a) pointed out that the use of documentation had become more common, but that it was often used to show parents how pre-school were working and not as a means for the staff to develop their activities, as emphasised in the curriculum. In its later evaluation, however, *Skolverket* (2008a) noticed a change in the use of documentation, with an increased awareness of its potential for evaluating and assessing pedagogical activities. The national report continues that 'today pre-schools more often use documentation of their activities as a ground for joint reflection among the staff... Joint reflections can be of great importance in creating opportunities to implement the intention of the curriculum.'

The development of the pre-school after reform is not, however, without its problems. The curriculum has had an impact in the area of learning, which has been more emphasised. The later *Skolverket* evaluation points to how this emphasis on learning may be developing in some ways in contrast to earlier traditions in the pre-school, which regarded development and learning as something that take place together and in cooperation with others. Today, by contrast, there is increased individualisation, in which the child's development and learning are regarded more and more as an individual project. On the other hand, *Skolverket* notes that the view of the child as curious and competent has developed further as well as the teachers' awareness about what children want to learn and how. The influence of the child and co-operation with home and parent has also developed. The curriculum has had a great impact in the area of 'Norms and Value', which emphasise care and consideration towards others, solidarity, gender equality and tolerance. This area has developed further and the reason for this, the evaluation concludes, is the strong tradition in the Swedish pre-school (*Skolverket*, 2008a).

Overall, the national report concludes that the increased focus on the educational content in pre-school and the maximum fee reform has 'strengthened the role of pre-school as a part of lifelong learning and as the first step in the educational system'.

**d) Resources.** Although there is no data in the national report, the reform measures – including reducing costs to parents and extending entitlement to all children over 12 months – will have required additional funding, including central government funds made available to municipalities who are responsible for the financing and administration of ECCE services.

**e) Relations between ECCE and other services.** The national report dwells at some length on signs of ‘schoolification’. But this was not meant to be a consequence of the transfer of ECCE to the education system: quite the contrary. The transfer was premised on pre-school influencing the school; as the national report puts it, ‘The pedagogical role of the pre-school should be strengthened at the same time as the pre-school’s pedagogical approach should be given greater influence in the school’ (NR). The Prime Minister at the time of transfer into education, Göran Persson, made the expected relationship clear, stating that ‘the pre-school should influence at least the early years of compulsory school’, and initial development work was focused on ‘the integration of pre-school pedagogy into primary schools’ (Korpi, 2005, p. 10). Subsequently, the distinct identity of the pre-school has been emphasised:

The government bill ‘Quality in the pre-school’ (2004/05:11) declares that ... (the pre-school) should remain unchanged and continue to give children a good care as well as educational stimuli and also promote good conditions for growth...The aim with constituting the pre-school as an own type of school is to further emphasize the pre-school as the first step in a lifelong learning perspective and a valid part of the school system and to have the same comprehensive goals as other types of schools.

The previous government rejected the proposals of a parliamentary committee that pre-schools should simply adopt school terminology, such as *school*, *teaching* and *pupil*. The government’s view – stated in ‘Quality in the pre-school’ - was that the pre-school should not just take over terminology from school; for example, the term *pupil* should not be used for pre-school, and if the term *teaching* was applied to pre-school, the definition must be adjusted to pre-school as well as to school. The government meant to come back to Parliament with terms and definitions, but this and the overall Bill on Quality were overtaken by events, the government losing the 2006 election. The subsequent coalition government has promised a new bill, but this has yet to be presented.

However, there are some indications that the process of pre-school influencing school has not always worked, and that transfer into education may have led to ‘schoolification’, at least in some places. Pre-school classes, opened in schools in the 1990s to take 6-year-olds (previously in ECCE), have often adopted the ways of the school, for example the organisation of time and space and a focus on ‘subject knowledge which has a tendency to be taught as something which is about doing the “right” or to find the “right” answer’ (NR). These classes, in short, find it hard to escape the dominant discourse of the school community, whose

'own' discourse is taken for granted as a 'right' way of understanding children, knowledge and learning (Munkhammar, 2001). The possibility to develop a joint understanding might be to communicate and reflect on common and integrated activities (Davidsson, 2002, Hjelte, 2005, Nilsson, 2005). Research results show that dialogues are important for activity development but, however, the lack of practice and the uncertainty to leave discursive conversations may end in dialogues which do not always develop to full extent. The dialogue is then not a real dialogue. It is more like a monologue where each person turns to and speaks to oneself without listening to others. Each person argues for her/his own opinion instead of mutual giving and taking arguments (Wikgren, 2005) (NR).

There are also some indications of growing school influence not only on pre-school classes, located in schools, but also on pre-schools themselves. Although the *Pre-school Curriculum* is very clear that its goals are to be striven for and to provide an orientation for the pre-school's work, *Skolverket's* later evaluation notes a tendency for pre-schools to treat them as norms to be achieved and to assess children's performance against them (Skolverket, 2008a), a consequence of the pre-school's incorporation into an increasingly goal and result oriented education system. This is part of a wider trend that the evaluation notes, a stronger emphasis on the pre-school's role as preparation for school. In the words of the national report, there is

a tendency to prepare for schooling in the pre-school. Many municipality plans give priority for language and linguistic development in the pre-school with the intent to improve goal attainment. The strong focus on one area of the curriculum means that the goal to promote the view of the whole child's development will be difficult to (achieve). The increased monitoring and judgement of the child's development and skills is also something that the National Agency for Education interprets as preparing for schooling (NR).

The Swedish national report also sees a risk of further schoolification in recent policy moves. In 2009, the government announced its intention to introduce changes to the educational work of the pre-school, in order to better prepare children for school and because the government considers that 'pre-schools have not stimulated children's natural desire to learn to full extent'. Skolverket has been charged 'to propose more detailed linguistic and mathematical goals' (NR). The national report fears that these moves may presage growing 'schoolification' of ECCE, or at the very least raise questions about the meaning and practice of education in this period of life:

What we can see is a schoolification where the tradition and culture from school enter the pre-school and pre-school classes, a tradition where the goal of subject knowledge is to be achieved and assessed. This is contrary to the Swedish tradition of pre-school's holistic view of the child promoting development.... According to the curriculum pre-school should promote learning. Care, upbringing and learning should

form an entirety. But the tendency of schoolification might become more distinct as the ambition for the new Government from 2006 is to elaborate the curriculum, especially with the aim to strengthen work with children's linguistic and mathematical development in pre-school...The 'new' way of narrowing the concept of learning is something to take into consideration in relation to how we understand learning and is contradictory to the curriculum... (At the same time) you can see a political expression with a tendency to focus on pre-school as a service for care. This tendency appears in the Inquiry on a new teacher education programme. Those pictures are rather contradictory and the question is which dominant learning discourse will come out of these changes and how this will have an influence on the Swedish pre-school (NR).

## Slovenia

**a) Children and Families.** The Pre-school Law of 1996 states that pre-school should be available to all children, requiring municipalities to make necessary provision, while various measures have been introduced to support the inclusion of marginal or different groups of children, for example free attendance for children of parents with low incomes, additional support for classes with Roma children and children, and an emphasis on diversity in the curriculum. This legislative framework has been supplemented by a new means-tested parental fee scale introduced in the Regulations on Payments of the Parents for the Pre-school Programmes (1996).

The data show that the number of children, especially toddlers, attending pre-schools has increased since the full integration of services within education. In the school year 1993/94, 28 per cent of toddlers aged up to 2 years attended pre-schools, 49 per cent of 3 to 4-year-olds; 53 per cent of 4 to 5-year-olds; 60 per cent of 5 to 6-year-olds and 70 per cent of 6 to 7-year-olds included into pre-schools<sup>12</sup>. Following the integration of pre-schools under the Ministry of Education and Sport (1993), a statistical base was gradually established, holding data on children attending pre-schools by age. The first statistics prepared using this data were for the school year 1998/99, when there were 16 per cent of one-year-olds; 33 per cent of two-year-olds; 50 per cent of 3-year-olds; 62 per cent of 4-year-olds; 68 per cent of 5-year-olds and 91 per cent of children aged six years and more included into pre-schools. In 2001/02, following the implementation of the *Preschool curriculum*, there was a further increase in attendance: 20 per cent of one-year-olds; 40 per cent of two-year-olds; 62 per cent of 3-year-olds; 72 per cent of 4-year-olds; 77 per cent of 5-year-olds and 63 per cent of children aged six years and more included into pre-schools (from 2000/2001 six years old children were gradually included into the primary school according to the *Law on primary education*).

12 These statistics were calculated for the purposes of preparing the 1995 *White book on education in the Republic of Slovenia*. On the national level, the data obtained by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia was not collected in a way that it would enable us to provide figures for attendance of toddlers/children for each year group)

The latest statistics are for 2008/09: 39 per cent of one-year-olds; 60 per cent of two-year-olds; 77 per cent of 3-year-olds; 86 per cent of 4-year-olds; and 90 per cent of 5-year-olds are attending pre-schools. The data over this 15 year period show a substantial increase in attendance across the whole age range, with the one to 3-year-old age group increasing rapidly. The national report suggests that this increase is in part a result of 'the positive attitude of parents towards the enrolment of children into pre-school and increasingly widespread understanding of the importance of pre-school education for child's development and learning'.

Although the 1996 pre-school legislation and fee regulations should have increased access by previously under-represented groups, there is no information to show whether this has in fact happened.

**b) Workforce.** The basic structure of the workforce – a pre-school teacher and an assistant - took shape before full integration within education, and the move towards a graduate level education for teachers began in 1984. In 1995, however, it was made universal, introducing a 3-year graduate education into Faculties of Education. The Pre-school Law of 1996 also specified that assistants should have a secondary level of education. Though the level of education of the workforce has, therefore, increased since reform, the national report argues that this is part of a longer term process: it is not 'directly related to the reforms of pre-school education but is a result of a continuous effort of different experts to increase the level of formal education for the professional workers in pre-schools'. This trend continues, resulting in new 'Bologna programmes' for pre-school teachers' education; pre-school teachers will be able for the first time to study at the second (Master's) and third (PhD) levels of education.

**c) Services.** The national report concludes that the inclusion of pre-schools within the education system, with the subsequent adoption of measures such as the *Pre-school Law* and the *Pre-school Curriculum*, has improved quality in pre-schools. They have 'achieved the quality on the level of the organisation as well as of the contents, comparable to that, enjoyed by pre-schools in the countries with a long tradition of integrated pre-school (particularly Scandinavian countries).' The Pre-school Law has established 'conditions comparable to those in countries with high-quality pre-schools, enabling high quality work on the process level.'

Services have also become more internally coherent. The national report argues that the reforms have reduced 'the internal systemic and substantive dividing of pre-schools in two parts: for infants and toddlers, where predominantly care was provided, and for (older) children ...where predominantly education was provided'. The introduction of the concept of curriculum, covering all age groups and encouraging a broader and more complex approach to practice, has been particularly significant, emphasising 'the process of pre-school education and the whole context of the daily life of children in pre-school.' This and other initiatives following reform have also supported new thinking, with a shift from 'normative views on child development to the latest theoretical knowledge, based on socio-cultural theories of

child's development and learning; as well as the shift from the understanding of pre-school care and education as the preparation school to its understanding as the possibility for preparing children for learning'.

The *Pre-school Curriculum* has also had other impacts on pre-school services. It places special emphasis 'on the re-conceptualisation of the space as an important element of the curriculum ... (and) several principles have been defined: organisation of healthy, safe and pleasant space (both the internal and outdoor spaces); ensuring privacy and intimacy; providing flexibility and stimulation (the organisation of the playrooms should vary depending on the age of children and on the activities that take place in the playroom)' (NR). Overall, the Pre-school Curriculum emphasises the importance of both quantity and quality of space. A second impact is the attention paid 'to the realisation of the principle of equal opportunities and consideration of diversity among children', which is taken to mean ensuring 'equal conditions for the optimal development of each child...while taking into account individual differences in development and learning. Additional measures have been taken for children with special needs in pre-school, for children in nationally mixed areas and for Roma children' (NR).

Finally, a model for assessing quality in pre-schools has been designed. This includes the introduction of a system of external experts from different institutions, who have assumed the role of critical friends, and the gradual build-up of a network of pre-schools working with self-evaluation. Between 2002 and 2005, a model for assessing quality in pre-schools was designed, focussing on structural (organisation of work and life in pre-school, space and materials), indirect (cooperation between the employees, cooperation between pre-school and parent, professional development and satisfaction of workers, cooperation with other pre-schools and institutions) and process level indicators (curriculum planning, implementing the curriculum, routine activities, children in the process of implementing the curriculum). The national report concludes that 'the identification and provision of the quality of pre-schools has become a part of the developmental work of most pre-schools.'

**d) Resources.** There is no information in the national report enabling a comparison of resourcing of ECCE before and after integration within education. The report does, however, comment that expenditure on pre-school as a proportion of GDP was stable between 2001 and 2007, though before 2001 financial data was not collected in a way to allow similar comparisons. One benefit of reform is noted, concerning information on resourcing: because 'the entire system of education (from pre-schools through to the education of adults) is under the jurisdiction of the same ministry, there has been greater transparency in the preparation of the budget for education as well as in the allocation of money for each level of education...

approximately 6 per cent of GDP is intended for the entire system of education, while for the pre-school education 0.65 per cent<sup>13</sup> (NR).

**e) Relations between ECCE and other services.** The national report concludes that recent developments have ‘encouraged the direct cooperation between the professional workers in pre-schools and schools’. But this has not been accompanied by schoolification of the pre-school. Despite earlier concerns, ‘there was not the schoolification of pre-schools nor did the pre-schools take on the ways and forms of work, specific to school’ (NR). This is partly because, it is argued, the first 3-year period of compulsory schooling places emphasis on the individual differences in children’s development and learning thus enabling all children to achieve the standards of knowledge at the end of the first triad in their own time’ (NR).

## New Zealand

**a) Children and Families.** Following integration, participation in services has increased substantially, with an increasing proportion of children attending ECCE going to what were formerly ‘childcare’ services. As reported in a previous publication:

In 1989, at the time of the major reforms to the administrative system for education in New Zealand, approximately 90 per cent of 4-year-olds, 61 per cent of 3-year-olds, and 40 per cent of all children under the age of 5 attended an early childhood program. ... Less than a decade later, nearly all 4-year-olds and over 80 per cent of 3-year olds were enrolled in some form of early childhood education. It is estimated that over half of NZ children aged 0 to 5 years were enrolled. Childcare centres became the dominant service. Enrolments were concentrated in centre-based childcare (36 per cent), kindergartens (29 per cent), and play centres (11 per cent) (Meade, 2000, p. 83-84) (NR).

Increased participation has continued since, including more children attending and for longer periods, encouraged by the 10-year strategic plan in 2002, with its stated aim of increasing participation, and free attendance for 3 and 4 year olds from 2007. Overall, children start attending ECE services younger and they attend for longer hours. By 2007, 65 per cent of children aged 0 to 5 years were enrolled and there are early indications that ‘since the introduction of the “20-hours free” policy, enrolments (in terms of total hours for all children) are increasing (Froese & Jenkins, 2008) and children aged 3 and 4 years are attending longer with more exposure to ECE’ (NR).

13 Given the high level of workforce qualification and high levels of attendance, this figure seems rather low. This uncertainty, and the absence of any such estimates for many countries, underlines the need for reliable and comparable cross-national data on total expenditure across all ECCE services as a proportion (a) of total educational expenditure; and (b) total GDP.

At the same time, policies to promote participation have drawn in populations that were under-represented in the past. Attaching parent support and development programmes to services has increased participation. Attendance by Maori and Pasifika (Pacific Island) children has also grown. For the former, there has been a development of Maori-language services since 1980, before integration. The first of these services, *kōhanga reo*, was opened in 1982, and by 1990, just after integration, there were 618 operating. During the period from 1990 to 1999, the numbers of children enrolled at *kōhanga reo* continued to increase, on average by 2.3 per cent each year. From that date, however, enrolments decreased, as more Maori children have enrolled in 'mainstream' services; since 2003, the majority of Maori children have been in these services.

Between 1990 and 2000, the overall number of Pasifika children enrolled in ECCE services increased by 81 per cent, from 5,937 to 10,741 in 2000 (Podmore, Sauvao, & Mapa, 2001). By 2007, there were 11,634 Pasifika children enrolled. Numbers of Asian children are now increasing rapidly.

The impact of reform on participation by children with disabilities and additional needs is less clear, since statistics are only available from 1998 when the Ministry of Education assumed direct responsibility for providing specialist services (after a stand-alone specialist agency was merged with the Ministry). The number of children given additional support increased between 1998 and 2001, but, since then, the numbers have been similar each year, despite the increases in overall enrolments. The report concludes that 'it is hard to find data that capture trends in participation in ECE services for children with special education needs.'

The report puts increased participation down to a combination of more women in paid work and policy developments since integration within education, such as improved levels of government subsidy for what were formerly 'childcare' services and the free attendance period for older children making attendance more affordable. These drivers of change – more employment and policy – are not of course separate, with more, better and more affordable provision stimulating employment. But the report raises another important factor. Parents have changed their perception of ECCE services, recognising their educational role and benefit: 'Improved documentation of learning, using socio-cultural assessment approaches (Carr, 2001), means that parents now come to see and know that learning starts in the early years, not when their child starts school' (NR). Parents are relaxed about using ECCE services. Attending an early childhood centre is now accepted; it is what every child does and there is no longer stigma or guilt about attending. The report suggests that there has been a similar shift in attitudes amongst the public at large about the value of ECCE that 'seems to emanate from education departments being responsible for all ECCE services.'

**b) Workforce.** The situation of the workforce has improved substantially, with better education and pay, a 2002 policy goal of a 100 per cent graduate workforce by 2012 (reduced to 80 per cent in October 2009 on the basis of demand outstripping supply), and a strong movement towards parity with school teachers.



Since integration within education, ‘there has been continued growth in the number of students in, and graduates from, early childhood teacher education’ (Ministry of Education (2007a, p.40). In 2002, 39 percent of teachers in ECCE services held a recognised graduate-level early childhood education qualification, and by July 2006 this had increased to 50 percent (although not all services had 50 percent). The degree programmes for these early childhood teachers are ‘generally equivalent to programmes for primary school teachers, indeed some have considerable integration of courses for the two types of teachers’ (NR).

There are now 21 ‘providers’ offering early childhood teacher education, including seven universities and seven polytechnics. The national report observes that some commentators believe that some of these providers do not provide adequate coverage of younger children (infants and toddlers) in their programmes. This leads the authors of the national report to ask: ‘If childcare workers were trained separately, would the nature and extent of coverage of infant and toddlers be better, or as in-depth? It is hard to know’. But they add that they ‘are not recommending separation’ (NR). On a more positive note they add that ‘early childhood teachers are recognising how much learning occurs around routines like nappy changing’ (NR).

Perhaps most striking of all the workforce changes has been the improvements in pay for ECCE teachers, supported by the creation in 1994 of a combined union for early childhood and primary school teachers. Pay parity amongst its members went onto its agenda soon after and, as noted in Chapter Two, significant changes have been set in motion, leading the national report authors to the conclusion that it is ‘unlikely that the pay parity process and improved pay for childcare teachers would have occurred if the Ministry of Education had not been responsible for all ECE services’ (NR).

These structural changes in the position of the workforce have been accompanied by changes in how the workforce sees itself and the construction of its own identity. Since integration, the national report argues, there has been growing professionalism among early childhood teachers. The main lift has been for staff formerly regarded as ‘childcare workers’, but who today are increasingly well-qualified early childhood teachers. In the past, they had ‘colluded with those who believe that training and qualifications are not important for those who “mind babies”... (today these) teachers follow a code of ethics and most want to engage in life-long learning. Their talk is about teaching and learning, family involvement, curriculum and pedagogy’.

A critical factor in this transformation of the workforce has been government’s undertaking to fund the strategy: a better qualified and paid workforce is underpinned by extra funding. The national report sums up the changes wrought by integration:

What is being described above is the use of government funding and regulation to bring childcare services up to the same standard as kindergartens that have required

qualified teachers for decades. It is a very bold strategy in international terms, and costly (NR).

**c) Services.** Integration has been important for the development of quality in ECCE services, which has been stimulated by a number of major initiatives that followed integration. Major improvements in the workforce have been outlined above. A second key initiative was the introduction of a curriculum that not only covered the whole 0 to 5 age range but was highly innovative. New Zealand was one of the first countries in the world to develop a national early childhood education curriculum. The national report is clear on the relationship between integration and the form and coverage of this curriculum: 'If there had not been prior integration of services under Education, it is unlikely that New Zealand would have had a curriculum as innovative and as widely inclusive of early childhood education services as Te Whāriki...If childcare services had not been under the Ministry of Education, the curriculum probably would not have applied to them' (NR).

Further initiatives have followed on from the curriculum, again stimulated by the 10-year strategic plan, which set improving quality as one of its three main goals. Innovative approaches have been developed to assess children's experiences, and for teachers' self-evaluation.

The *Learning Stories* approach to assessment (Carr, 2001) was elaborated in a series of resources – Kei Tua o te Pae: Early Childhood Exemplars (Ministry of Education, 2004). By 2007, 80 per cent of ECE services were engaging with Kei Tua o te Pae (Ministry of Education, 2007a). Self-review guidelines for ECE evaluations were also developed and distributed to all licensed and chartered ECE services (Ministry of Education, 2006) (NR).

The ECE Centres of Innovation programme, implemented as part of the quality goal of the strategic plan, 'has challenged teachers' practice, fostered teachers' research development, led to strong engagement with innovative pedagogy, and experienced growing interest overseas (Ministry of Education, 2002, 2007a)' (NR). Twenty ECE services contributed to research findings for the sector in the six years that the programme existed. Sadly, as noted in Chapter Two, this Programme has been cut in the 2009 budget.

Before integration there were substantial differences in quality between different types of ECCE services. Since integration, improving quality across all services has been prioritised and supported by a range of policies and enhanced funding. The national report concludes that 'at last inequities in quality are being addressed' (NR).

**d) Resources.** The level of public expenditure on ECCE services has increased substantially since integration within education, with a particularly marked increase to implement the strategic plan. In 2001/2002 government expenditure on ECCE (in grants

to services and fee subsidies to families) was NZ\$400 million (or US\$278 million<sup>14</sup>) and by 2006/07, it had nearly doubled to around NZ\$750 million (or US\$534 million, GST excluded) (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p.38). The increased expenditure reflects increased demand for services but also ‘the cost-driver funding model’ through which government compensates services for the cost of employing better qualified and better paid teachers; under this system, government pays per child per hour grants to services that vary in amount according to the proportion of qualified teachers on the staff. A study of sustainability concludes that additional government funding ‘has been successful in increasing the proportion of registered qualified teachers’ (NR).

The national report is clear on the link between the effectiveness of reform and the provision of additional resources:

These many and varied investments were necessary for the education system to live up to the promises made around the time childcare was integrated with education – promises about the benefits to children if they participated in good quality early childhood care and education services. Until pedagogical (process) quality in education and care services was/is attended to, those promises were/are hollow and there is potential for harm (NR).

**e) *Relations between ECCE and other services.*** The national report notes that “‘schoolification” has not been an issue ...to date partly because the ECE sector has actively avoided it’. Indeed, the report highlights problems arising from too much distance between ECCE and school: ‘the separation of the sectors has had costs for children - they have big adjustments to make during their transition between settings, as the environments and pedagogical practices in the two sectors have become increasingly different.’ (NR). Furthermore, the system is not adequately supporting children’s transition, with too much dependent on the willingness individual services to make connections.

Collaborative relationships are still not adequate elsewhere:

The system is not serving families with children with special needs optimally. Frequently these families are still making their way up multiple paths in the absence of integrated services in local areas. As well, socio-cultural assessment approaches can mean identification of children with additional needs does not happen as early as it could for optimal intervention (NR).

The national report also suggests a potential problem in the relationship between ECCE and government, a problem arising more from the closeness of the relationship than indifference on either side:

14 US\$1 = NZ\$1.404 (1 February 2010, UN exchange rate).

A dependency relationship seems to have developed as government has increased its role in ECE. The first response to problems that arise in the ECE sector tends to be: 'Let's request more government funding.' As one interviewee for this paper reflected: Has the Ministry given out 'too many fish' instead of giving out 'fishing rods'? Should more be done to 'show people how to fish' for themselves? (NR)

## Brazil

**a) *Children and Families.*** Despite the lack of evaluative studies, the authors of the national report argue that there are 'obvious achievements arising from the integration of day care centres and pre-school education' (NR). The national report concludes that integration within education has served an important symbolic purpose:

The major consequence of the integration of day care centres and pre-school to education has been the assertion of children's education as a right to be fulfilled... the historical achievements of the Brazilian children's education which assigned the State to care for the education of children since birth. The society and the State in Brazil can no longer disregard a constitutional right of these new citizens... (The) Brazilian option has brought to the political, administrative and theoretical arena a new look at children and their specific education concerns. Maybe this is the greater implication of the integration of early childhood education (NR).

There has also been an increase in provision, though it is not clear whether the rate of increase since integration is faster than during the period before reform. The National Plan for Education (PNE) of 2001 has set goals for participation in all ECCE services: 50 per cent for 0 to 3-year-olds and 80 per cent for 4- to 5-year-olds attending pre-schools in 2011. In the first decade after the transfer of responsibility for all ECCE services to education (1995-2005), the growth rate for attendance by 0 to 3-year-olds almost doubled, but had still only reached 13 per cent in 2005, well behind the interim target of 30 per cent attendance by 2006. The national report also highlights continuing high levels of inequality in access to these services for very young children:

Access to day care centres is still uneven between children of different regions of the country, between the urban and rural settings, between the white and black or mulatto children, and between the poor and the rich families. The greatest inequality is seen when we compare the nurseries attendance rates vis-à-vis the income of their families: 9.7 per cent of children in the lowest income families (20 per cent poorest) attended nurseries, whereas among the children from families with higher income this rate was 29.6 per cent (NR).

Access for 4- and 5-year-olds - 64 per cent in 2005, up by 50 per cent over the preceding decade and above the interim 2006 target in PNE of 60 per cent - is better. But inequality

in access is still apparent, as with services for 0 to 3-year-olds. For example, 86 per cent of children from the richest 20 per cent of families attend, compared with 54 per cent among the poorest 20 per cent. This, however, represents a slight closing of the gap since 1995 (down 9 percentage points), compared to a widening of inequality in services for children under 3 years (up 3 percentage per cent).

**b) Workforce.** The 1996 National Education Guidelines and Framework Law laid down that all teachers of children from birth to 10 years should be graduates of higher education institutions or of secondary Normal schools for teachers, while the PNE set a target for 2011 that 70 per cent of these teachers should have a higher education qualification. In both cases, integration within education has meant the inclusion of all ECCE services, both for children under and over 3 years. There have also been specific policy initiatives to improve training: for example, the federal government has introduced short-term programmes to improve the qualifications of teachers (at all levels of basic education) up to secondary level, including the nearly 40,000 early childhood teachers without minimum qualifications. Many states and municipalities also have programmes to improve teacher education.

The results can be seen in the improving qualification profile of the workforce. Between 2000 and 2006, the proportion of teachers with only primary education dropped, from 22 to 5 per cent in 'day care' centres, and from 9 to 2 per cent in pre-schools; while the proportion with complete secondary level in 2006 reached 61 and 52 per cent respectively and teachers with a higher education qualification reached 34 and 46 per cent. This reflects significant progress, nearly reaching the PNE's 2006 target of all teachers with at least secondary level education. Meeting the 2011 target of 70 per cent with higher education still remains a challenge.

These improvements in workforce qualifications, especially for those working with children under 3 years, is in the context of the 1996 National Education Guidelines and Framework Law establishing early childhood education from birth as an integral part of the education system with parity of qualification across all sectors. Legislation in 2008 extends this parity to earnings, establishing a national minimum wage for teachers in basic public education. The national report notes that a monthly minimum wage of 950 BRL (or US\$522)<sup>15</sup>, fixed by this law, will benefit a substantial number of early childhood education teachers.

**c) Services.** Some initiatives have been taken that have a potential to enhance quality in services. As well as targets for enhancing the qualifications of the workforce, there are now national parameters of quality for early childhood education, including basic infrastructure standards. The national report also points to the potential significance for pedagogical work of some of the ideas about children and education that have underpinned reform:

(The concept) that children are active social beings, producers of culture, subjects with rights, citizens in progress and whose development happens fully in the physical, social, emotional and cognitive aspects...implies efforts and challenges of rethinking

15

US\$1 = 1.82 BRL (1 February 2010, UN exchange rate).

the educational practices in the public and private forums, more consistent with the integrality of the child and therefore with the identity of this field of work. The attendance in educational institutions focused on education and childcare of 0 to 6 years-olds, in a joint effort with their families, has a particular relevance, due to the novelty of its purposes (NR).

There is no evaluation or comment on whether and how far these ideas have actually impacted on actual practice.

**d) Resources.** The inclusion of all ECCE services, including those for children under 4 years, in the national funding system for education (FUNDEB), introduced in 2006, has potentially major implications, not only for its recognition of all ECCE services as educational but for their resourcing. There is, however, no information on actual funding and changes in levels of funding over time, so the actual impact of FUNDEB, and of integration within education, cannot be assessed.

**e) Relations between ECCE and other services.** The risk of schoolification has been recognised in Brazil, indeed ‘premature schooling’ is an old problem, especially where teachers have had inadequate training for work with young children. However, the authors of the national report also point to a ‘huge effort’ of information and training intended to ‘build up the identity’ of early childhood education:

The policy of early childhood education and the national guidelines established by MEC and the municipal and state education systems have been very clear in defining early childhood education as a stage of education with its own identity, content, methodologies and experiences of learning defined according to the interest, the pace, and characteristics of the child, where playing takes a fundamental role. The emphasis on early childhood education as a step that has specific objectives does not preclude its role in the preparation of the child to meet new demands in the following stages of schooling (communication from national experts).

More generally, the relationship of ECCE to the wider education system, with its inclusion as the first phase of basic education, is regarded as very positive by the authors of the national report. For it has meant that ECCE has been brought within ‘the educational policy debate’, where it can participate in defining ‘resources, guidelines, programs and actions’ and participate in programmes to improve the quality of education: ‘distribution of educational material, books, literature, school transport, meals, construction and reform of physical facilities, teacher education, among others, are examples of the integration of early childhood education in educational policy’. (NR)

## Jamaica

a) **Children and Families.** While there has been an increase in supply of services and attendance since integration, the national report is cautious about attributing this to reform:

since we do not have the comparable figures for 1987-1997, it is difficult to assess how much the 30 per cent increase in day care centres and the 14 per cent increase in number of children attending is likely to be a response to increased demand (over the same period female employment increased by 21 per cent), and how much if any is due to Integration (NR).

Moreover, despite increased participation by children under 3 years, this is from a very low base (so a 30 percent increase is only from 3.7 to 5 per cent) and policy has continued to focus mainly on the older 3 to 5 year old age group, where access rates have risen from 89 to 98 per cent: 'access to high quality services is seen as a universal entitlement for this age group but while this is true of high quality health care for the 0-two year old group, it is not true otherwise. Day care is still the "poor cousin"' (NR). So Jamaican society now expects that a young child will be in some form of ECCE – but not until the age of 4 years.

Young children with disabilities continue to be insufficiently targeted and reached, despite the fact that the National Strategic Plan calls for 'the screening of children 0-3 for disabilities with subsequent referrals to specialists when necessary' (NR). However, access to pre-school education for poor children aged 4 and 5-years-old has increased remarkably since 1997. Whereas in 1997 there was a gap of 24 percentage points in enrolment between the poorest and wealthiest quintiles, ten years later there is universal enrolment in both quintiles.

In the opinion of the national report, integration, including the movement leading up to reform, has significantly contributed to raised awareness and an increased focus on the importance of early childhood development, and also on strengthening parenting outreach programmes. Integration, however, cannot be treated and evaluated in isolation, since it has happened 'in a context in which much greater focus is being placed on children in general in Jamaica, partly stimulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, then given a strong push at government level by the acceptance by all CARICOM governments of the Caribbean Plan of Action' (NR).

b) **Workforce.** Improved training opportunities are identified as a direct consequence of Integration. The national report concludes that

(integration) has made a profound difference with a career path through certification now available for early childhood practitioners prior to reaching the trained teacher standard... many day care centre and basic school staff took the opportunity to get training with certification... From 1999-2006 5,202 persons graduated with Level 1 Early Childhood Practitioner Training, 1,504 with Level 2, and 8 with Level 3 training (NR).

**c) Services.** The national report concludes that there has been an improvement in quality in ECCE services, which can be attributed in part to integration. This is especially so for the less developed 'day care' services for children under 3-years-old, where there is 'much more training, lower staff: child ratios [the average staff: child ratio improved, more than halving what it was in 1997], more print-rich environments, environments that can help children develop fine and large muscles, more cribs (centres can no longer put two children in one crib), and a new focus on the use of outside environments' (NR). As well as better training, the report highlights an increase in the average teacher: child ratio in all basic and infant schools – up by about a quarter - compared to a fifth in day care centres. According to the national report, improved staff ratios at least in pre-schools are likely to have been a direct result of integration given the focus on improving quality and teacher: student ratios. Improved staff-child ratios are now part of the recent regulatory framework and licensing.

But particular attention is devoted to curricular development, especially the new curriculum for children under 3, which is also a direct consequence of integration within education. Senior staff interviewed for the national report commented that the new curriculum was welcomed by 'those practitioners who had never worked with a curriculum (primarily in the day care sector)...as "for the first time they actually had some teaching tools to work with, rather than trying to create their own lesson plans"' (NR).

Although the basic/infant school sector has been accustomed to having a curriculum, so that the impact of the new curriculum will be more incremental than in the 'day care' sector, curricular developments in both sectors are viewed positively. Given the continuing split within ECCE – between 'day care' and 'basic/infant school' - the new curricula with their shared orientation 'have the potential to be significant vehicles of integration...aiding early childhood personnel to address the integrated needs of children across their developmental domains, they can serve to make more seamless the experiences of children from birth' (NR).

A note of caution is added in the national report about continuing disparities in quality between schools: 'the strength of Jamaica's educational system is access; its weakness still remains quality, which is linked with inequity with a bias against children in poorer communities which tend to have poorly resourced ECIs [early childhood institutions]' (NR).

**d) Resources.** In terms of actual funding, the consequences of integration have, so far, been small. Day care centres (except for the 13 built by the government, catering to only 3 per cent of children in day care) continue to be privately financed mainly or entirely through parent fees: 'it has been a great disappointment for day care operators and staff that no salary subsidy to mirror basic school subsidies was provided following Integration in 1998' (NR).

Basic schools, also, depend mainly for income on parental fees. Given the low incomes of many families, fee collection is unreliable even when fees are low: 'this has been a major problem with the basic school system, since as a result poorer schools usually attract poorly



qualified staff and provide the poorest service to the children most in need' (NR). Basic schools teachers receive a government stipend, intended to supplement income from fees, and this subsidy has increased since integration. All recognised basic schools (93 per cent of all basic schools) also receive an annual nutrition grant of J\$250 (US\$2.8)<sup>16</sup> per child. This represents an eleven-fold increase on the nutrition grant received prior to 2001 and is the same level of grant as government Infant Schools and Departments. The authors of the national report assume this increase was due to integration and the increasing importance given to early childhood by the Ministry of Education.

Despite these very limited changes in actual funding, the integration reform process and particularly the work of the Early Childhood Commission in budgeting for long-term planning has raised awareness and debate about 'differences in funding between educational levels and between children and adults' (NR).

**e) *Relations between ECCE and other services.*** 'Schoolification' is not regarded as a risk of reform, but rather as an existing and deeply entrenched problem in established ECCE services, which have responded to traditional attitudes to early childhood education held by the majority of parents. The new curriculum, one of the fruits of integration within education, is regarded as a challenge to 'schoolification'. The national report regards it as 'a further move away from the "schoolification" that is very much the perspective of many parents and still too many teachers, and which has been a mark of government infant school education in particular' (NR). However, if integration has not increased 'schoolification', neither has it met the intention of introducing early childhood approaches into the junior school and developed a more integrated pedagogical approach: 'This has not been achieved and, despite one or two projects, given the other priority areas in the earlier years may not receive focused attention for several years' (NR).

Jamaica has adopted a broad approach to integration, going beyond ECCE. The wider goal has been improved cross-government linkages between ministries concerned with children and families, namely the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health (especially the public health services) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Progress has been made here. The ECC with its structure of sub-committees recognises that it must coordinate across sectors if it is to achieve the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood. Its new expanded organisational structure, which expands its staff to over 170, includes a Cross Sectoral Co-ordinator who will now have five Community Intervention Officers working in the five regions.

The national report draws attention to an important issue, of relevance far beyond Jamaica: the emergence since 1998 of two approaches to and understandings of integration that are in theory complementary but which, in practice, may create unproductive tensions if not properly coordinated:

16 S\$1 = 89.8 JMD (1 February 2010, UN exchange rate).

The original concept, and the one being still pursued by the Early Childhood Commission, is that early childhood learning is a continuous process from pre-birth to eight and involves much more than 'schooling' approaches - parents, communities, schools, health services, government and the private sector are all partners in achieving the broad developmental goals of children. The ECC Chair has described it as 'a single comprehensive approach...The child is at the centre – able to receive all the services s/he needs in a coordinated manner.' Virtually the whole sector would agree with this definition in principle. The parallel approach, via the Integration pilot project in a selected region, has focused more on the specifics of delivering and testing an integrated day care and early childhood education service of improved quality with higher staff qualifications, expecting the evaluation of this to lead to island-wide recognition and implementation...These parallel approaches are not oppositional, they have both occurred under the ME but the ME has not coordinated them (NR).

Despite the potential complementarity of these two approaches to integration, the national report concludes that it has proved difficult to progress them together. The original broad aspirations of the Task Force to 'mainstream' integration and early years across many sectors and policy areas has, with time, lost some ME advocates who perceive the Early Childhood Commission's direction as 'unrealistic' for Jamaica at this time, or who feel left out of the processes advancing via the ECC as they move away from the more conventional ME-nurtured services.

## Ghent

**a) *Children and Families.*** The key persons interviewed for the municipal report all agree that the integration of services for children under 3 years within the city's Education Department was a main reason for the growth of municipal 'day care centres', complementing the schools for 3 to 6 year-olds already run by the city. The 8 municipal centres in 1970, when responsibility for them was integrated into education, have grown to 24 today, with a further 14 centres subsidised by the municipality, operating alongside 40 municipal *kleuterscholen*. This followed, in part, from one of the original motives for the transfer, to boost recruitment for municipal schools, one way being to provide more municipal services for pre-school age children.

The report also concludes that the integration of services for this youngest group of children in the Educational Department has had an important effect on which children get places, since the municipality has adopted a policy focused on improving accessibility for vulnerable groups. The 'Tinkelbel' system for determining admissions (see Chapter Two) has led to the users of childcare in Ghent now reflecting the population as a whole in terms of income, employment, family composition and ethnicity. There have also been improvements in the relationship between services and the families who use them. The city's Pedagogical Guidance Centre started an experimental project in the 1990s in one day care centre, situated in an

area with predominantly ethnic minority families (mostly then with a Turkish background). The aim was to transform the centre, which was rather isolated from its neighbourhood, into community based service with a strong emphasis on accessibility and parent participation as well as on respect for diversity and social inclusion. In the follow year the pilot expanded to four more centres, all situated in more deprived areas.

The project was successful: multilingual and diverse staff were recruited; enrolment of children from ethnic minority families increased; parents became more closely involved and collaboration grew. This successful project inspired some of the *kleuterscholen*, especially those sharing buildings with pilot day care centres:

In these cases, the kindergarten teachers came to study the practice of the day care centre and translated some of their approaches to their own needs. This may mean for instance that the multilingual communication sheets used in the day care were taken over by the *kleuterschool*. Another example is that most *kleuterscholen* start with a circle time and this circle time will to a large extent determine what happens the rest of the day (in the context of experiential learning). The collaboration with the day care centres made them aware that the children from ethnic minorities are less active in these circle times and therefore their experience is less taken into account in the curriculum. This has led to initiatives where mothers are invited to participate in the circle time (MR).

Such innovative work could be ascribed to the interests and values of the staff of the PGC. But the emphasis on widening access can be seen as a strong educational value, while shared municipal management created favourable conditions for dialogue and exchange between day care centres and *kleuterscholen*.

**b) Workforce.** Integration within education has enhanced the education and status of workers in the municipal 'day care' centres, which have traditionally been much lower than those of teachers in *kleuterscholen*. The PGC and the management of the 'day care service' located in the municipal Department of Education have actively promoted and disseminated in municipal day care centres an interpretation of professionalization that is based on an integrated concept of pedagogy. The salaries of the workers in these municipal centres are higher than in most other centres operating in the city as a result of integration in education. Overall, the municipal report observes, 'through the integration of childcare in the education system, quality care by qualified persons is also seen as a right for the children under 3s and after school' (MR).

Despite these improvements in the position of workers in 'day care' services, there remain significant differences in education and working conditions between them and *kleuterschool* teachers due to the continuing split system that operates at regional level and which determines basic education and pay rates for the two groups of workers. Due to this split system, over which Ghent has no control, day care workers are trained at secondary

vocational level and their pay is relatively low, while *kleuterschool* teachers are educated alongside primary school teachers at a graduate level, and both groups of teachers have the same salary since the late 1990s.

These differences in qualification and status contribute to continuing problems of collaboration between the two main groups in the ECCE workforce. In the early 1980s, the Pedagogical Guidance Centre attempted to bring these two groups together in common in-service training but found that this training actually exacerbated mutual prejudices. Workers in day care services were considered carers and not educators and felt inferior to teachers. For these reasons, the PGC decided to maintain the separate in-service training for childcare and pre-school workers.

**c) Services.** According to the municipal report, the municipal ECCE services, especially for children under 3- years-old, have changed since integration within education, with increased quality, due to new approaches towards access and professionalization, outlined above. Equally important, these have been underpinned by a commitment to social inclusion and an integrated concept of pedagogy discussed in Chapter Two, both developed and introduced into services by the Pedagogical Guidance Centre. A major consequence for day care services has been a turning away from the formerly predominant medical approach towards a pedagogical approach, addressing the whole child and closer to the work in the *kleuterschool*.

**d) Resources.** There is no information on funding for ECCE services before and after integration within education, but the developments that have taken place imply extra funding. Today with 1,027 places in 'day care' centres for children under 3 years, and 2,279 places in out-of-school centres for school-age children, Ghent invests more money in these services than any other municipality in Flanders.

**e) Relations between ECCE and other services.** Schoolification was a very real concern in Ghent, the avoidance of which affected the approach taken by the Pedagogical Guidance Centre, as described by a leading member of the PGC's staff:

Dr. De Meyer emphasised that the Pedagogical Centre never imposed the integration of childcare and *kleuterschool*. De Meyer does not believe in the effectiveness of top down measures for integration. He feared that in the 1980's this would have resulted in a schoolification of the childcare sector. The *kleuterschool* in this period, was still very adult centred...He believes strongly that each part of the education system must have its own identity. From his long experience in the education field, he is convinced that the first year of *kleuterschool* can learn a lot from the experiences and working methods of childcare, just like the first year of primary school can learn from the last year of the *kleuterschool* and so on. This raises the point that without a strong identity of the services for 0 to 3 years an administrative integration can be dangerous: it can lead to a schoolification of the services for the youngest children (MR).

As this excerpt shows, ‘schoolification’ has been resisted by maintaining distance between and a separate identity for ‘day care’ centres and *kleuterscholen*, while working with both to develop a holistic pedagogical approach to early childhood work.

## Some lessons learned

Authors of national report were invited to offer some lessons that might be learnt from their national or municipal experience of integrating ECEC within education. The national report for **Sweden** emphasises the need for reform to be implemented, supported and followed up at every level both centrally and locally. The report gives the example of pedagogical documentation and its potential for developing practice in pre-schools and for evaluation (in contrast to more standardised evaluation methods). But to develop work with pedagogical documentation requires both sufficient time for practitioners and support both from central and local levels.

Reference to time is echoed and developed for **Slovenia**. The *Preschool Curriculum* was implemented rather rapidly, especially given its open and unstructured form and its attention to process-oriented planning. Apart from well qualified workers, implementation requires a ‘longer period of time to acquire new knowledge and become aware of (the) implicit theories of childhood and professional work with children’ (NR). Working in this more complex and creative way also requires ‘continuous self-evaluation and external evaluation of the quality of work’. Reform and innovation should also be supported by the education – basic and continuous - of the workers in pre-schools; and the preparation and distribution of materials to support deeper understanding of theories and methods of work.

One of the main lessons to be learned from **New Zealand**, which started with a split system, is the importance of making the basic structural change first, i.e. integration of all services within the education system itself: ‘if the childcare administration had not been moved to Education, many subsequent policies of significant benefit to infants, toddlers and young children would probably have applied only to children and services under the auspices of Education’ (NR). But if structural change is a necessary condition for reform, it is not sufficient. The national report emphasises the importance of evidence and good argument have been crucial in getting the messages heard:

History has shown us in New Zealand that ECE policy reforms will not gain traction until a Minister and senior officials in government recognise the value of ECE and ‘champion’ the policy improvements. When there has been positive movement forward, bi-partisan political support is important for maintaining the improvements. Increasingly, the leaders want research evidence before they will become ‘champions’. Academics - from home or abroad - who can provide evidence and clear written or

visual messages have been significant in providing the evidence and in shaping the arguments (NR).

Language and integrating concepts have also been important:

Across the decades the education of young children in childcare was increasingly emphasised. The term 'care and education' was important in the late 1970s and early 1980s to acknowledge that childcare and pre-school services constituted one sector. In the current decade, the care of young children in kindergartens has come into prominence again. In sum, the language used in discussing integration (and other policy changes) have socialised people to understand that care and education go together (NR).

The process of reform is not necessarily linear, with continuous progress. There have been 'periods of divergence' as well, which can come after a giant leap forward for all in the sector. 'Services tend to focus inwards as they do the hard work of implementing policy change and do less joint work externally' (NR).

A key lesson for **Brazil** has been to the importance of establishing the rights of all children in its Federal Constitution, including the right to education. This has provided a strong conceptual and legal basis for integration. Alongside this has gone the emergence of a new image of the child, an image supportive of an integrated and educational approach to ECCE:

the idea that children are active social beings, producers of culture, subjects with rights, citizens in progress and whose development happens fully in the physical, social, emotional and cognitive aspects. This concept implies efforts and challenges of rethinking the educational practices in the public and private forums, more consistent with the integrality of the child and therefore with the identity of this field of work (NR).

A theme that resonates with some other cases is the need to build alliances and partnerships, in Brazil's case involving also the different layers of government in a federal country. It has been important 'to build the consensus that led to a national policy for early childhood education with the several government bodies plus different sectors of civil society, non-governmental organizations, city, state and Union councils, legislators' (NR). This consensus recognizes 'both 'day care' centres and pre-schools as educational establishments, as part of education systems and, therefore, regulated, managed and supervised by educational bodies'.

For **Jamaica**, the national report also highlights the importance of 'persistent and well-informed advocacy (which) pays off when the timing is right' and which brings together 'a wide cross-section of stakeholders in the public, private and civil society sectors' (NR). Reform gained momentum from 'unity of purpose and a body of well argued evidence to

put before governments' (NR). At the same time as building coalitions, strong leadership is essential, and 'this has not been consistently present, causing serious challenges.' While there was strong leadership within the initial coalition of advocates, some of this leadership drive:

was dissipated when Integration under the Ministry of Education was accepted by government and the ME took over the reins. There was lack of coordination and direction. Integration started to appear to be running on two 'tracks'. Leadership has now emerged through the Chair and Board of the Early Childhood Commission but the gap between the two tracks has not been closed (NR).

The lessons from **Ghent** reflect on the motivation for and scope of local initiatives. Although integration within education in this Belgian city was driven by very pragmatic considerations – a socialist administration wanting a strong municipal educational system and viewing 'day care' centres as an important means to support this system – 'this pragmatic standpoint was coupled with a sincere concern for high quality education for the working class' (MR). Implementation was based, as in New Zealand, on integrative concepts: social inclusion and a holistic pedagogy. Over time, these concepts have become mainstream in Ghent and are supported by most of the political parties.

Ghent shows clearly the potential and limitations of local action. Much has been achieved by an innovative municipality, but 'the integration of education and care in the city of Ghent is only partial, given the split system that prevails in Flanders' (MR). Further integration, without major changes in the split Flemish ECCE system, may be counter-productive, resulting in the schoolification of services for children under 3-years-old due to the higher status and stronger traditions of teachers and schools.

## Concluding comments

In this section, we attempt to look at what broader conclusions can be drawn from the six cases considered separately above. The earlier caution about the nature of the evidence available for an evaluation of integration in education needs to be reiterated; we have a series of jig-saws with varying numbers of pieces missing. A reminder of the need for and difficulty of interpretation of the evidence, given the very different contexts involved, is also in order. This is neither an exact nor a complete comparison.

Generally, though, the consequences of integration in education have been positive, especially for children under 3 years and for the workforce in their services. Two examples best illustrate this. Four of the five countries now have curricula covering children under and over 3 years, a clear consequence of integration within education; while the fifth country, Jamaica, is aligning its new though separate curricula for under and over 3s. Four of the five

countries also have an integrated early years profession, a graduate level worker educated to work with both under and over 3 year olds. The 'pre-school teacher' was already present in Sweden and Slovenia before transfer into education, though in both cases there have been subsequent reforms to education. New Zealand and Brazil have introduced this professional and have set very ambitious targets: originally 100 per cent graduate workforce in the former case (changed to 80 per cent in 2009), and 70 per cent in the latter, above the 50 per cent or so found today in Sweden and Slovenia. Jamaica retains a split workforce, with a separate and higher status group working with children over 3 years, though with some improvements implemented in training for workers in 'day care' centres. The same split occurs in Ghent, reflecting the wider structure of the ECCE workforce in Flanders and Belgium, though again integration into education has led to improved conditions for workers in municipal 'day care' centres.

Access to services has increased in all cases, though by very varying amounts and it is not always possible to decide how much is accounted for by the reform process. However, in both Sweden and Slovenia, a universal entitlement to services, at least from 12 months, has been part of the reform process, with clear evidence in Sweden not only of increased overall attendance but of the narrowing of inequalities in access. This has partly been made possible by central government funding to support reduced fees and increased entitlement; it is significant that the former qualified welfare entitlement (meeting child or parent criteria) has been replaced by a universal educational entitlement.

Increased government funding has also supported increased participation in New Zealand and, most significantly, enabled a large improvement in staff qualifications and pay without the cost being passed on to parents and so potentially reducing demand. Brazil has also set targets for attendance levels, within the framework of a national education plan, and attendance has risen, but the level of services for children under 3-years-old lags way behind that for services for over 3s, as is also the case in Jamaica. By contrast, the difference between under and over 3s is much less in Sweden, Slovenia and New Zealand.

'Schoolification' is a danger recognised in some cases, though in the case of Jamaica it was already strongly present in the ECCE system, with hopes that reform might loosen the grip of compulsory education. In Ghent, the risk was averted by keeping 'day care' centres and infant schools separate. In Slovenia and Brazil the risk has not materialised. It is only in Sweden that some evidence emerges of schoolification taking place as a result of integration within education with, interestingly, the government's own agency expressing concern at the evidence they have picked up in their evaluations. What is not clear is whether the evidence of schoolification being confined to Sweden reflects some particular issues in that country, for example, 1- to 6-year-olds being brought into the education system for the first time, or greater awareness of the risk and more methodical evaluation.

What is more general is a failure of integration of ECCE into education to bring with it an enhanced influence for early childhood pedagogy on compulsory schooling. There is little sign



of the emergence of a 'strong and equal partnership' or indeed of the creation of pedagogical meeting places. Influence continues to be one way.

In some respects, the consequences of integration within education have been greatest in New Zealand. Starting a long way back with a completely split system, it has made major strides towards integration, with large integrative reforms having substantial impacts in key areas such as funding, workforce and curriculum, despite retaining a very diverse range of services and providers. To get some idea of the potential of reform and of the consequences that can follow from integration within education, it is worth quoting at length from the New Zealand national report (see Box A).

### **Overall assessment of integrating ECCE within education from the New Zealand national report**

If childcare administration had not been moved to Education, many subsequent policies of significant benefit to infants, toddlers and young children would probably have applied only to children and services under the auspices of Education. The list of policies includes:

- the application of the early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki for all children, including infants and toddlers
- assessments that are credit based, not deficit focused
- reviews by the Education Review Office focused on the educational experiences of children
- mainstreaming of children with special education needs in all services, supported by multi-disciplinary teams employed by the Special Education Service/Group Special Education
- same per child, per hour grants in aid for all children regardless of which ECE service they attend
- teachers trained to the same standard as kindergarten teachers are employed in education and care services and more and more registered teachers are in each setting
- generous professional development provision for ECE teachers and educators
- pay parity with school teachers being staged in for all registered ECE teachers
- parent support and development programmes have been intertwined with a number of ECE services, including education and care services
- centres of innovation have included a number of education and care services that have inspired the sector with their innovative teaching and learning...

By 2008, New Zealand has a set of policies that mean all types of services in the ECE sector attend to:

- the interests of the child
- the interest of the parents and wider family
- the interests of society.

Sweden, though starting much further forward in terms of integration, has introduced significant changes that follow from adopting an 'educational rationality' with significant

effects for access, funding, curriculum and the workforce. It is, however, concerning to note actual or proposed reversals of policy in both countries, the scrapping of the Centres of Innovation programme and lowering the goal for qualified teachers from 100 per cent to 80 per cent by 2012 in New Zealand, and the proposed reduction in the basic education of pre-school teachers in relation to other teachers in Sweden.

Negative comments are largely specific to individual cases: in Sweden concerns about schoolification; in Jamaica, too little attention paid to services for children under 3-years-old and some tension between different (though potentially complementary) understandings of 'integration'; and in New Zealand, some teacher education providers failing to give adequate attention to under 3-year-olds, inadequate collaboration between ECCE and other services, the possibility of over dependency by the ECCE sector on government. However, it seems clear that there is widespread support for the reforms and no significant body of opinion arguing for going back to split systems and/or welfare system involvement. Integration within education seems to be firmly established in all cases as the basis for future developments.

The lessons offered by our expert authors fall into three groups. To get reform in the first place – or at least reform that will lead on from administrative to deeper integration – you need alliances, advocacy based on strong arguments, and leadership. To get change deep into the system you need action at all levels of government (action by one level will have worthwhile but still limited results) and strong and integrative concepts on which to build substantive reform. Last but not least, to get change into actual practice you need a strategy, including resources and materials, support workers (what, in Italy, they call *pedagogistas* or pedagogical coordinators) and training, and time, not least to reflect on practice using, for example, tools such as pedagogical documentation or Learning Stories.

# 4. Countries that have not integrated ECCE: Another perspective

**A**lthough our primary interest in this study has been countries that have integrated all of their ECCE services, primarily within education, it is not our purpose to presume or insist that this approach is either the best option or equally feasible in all countries. Many countries have not taken this road, and it is important to understand why an integrated system may not seem either an obvious or even possible direction to take. For this reason, we look in more detail in this chapter at three cases that have retained split ECCE systems and which show no imminent sign of wishing to introduce change: two countries, France and Hungary; and Flanders, the Flemish-speaking community of Belgium, which has government responsibility for ECCE services in its area.

It should be noted that all three cases represent a particular kind of split system, i.e. a split based on age of children and with an education sector dominating the ECCE system, offering three years of full-time school or kindergarten to nearly all children over 3-years-old. Another form of split system, more common in, for example, the English-speaking world, has an all-age childcare sector (i.e. from birth to school starting age) that dominates the ECCE system, compared to a relatively weak education sector offering one or two years of mostly part-time attendance to children over 3-years-old.

The chapter begins by reviewing the split systems in the three case countries or regions, focusing on the similarities, but noting some differences. It then considers the problems identified by informants in the system, and what initiatives may have been taken to improve coordination between the two parts of the system. The chapter concludes by examining why an integrated system in each case seems unlikely, at least in the foreseeable future, which identifies some of the major structural and cultural obstacles to such systemic reform.

## The split system in practice

As in virtually every country, the history of these three countries (or region) describes a split system of services from the earliest days of ECCE provision, going back to the 19th century.

Today the system is institutionalised, with services for children under 3 years providing 'childcare' for working parents as well as preventive services for all children, all within the welfare system; while schools or kindergartens provide for children from 2- or 3-years-old until compulsory school age at 6, within the education system. The differences between the two parts of the system are in part structural: different types of provision, different workforces, different funding and different levels of provision affecting opportunities for attendance. Broadly speaking, schools or kindergartens provide for all or nearly all of their age group, while childcare services cover less than half of theirs.

However, there are differences and the cases are not identical clones in the following areas:

**Governance:** both nurseries and kindergartens in Hungary are the responsibility of municipalities, who provide over 95 per cent of services. In France and Flanders, municipalities are less prominent overall, in particular having a relatively minor role in schools. But new trends in France, linked to the non-renewal of civil servant posts, have given a greater role to municipalities. Also, unlike Hungary, private providers (mostly non-profit) play an increasing role in the provision of services for children under 3-years-old.

**Funding:** public authorities cover about 90 per cent of costs across the Hungarian system, with parents paying a uniform, and relatively low, fee intended to cover meals. In France and Flanders, funding arrangements for services for children under and over 3-years-old differ far more; parents make a substantial contribution to the former, while the latter are free to parents, being financed by state payments.

**Type of provision:** Hungary has a rather uniform system, based on nurseries for under 3s and kindergartens for over 3s. Services for children under 3-years-old in Flanders and France are far more diverse, including a high proportion of family day carers; schools, however, are the uniform provision for children over 3-years-old.

**Access:** schools in Flanders and France are open to children from 2.5 years and 2 years respectively, and many attend from this age, creating a brief period (from 24/30 to 36 months of age) when the children served by the two parts in the split system - childcare services in welfare and schools in education - overlap. This is not the case in Hungary, where kindergarten attendance begins at 3 years. Although childcare enrolment rates in both Flanders and France are well above the European average, none of the three cases provides an effective entitlement to services for children under 3 years: in Hungary, there is a legal entitlement which is not realised in practice due to a shortage of places; while in Flanders and France, there is no legal entitlement but there is a strong commitment to increasing access. A reason particular to Hungary is that paid parental leave in that country supports home care over the first three years of a child's life.

But the differences between the two parts – services in welfare and education – have been and continue to be not only structural, but conceptual too. Each part has a different view

about what it is for. Again the roots are deeply embedded historically, with an emphasis on health and care in services for children under 3, and on education in services for children over 3.

The French informant notes that the medical tradition of *crèches* remains today, with ‘para-medical professionals’ making up most of the workforce. The introduction of a new worker – the *educateur/educatrice de jeunes enfants (EJE)*, similar to a pedagogue – in the 1970s was intended to bring a more developmental or pedagogical perspective to the work of the *crèche*; but although their influence has grown, to the extent EJEs can now direct small (up to 40 children) *crèches*, they remain a minority of the workforce, and most directors of *crèches* are still paediatric nurses. Clinical psychology also remains a prominent influence. Despite the efforts of developmental psychologists ‘to make *crèches* a place for educational activities and play, psychopathological and psychoanalytical approaches linked with prevention goals still dominate over educational concerns’; in short, psychologists working with *crèches* are oriented more to clinical than to developmental psychology.

By contrast, French schools for 2 to 6-year-olds – *écoles maternelles* – prioritise learning and readiness for school, and they have grown closer with time to primary schools. Becoming a pupil is the explicit aim of pre-school. The previous early childhood education section in the Ministry of Education has disappeared; both types of teacher train together; school inspectors, common to both nursery and primary schools, have little knowledge of young children; and the ‘basic learning cycle’ spans the age group 5 to 7 years, the last year of *école maternelle* and the first two years of primary school, to enhance continuity and facilitate transition.

A similar difference of orientation and perspective is apparent in the split system in Flanders, as an informant from the social welfare system explained: ‘the education system is about intellectual development, children have to learn; childcare is linked with food, affective development, with health, with children playing, work with children...we work with children and families, education works with children’. Childcare, she added, has three functions: economic (care), social (integration of families and children in local communities) and pedagogical (development); schools, by contrast, are about learning. The *kleuterschool* has a core curriculum, which includes 250 objectives, to be striven for by the time of transfer to primary school.

However, these conceptual distinctions are neither identical in each country, nor immune to change. Despite the continuing influence of health, French *crèches* have assumed a more developmental orientation, under the influence of the EJEs and the psychologists who have entered the *crèches* since the sixties. An incentive policy from the Ministry of Culture towards the younger children, their families and the ECCE professionals (1989), based on earlier initiatives on art, music and baby books, supported by some psychoanalysts and artists, has also played a significant role too. But the increasing influence of clinical approaches

that value more prevention and detection than early education, joined to a recent revival of a hygiene and safety discourse, tend to slow down the process.

In Flanders, there was a period in the 1960s and 1970s when *kleuterscholen*, especially in cities, began to add 'childcare' for under 3-year-olds, called '*pre-gardiennat*' or classes for children from 18 months. These were financed by the Ministry of Education and in the education system and served a dual purpose; childcare for working parents and an early start to education for less advantaged children. They grew rapidly and proved popular, but in 1973 a decision was made to transfer them out of education, into welfare; they were not closed, but converted to childcare centres. The reason for this transfer was not clear to our informants. Could it have been financial, or was it a political compromise? However, a development that held out the prospect of a closer relationship between care and education, and more integrated provision, did not come to fruition. At the same time, from the 1970s, there has been a shift in the orientation of Flemish childcare centres, from a strongly health approach to a broader pedagogical orientation, concerned with overall well-being and development (discussed further in Chapter Two in the case of Ghent).

Hungary provides the clearest example of difference between the nursery and kindergarten sectors, with no overlap of age; while at the same time exemplifying how this may fluctuate, depending on the varying emphasis given to concepts specific to sectors as well as to a shared concept, in this case '*nevelés*'. This concept has a central role in discussing and practising early childhood work in Hungary. It does not have an exact English equivalent, the closest translation being 'upbringing'. It is a holistic concept, including not just care and education (considered as very closely related, if not inseparable), but also health, behaviour and social skills – everything needed in life. It seems to relate to the concept of pedagogy, which we have suggested earlier might be translated into English as 'education-in-its-broadest-sense'.

The term has had an important, though varying, place in the history of ECCE services in Hungary, down to the present day. The *óvoda* (kindergarten for children over 3 years) has had two main responsibilities over the years: protection for children from poor families and *nevelés*. But at times e.g. in the 1950s, the focus on education (in the narrow sense) as the main role of *óvoda* became more pronounced; until 1993, they were considered to be institutions of *nevelés* and education. *Óvoda* have always been considered as the first step in the public education system, so the term 'education' - *tanítás* - has been used in legislation and public discussion. But since the Education Act in 1993, and following successful lobbying by the 'kindergarten lobby', *óvoda* are now classified as institutions only of *nevelés*, reflecting the negative connotations of *tanítás*, which is linked to an idea of teaching in elementary schools.

*Óvoda* have always resisted *tanítás* being used in relation to their work, as this term for education is often not meant in a broad sense. *Óvoda* have understood their role as preparing children for school but not by using school methods. Qualified staff in *óvoda* also describe

themselves as pedagogues rather than teachers, as practitioners of *nevelés*, in order to reflect their broad concept of the work they do.

Today the concept of *nevelés* increasingly applies also to *bölcsőde* (nurseries for children under 3 years). Work in these centres with very young children was originally not so evidently about *nevelés*; there was a strong emphasis on health. But the work changed in the late 1970s when nurseries opened up and children did not have to spend the whole day there when they first began – a gradual introduction was possible. Parents had an opportunity to come into the *bölcsőde*, so perceptions of the workers changed and it was realised more and more that their work was not just to look after children. By the early 1990s, workers became very conscious that they were doing *nevelés*, and that their work had been in a process of change from looking after children to *nevelés*. In 2000, a ‘programme for *nevelés*’ was agreed for *bölcsőde*; after a long fight for recognition that *bölcsőde* workers are ‘educating’ children in the broad sense, *bölcsőde* were officially accepted as places for *nevelés*.

This process of change has been accompanied by a growing awareness that work in *bölcsőde* and *óvoda* is similar. Today, work in *bölcsőde* is generally referred to as doing ‘care work and *nevelés*’, the ‘care work’ emphasising the physical care; workers in *óvoda* talk about doing *nevelés*; while elementary school teachers refer to doing education and *nevelés*. So *nevelés* – as a concept and practice - runs through services from birth to 11/12 years (and families are supposed to ‘*nevel*’ their child.)

## Recognised problems of the split system

Our informants recognised that split systems created a number of problems. For Hungary, four main issues were identified, with a major theme running through them of the unfavourable position of nursery services for children under 3-years-old compared to kindergarten services for children over 3:

- The initial education of nursery workers is at a lower level than kindergarten workers.
- There are far fewer nursery places than kindergarten places, so most children are admitted to kindergarten from home.
- The process of accessing funding is different for nurseries and kindergartens, to the disadvantage of the former.
- Continuity is not ensured from the child’s perspective during the transition from nursery to kindergarten.

One consequence of the lower training, and status, of nursery workers is recruitment, as kindergarten work is more appealing for those wanting to work with young children. Our



informant observed that ‘there is an ageing (nursery) workforce and no one knows how to replace the workers when they retire. The job is not popular among young people, because it is a low paid, low prestige job’.

The big difference in education between workers in childcare and school – the qualification gap – was also raised in Flanders. One of the two disadvantages of the split system raised by one informant was the ‘inferior’ training and working conditions of childcare workers, a reflection of the inferior status of the sector. Continuity between sectors was also cited as an issue. ‘The situation of 2½ year olds in *kleuterschool* is not good’, one informant admitted, as they move into settings with larger groups and fewer staff; ‘in subsidised childcare centres, the staff ratio is 1 : 6-7 places, in *kleuterschool* 1 : 22-25 – this is a big problem’. Another informant agreed: ‘the environment is not always very suitable for very young children... children cannot rest and they lack a family-type environment’. He suggested that this problem requires ‘childcare assistants’, but added that this solution would raise a further problem: ‘childcare assistants are often considered unqualified for pedagogical work by the teachers; and it is difficult to provide common training’. Another informant added two further problems: how childcare services for children under 3-years-old continue to be seen primarily as welfare measures (another informant added that ‘parents send children to *kleuterschool* to learn, children go to childcare to be cared for’); and the shortage of places in this part of the ECCE system.

## Mending the split

In all three cases, little has been done formally to mend the split in the ECCE system. In France, there is no cooperation at national level between Ministries and no formal structure for cooperation. In Hungary, there is a lack of coordination between Ministries, with ‘no coordinating mechanism’. In Flanders, there are good contacts at administrative level on particular issues, and *ad hoc* discussions between the staff of the two Ministries – but no structural connections or formal coordinating mechanisms. One informant commented that there has been, traditionally, ‘not much cooperation’ between the Education Ministry and the childcare sector, though the Education Ministry has recently contracted, Kind en Gezin, the government agency responsible for the childcare agency (and other welfare services) to use its district nurses to try and stimulate enrolment in *kleuterscholen*, using them to contact ‘hard to reach’ families. This move was seen by another informant as exemplifying a ‘growing awareness and necessity to talk to each other’, stimulated from the education side by the PISA results, which have shown a wide school performance gap between pupils from higher and lower income families, and by a growing concern with lifelong learning.

The lack of serious engagement between different sectors, at least at government level, seemed to reflect a widespread perception in all three cases: that the split system, in general, was not an issue – it was not broke, so did not need fixing. In Flanders, one informant

summed this up: ‘there is some discussion about transition of children and about very young children in *kleuterschool* – but the system as such is never a point of discussion’. Another informant commented that ‘there has never been a government review or assessment or societal discussion. Voices have been raised encouraging more coordination but it remains a local issue’. Moreover, he could see no cause for change: ‘there is no real need to merge because the two systems have got better and better; nor is there any wish to do so...why do away with one or two hundred years of tradition?’ A third informant pointed to the taken-for-granted nature of the split and its accompanying differences: ‘the idea that childcare workers should have lower qualifications than *kleuterschool* teachers does not seem to bother people and is usually not questioned. It is frustrating to see that parents and the press find it normal that there is a difference in qualification – it is like the split system is in the minds of the people, ‘mother-like care for younger children’ and ‘education for children above 2 years.

Similarly in France, the issue was not on the agenda: ‘there is no discussion about integration under one sector in France’. The split is even reinforced by the recent decrease in 2-years-olds attending *écoles maternelles* (from 35 per cent to 25 per cent) and the increasing diversification of settings for the under 3s (the latest, the ‘*jardins d’éveil*’ for the 2 to 3-or 4-years-olds, have recently been launched). In fact, care by *assistantes maternelles* (family day carers) is now the majority childcare service in France, although parents consistently express a preference for centre-based care in national surveys.

In Hungary, when nurseries were placed within the child protection part of the welfare system, in the 1990s, some nursery workers raised with the Minister the possibility of being in the education system. The Minister dismissed the idea on grounds of costs, given the current lower qualifications and earnings of childcare workers; he could see it might lead to demands for major reform of education and pay for this workforce group. Today, Hungarian nursery workers remain divided on the issue, but integration is not on the policy agenda; a single system for children from birth to 6 years is not discussed.

Given this low or non-existent profile for the issue of integration, it is not surprising that there has also been little attempt to bridge the gap through developing new ‘integrated’ services; innovation has been within sectors rather than across. The one exception, in Hungary, only proves the strength of sector boundaries. Nurseries and kindergartens have traditionally been independent; but since the 1990s (supported by the 1993 Children Act, which makes it possible for municipalities to set up multi-purpose institutions, e.g. a nursery and kindergarten), there have been a small number of mergers, mainly to cut costs and address the shortage of *bölcsőde* in some parts of Hungary. But in these cases, though sharing a site and/or building, each type of provision has to be run according to its own legislation and guidelines, and there must be separate directors: this is co-location, not integration.

## Obstacles to change

The previous section makes it clear there is no momentum for change. Unlike the case countries reported on in previous chapters, where integration within education has been adopted, there are neither pressing reasons nor strong constituencies for change in Flanders, France or Hungary. The other side of the coin are the considerable obstacles that any such reform might face, which might be summarised as cultural, political and economic.

Culture was a strong issue in Flanders and France. One Flemish informant stated the problem succinctly: 'Merging two different systems would not work, there are two cultures...Schools are schools'. The same argument was developed in more detail by the French informant. Each sector, she said, has a:

strong separate culture and tradition: on one side health, and the power of doctors and *puericultrices* (PMI, crèches, etc...) and clinical psychologists who are critical towards early schooling; on the other side education which is more and more instruction, and teachers ... Theoretically, one might wish it (integration of the two systems) to happen but it is hard to imagine how that might be possible. On the one hand, there is a smallish childcare system, which is characterised by high fragmentation and complexity of administration; by personnel with different qualifications and many lobbies; deeply psychologised with relatively little knowledge of pedagogy. On the other hand, a powerful early education system that is part of primary schooling, heavily centralised and hierarchical, dispensing instruction rather than education and care...The medical lobby and education lobbies would oppose it. Corporatism is exacerbated between the two sectors as well as within the under 3s sector. The weight of history and tradition is very heavy, and the political stakes are high.

The cultural issue was less strong in Hungary, given the growing shared identification of sectors with the concept of *nevelés*; both parts could, therefore, talk the same language. However, there remained mutual suspicions and fears that could equally obstruct change. Although some nursery workers would prefer to be in education, others feared for their jobs and position in the sector:

The main difficulty would be the way nursery and kindergarten perceive each others' work. Kindergarten pedagogues are proud of their higher level of education, nursery workers prefer the more family-like environment and work with children. Nursery workers have always been afraid of the greater number of kindergarten pedagogues overtaking work in the nurseries. They would consider integration as a bad dream come true.

Fears of the childcare sector being overwhelmed by and lost in education were also expressed in Flanders: 'education has half the Flemish (government) budget; childcare would be disadvantaged as a small part of a much larger education...childcare would be little, little

brothers'. Similar fears – of 'schoolification' of childcare centres by a powerful school system – were expressed in the municipal case study of Ghent (see Chapter Two).

Childcare might be a small part of an integrated system located in education, but in Flanders its loss to welfare would have a big impact on the welfare sector, and this impact would have political implications. All informants referred to a destabilising effect on party government, since welfare was usually a Christian Democrat ministry and domain, while education was often the same for Socialists or Liberals. To move part of welfare into education would, therefore, involve a change in the political balance of power. For this reason, all thought that 'going to education is totally out of the question':

At political level, there is a division of policy domains, dating from a long time ago, and it is unthinkable that part of welfare should move to education. Different political parties usually have different domains: education normally for Socialists or Liberals, welfare for Christian Democrats. If you take away part of welfare – and if you take childcare that includes family day care – you leave a big hole. The political reality is that domains have been set up to give a balance between education and welfare. Can't pull away one part and move it to another domain without consequences.

The third perceived obstacle to integration, especially in education, was economic, arising from the cost of introducing education values and principles, in particular raising the childcare workforce to the graduate level expected of teachers: introducing parity between sectors would mean higher investment, especially in services for children under 3. We have already noted how a Hungarian Minister rejected the idea of integrating nurseries into education on such cost grounds, and the Hungarian informant saw this as a continuing difficulty. It has taken about 15 years of efforts to raise nursery workers education to degree level. Similarly, increased availability of services for children under 3 (for example, making attendance an entitlement for this age group) would require sizeable additional funding. The same economic obstacle was foreseen by a Flemish informant: 'An integrated 0-6 profession would cost a huge amount of money, and the childcare sector is paid for by parents ... In principle there is no opposition to such thinking, it is just a question of who will pay.'

## What next?

We end with the thoughts of our informants on the possible future direction of ECCE in their countries, especially in relation to the integration of split systems. Clearly, these informants do not represent a sample of national opinion, but they offer some insightful views by highly knowledgeable and experienced observers.

One of our Flemish informants, experienced in cross-national work and very conscious of the defects in the current split system, nevertheless was doubtful about integration, at least

into education: 'The disadvantages of the split system are very clear, but it is not sure if integration within education is the solution'.

The system under education has certain disadvantages, too. PISA showed that education is not doing well regarding equal opportunities – there is a suspicion and question about education. So there is a fear that if childcare becomes under education children at risk may be disadvantaged in childcare services as well. Also, nowadays, education is increasingly seen as connected with labour concerns and employment. Discussion on education for all in the 1970s is not the same as education for all today.

Instrumentalisation and technicalisation of education is occurring. Therefore there is concern about the way education functions, the concept and practice of education (e.g. education is for preparation for work/employment), which renders the option of integration in education unattractive... In Flanders, education is such a monolith. The main problem with education is the idea of 'school' and 'education'.

The informant added that *Kind en Gezin* had succeeded in giving a strong identity to the childcare sector and that workers in the childcare sector fear that if integrated into education, they would lose its valuable support. He raised a further doubt, about the education sector's ability to innovate: '(the) childcare centre is more open to innovation. In comparison, the early education sector is more didactic and 'closed' ...in (my city) teachers go to childcare services to learn new things.'

The French informant saw theoretical advantages of integrating French ECCE in one sector, and was clear that 'the present split between care and education is negative for both sides'. Having said that, she found it 'hard to imagine how that might happen', given the cultural and other obstacles in the way. If she did not see integration as a national policy, she did see:

one possible path to integration, despite the divide also observed within municipalities through small intermediate steps, e.g. co-ordination at local level, expanding the *passerelles* settings, which mixed EJESs and teachers in staffing classes for the 2 year olds, exchanges with other countries, and networking (like Italy) – all have the potential to improve the present system and to encourage innovative practices.'

The Hungarian informant was most able to envisage some move to integration happening, but for very pragmatic reasons. Partly because of the EU's Lisbon (employment) and Barcelona (childcare) targets, Hungary needs more nursery places. One option being explored by government is to make this provision in kindergartens, especially in towns with kindergartens but no nurseries. A low birth rate means there are now fewer children in kindergartens, with space and workers going spare. Two possibilities are under consideration by the government: nursery groups in kindergartens; and (like Flanders and France) taking 2 year olds into kindergarten.

But either raises cross-sectoral issues. Kindergartens are not currently organised to cope with young children, e.g. toileting, large groups of children. Then, who will work with these 2 year olds? That is a big issue because the Ministry of Education wants their kindergarten pedagogues doing this work, in response to there being too many pedagogues and too few nursery workers. Meanwhile the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour is working on criteria for operating nursery units in the building of a kindergarten – but not in collaboration with Ministry of Education as the latter initiated a change in legislation to admit 2 year olds in kindergartens, without first consulting the ministry responsible for nurseries. Consultation took place only after the law was passed by the Parliament in order to work out / develop the criteria for such cases. So, this has created some tension between the two Ministries.

In the face of this situation, the informant thinks that the probable way forward for Hungary is integration within one Ministry, with education the best place for nurseries if they have to go somewhere else, not least to improve continuity for children. Indeed, she thinks integration is unavoidable. But she is uncertain, indeed ambivalent about this direction, based on major reservations about the education system. Looking at the current structure of education, she sees kindergartens as the lowest level of the system today. If nurseries came into education, they would find themselves assuming this position, occupying the very lowest level – the bottom of the heap - so not gaining much from the transfer. Far from integration and transfer improving the lot of nursery workers, it might hold improvement back, as part of a large system in which they were seen as a very minor player. There would, she adds, be strong opposition from many nursery workers, fearing for their jobs and profession.

## Concluding comments

This review of these three European experiences, two countries and a region, each operating a split system in which the education sector is dominant, has both confirmed some of the more general criticisms of split systems, while at the same time showing that the response to the situation is by no means uniform: in none of these cases is there a strong demand for major reform, and little demand for integration within education. This could be interpreted as inertia (or satisfaction with the existing system) outweighing complaints, or rather those in favour of the status quo easily outweighing critics. Not only is there no strong pressure for change, nor any programme for change articulated, but the prospect of change throws up some major obstacles that would quickly impede any reform process. At the same time, it should be emphasised that although there may be no steps being actively taken to mend the split system, efforts to improve the level and quality of the ECCE provision are evident in all three cases: improved provision is possible without waiting upon major structural reform.

The country which might introduce change, Hungary, is likely to do so less for pedagogical or equity reasons, and more because it needs to provide more places in nurseries for children under 3-years-old. Having said that, and acknowledging some of the tensions that

exist between sectors and their workforces (for example, about future jobs), Hungary does have two potential advantages if it does enter into reform: a common local administration of services, by municipalities, with a common system of funding in place (though with inadequate finance at present for under 3s); and the integrative concept of *nevelés*, which provides a common approach and perspective for both nurseries and kindergartens. Given the conclusion from Chapters Two and Three that integrative concepts are an important condition for successful integration, this suggests that the potential for integrating the split system without a damaging clash of cultures is greater in Hungary than Flanders or France, though many other obstacles remain.

# 5. Conclusions and recommendations

## The need for this study

**T**his study of integrating ECCE services within the education system has been stimulated by three considerations:

- The long recognised and very substantive problems of split ECCE systems, which are still by far the most common form of provision.
- A gradual and worldwide (though still very partial) movement towards integration of ECCE within education.
- A lack of recent comparative studies of integrated systems, including countries from North and South.

Finding ECCE systems that rectify failings bequeathed by the 19th and 20th centuries and are suited to the demands of the 21st century is a matter of some urgency, given the policy attention that ECCE now attracts and the rapid rate of service expansion across the world.

## The study itself

The study has examined and compared six cases where government responsibility for all ECCE services has been integrated into the education system; five of these are national experiences, and one is at the level of local government, a municipality that integrated responsibility for its own services while the national (or regional system in this case) remained split. All six are located in countries that are, by World Bank definitions, either upper middle income countries (Jamaica and Brazil) or high income countries (New Zealand, Slovenia, Sweden and, for the city of Ghent, Belgium). This is partly because integration in education has mostly taken place in higher income countries, but also because some lower income countries invited to participate (in Africa and Asia) were not in a position to do so. It is



important to emphasise, therefore, that none of the experiences and conclusions reported in this study can necessarily be generalised to lower income countries. In these countries, the issue of integrating ECCE services within one system, the advantages and disadvantages of that system being education, and what conditions might be needed for successful integration calls for further study.

Another qualification about the study is its reliance on reports by local experts. This has provided rich material and given considerable insight into rationales, processes and consequences. But further work on this important policy development will benefit from site visits to investigate experiences, conditions and claims in greater depth. Regular and systematic evaluations of *all* national ECCE systems, however these systems are organised, would also provide an important source of evidence for assessing the strengths, weaknesses and developments in different options; unfortunately, such system evaluations are rare.

The study has also sought the perspectives of several countries that have not integrated ECCE services within the education system. One, Finland, has integrated ECEC services within welfare. Three – Belgium (Flanders), France and Hungary – have split systems, with services for children under 3 years largely in welfare; and services for children over 3 years in education. These countries have received less attention than the six cases of integration within education, but their inclusion in this study does provide some insights into the reasons for maintaining split systems.

It is important to emphasise that the study treats integration within education as one policy option for overcoming the problems associated with split systems. This is an important option and one gradually emerging, not just in Europe. *However, integration within education is not the only option for the future of ECCE services, nor is it inevitable.*

## Conclusions

Overall, the six cases of integration in education all reported positive consequences, both from integration and from situating the integrated service in education, especially for the position of children under 3 years and for the workforce, but also in other respects such as curriculum development or pedagogical work. The most positive overall assessment was from New Zealand, where widespread gains were documented in the national report. New Zealand was one of the first countries to integrate ECCE into education, starting in 1986, and has managed to integrate a diverse and complex system (including, for example, a variety of types of provision and of providers) to a substantial extent, with the development of a common funding, curricular and workforce framework covering all children below school age.

There were no widespread or substantive negative consequences. One concern – ‘schoolification’, the downward pressure of the school system and its methods into the ECCE system – was only raised in one case, Sweden. On the other hand, there was little evidence of one potential benefit of integration in education, that is the ECCE system having influence on the school system through the development of what the OECD *Starting Strong* review has termed ‘a strong and equal partnership’.

It is important to bear in mind how the process of integration in education can take place in different ways. In some cases, such as New Zealand, but also Brazil and Jamaica, the start of the integration process *and* locating all ECCE services in education have occurred at the same time; in other cases, such as Sweden, services have first been fully integrated into another system (typically welfare), then at a later date transferred to education. Sweden illustrates how the transfer of a fully integrated system to education can still lead to substantial reform, for example in access to services, the introduction of a pre-school curriculum, a changed funding regime and a re-structuring of workforce education.

It should be added that the four other countries reported on here – with different ways of organising ECCE – had well developed services, which have many strengths. The system in Finland is fully integrated, and though located in welfare has good relations with education. All five Nordic countries have long had fully integrated systems and, until recently, four located their integrated ECCE system in welfare. But with the recent transfer of these services to education in Norway and Sweden, this leaves only Denmark and Finland with ECCE in welfare; there has been some discussion in both countries of a similar move to education, and it remains to be seen if either or both follow suit in due course.

The systems in Flanders, France and Hungary are split, with substantial differences and discontinuities between welfare-based services for children under 3 years and education-based services for children over 3 years. Despite these differences and discontinuities there has not been a strong movement for reform in these countries and integration into education does not appear to be imminent.

In the remainder of this sector, we review our conclusions about integration of ECCE services in education under five headings: concepts and processes; assessing impact; potential benefits; potential drawbacks; and the relative merits of integration in education or elsewhere. We also emphasise the tentative nature of these conclusions given the limited nature of this study. They open up for discussion and further work, rather than offering definitive messages.

## Concepts and processes

- **It is not either/or.** The policy issue is not a simple binary choice – ‘split’ v ‘integrated’. Split systems vary, for example in the relationship between ‘childcare’ and ‘education’ (e.g. ‘childcare’ can be the dominant part of the system in some countries, while ‘education’ is in others); and in measures adopted for

coordination. While ‘integrated’ systems can vary in their depth (i.e. the extent of conceptual and structural integration) and the location of integration (e.g. in welfare or education). ‘Integration’ is, therefore, better thought of as a continuum than a categorical state: a country that has begun the integration process, usually by moving responsibility for all ECCE services into one department, may sit anywhere on the continuum from minimal integration to full integration. A *fully* integrated system will be based on a common integrative concept (such as, in the case of New Zealand, ‘early childhood education’, where education is understood as a broad concept encompassing care and well-being) and full structural integration so that all services have a common system of access, a common curriculum and regulation, a common funding system, and a single workforce based on a core profession (e.g. an early years teacher or pedagogue).

- **There are different pathways to integration.** The sequencing and rate of change can vary. For example, structural integration can occur before locating within education; or integration can begin with moving administration of the whole ECCE system into education, then be followed by more or less, faster or slower subsequent structural integration.
- **Integration is not inevitable but depends on the interplay of barriers to change and drivers for change.** Whether or not the integration process starts at all and, if it starts, the direction and depth it subsequently takes depends on the relationship between barriers to change and drivers for change. Barriers to change may be cultural, political (including partly political and the political play of group interests), and economic. Drivers for change include major political events and other changed circumstances (conditions weakening obstacles and opening up for change), new understandings (for example, of the rights of children or of the concept of education), well-informed and articulate advocates, and the formation of broad and effective coalitions for change.
- **Integration can take place at different levels – but is most effective when all levels are committed.** The experience of the municipality of Ghent demonstrates that significant change towards greater integration can be initiated by one level of government. However, Ghent also demonstrates the limits of change when other levels, which have responsibility for key areas such as funding or workforce education, are not involved. So integration, like any major reform, will be deeper if supported by all relevant levels of government – municipal, regional, national and, in the case of Brazil, federal.
- **Integration = re-thinking + re-forming.** Deep integration, bringing about major change in ECCE services, requires re-thinking as well as re-forming structures. A range of major structural changes are needed, involving areas such as funding, regulation and workforce. But these need to be accompanied and supported by new thinking, which give the structural changes a clear rationale, a clear direction, and a clear momentum. One part of that thinking – the concept of education – has already been mentioned and will be returned to. But it needs to be accompanied

by new thinking about other key concepts and subjects, e.g. understandings of care, learning, children, workers and services. The world-famous early childhood services in Reggio Emilia, a city in Northern Italy (another example of a municipality taking the initiative to integrate ECCE in education) provides a good example of re-thinking preceding and underpinning re-structuring, having based its pedagogical policy and practice on its answers to the key critical question ‘what is your image of the child?’ (Rinaldi, 2006). An important part of re-thinking, therefore, is the development of integrative concepts, concepts such as ‘pedagogy’ and ‘education in its broadest sense’, that is, ways of thinking about ECCE that go beyond the ‘childcare’/‘early education’ divide. Integrative concepts and integrative structures are mutually reinforcing.

### Assessing the impact of integration in education

- Assessments drawn on for this study are partial, both because of an absence of comprehensive, long-term national evaluations of system change, but also because it was not possible to combine national reports with site visits. It is also, of course, impossible to know what would have happened if reform had not taken place.
- Assessments cover countries that vary in contexts (e.g. national income, ECCE history, form of governance, the level of equality and concepts of society...). Evidence needs careful interpretation in relation to this contextual variation.
- Last but not least, the impact of integration is likely to depend on why and how integration is undertaken. There are no inevitable consequences of moving responsibility for ECCE into education; what follows may vary from minimum through to full integration. What matters is *why* integration has been undertaken and *how* it is implemented; for example, integration can lead to significant reform of relationship between services for under and over 3s leading to greater equality – or it may lead to increased inequality due to the education system (now with complete responsibility for ECCE) prioritising services for over 3s at the expense of services for under 3s.

### What are the potential benefits of integration in education?

Integration is not, per se, a magic solution; it is a reform that has a potential for being both beneficial and dangerous. Depending on why and how integration is implemented, the reform *may* deliver some or all of these following benefits.

- **Rethinking the purpose, provision and practice of ECCE across all age groups, including children both under and over 3-years-old.** The integration process, and discussions preceding it, can provide an opportunity to open up deeply entrenched thinking and practice, and introduce new understandings,

concepts, theories and practices. In Brazil, for example, reform has been closely associated with developing a strong ‘children’s rights’ perspective, which has been linked to an entitlement to education from birth.

- **Changed perceptions of ECCE among the workforce, parents and the wider public, including greater recognition of its pedagogical value and higher valuation of those working in ECCE.** While it may be unjustified, ‘education’ has higher status in society than ‘care’, and raising the position of ‘childcare work’ will consequently prove a continual struggle. Particularly important here is the possibility for raising the standing of work with the very youngest age group, children under 3 years, which is often perceived in society as a relatively simple and narrow task of providing care, a perception reflected in the frequent low education and poor employment conditions of the workforce for this youngest age group. In calling attention to this reality, it should be emphasised here that we do not consider care to be unimportant; indeed we think that it is an ethic and practice that is essential to all aspects of life and to the work of all public services, including education. The question is not ‘should there be care or education?’, but ‘how can care inform and infuse all aspects of education?’
- **The creation of a stronger ECCE system that enjoys parity with and can influence compulsory education.** The former means, for example, parity of qualification, pay and other employment conditions between ECCE workers and school teachers. The latter means access for early childhood pedagogical ideas and practices and stimulating dialogue and exchange of experience between ECCE and school sectors, the idea of creating (in the words of a Swedish report) a ‘pedagogical meeting place between pre-school and school’ (Dahlberg and Lenz Taguchi, 1994).
- **Greater coherence in policy.** This can lead to the application of educational principles and practices across all age groups, both under and over 3-year-olds, including: universal entitlement; free or low cost access; a well qualified and appropriately remunerated workforce; and some form of curricular framework.
- **The reduction or elimination of inequalities between services for children under and over 3 years.** This is not necessarily one way. Integration might, for example, improve the education and pay of the workforce working with children under 3; but it might also increase the attention paid to the care needs of children over 3 years, leading to more staff and smaller groups. More equality would also lead to greater continuity of children’s experiences in the early years. One possibility following from integration is the development of ‘age integrated’ services, avoiding the need for children to move between services at around the age of 3 years.
- **Increased resourcing for ECCE.** With its emphasis on universal access, free or low cost attendance, well qualified workers, and lifelong learning, education may provide a better resource environment for ECCE services. In any case, the merging of administrations should eliminate duplication and be a source of savings, enabling the channelling of resources more into services than into administration.

Examples of all of these potential benefits were apparent in the case studies with one main exception. ECCE systems in the six cases still do not enjoy full parity with the compulsory school system and there were no examples of ‘pedagogical meeting places’. There are positive signs of movement towards workforce parity in New Zealand, balanced by negative indications of a movement away from parity in Sweden.

## What are the potential drawbacks of integration in education?

Depending on why and how integration is implemented, the reform may bring all or some of these drawbacks.

- **Schoolification.** Concern about the possibility of downward pressure by the school system has been expressed, but evidence of this happening, following integration within education, was documented only in Sweden. Schoolification is a risk under any system, split or integrated; as noted earlier, it already happens in the education parts of split systems. There is, moreover, an enhanced risk of schoolification today for *all* systems because of the wider education context – a drive to raise narrowly-defined school standards leading to an increasing emphasis on traditional education methods in primary school and, thence, ECCE.

Widely expressed concerns about schoolification reflect a deep suspicion in many quarters about schooling, which should be a major cause for concern. To many, schools appear to be very conservative institutions, not open to change or even dialogue with ECCE. Often the discourse is about how ECCE can provide ‘preparation for school’, rarely about whether and how the school might engage with and learn with ECCE. Despite some hopes that integration of ECCE within education might lead to the development of a ‘strong and equal partnership’ between ECCE and school, there was little evidence of this happening.

- **Poorer relations with other services.** It has been argued that moving ‘child care’ services, especially those for the youngest children, into education might lead to greater distance from health and other services of particular importance to this age group and their families; this may reduce the potential for collaboration and synergy. The cases in this study provide little evidence of this materializing. In fact, in the Nordic countries where integration within education has taken place, child health and well-being indicators (including for children with special needs) continue to be among the best in the world. It is possible, however, that this is a bigger risk in low income countries, where care and health may be more closely connected than in the case study countries.

Of the countries reviewed, Jamaica is particularly important for this issue because it has, to quote from Chapter Three, sought to adopt ‘a broad and ambitious definition of integration, including not only unitary management of ECCE services, but stronger linkages across health, education and welfare and incorporation of early childhood interests in all government

policies'. This shows that, in principle, integration of ECCE within education can be located within a wider set of more integrated services. England provides another example because it has followed up integration of ECCE in education with integration of responsibility for all other children and family services – except health – in education, into a renamed Department for Children, Schools and Families. So in both countries, integrating ECCE in education is not seen as undermining relations between 'care' and other services, but as part of a new strategy to build closer and more collaborative relationships. Whether or not this is achieved in practice, and how far education can open itself to a 'strong and equal partnership' with other policy areas, should be the subject of further research, but in principle there is no reason why integrating ECCE into education should be at the expense of greater distance from health or other sectors.

The issue raised here, and the potential drawbacks, return to a recurring theme of this study: how is 'education' understood, and hence what does it mean to be 'integrated in education'? If education is understood in its narrowest sense, with a focus on the cognitive and the transmission of prescribed knowledge, rather than in its broadest sense, with a concern for overall development and general well-being – then integration within education may well be at the expense of relationships with health and other sectors. But education in its broadest sense should provide a strong basis for close and collaborative relations with all services and policies that bear on children's development and well-being.

- **Increased costs.** These might be seen as a drawback from a government perspective, as illustrated in Chapter Four by the response of the Hungarian Minister in the 1990s to the idea of integrating nurseries and kindergartens. Deep integration does require major structural changes that in turn require substantial additional funding, e.g. for a better qualified and paid workforce; for more participation; for lower fee income; for introducing new curricula and other practices. But these increased costs can also be seen as a necessary price for rectifying the unjustified inequalities of split systems, recognising the importance and potential of all early years, compensating for past under-investment and developing ECCE work as good quality employment. In addition, savings can be made by merging two administrative structures, inspection agencies, statistical offices, and licensing and monitoring systems into one.

## Integration in education – or elsewhere?

ECCE services can be integrated within a number of policy domains. The focus of this study is integration in the education domain, but there are examples of integration within the welfare domain, and there could no doubt be other options. But if the benefits of an integrated system should include: (i) universal entitlement; (ii) affordable access, (iii) a unified and well educated workforce, (iv) enhancing learning for all ages, and (v) smoother transitions

for young children – then we think that the education system is more likely to deliver such benefits, as exemplified by the cases we have studied. For the principles and values that underpin such benefits are central to the education system and, in particular, to schooling.

But this study includes another perspective. Finland is a highly successful example of integration, delivering the benefits we have outlined, but within the welfare system. Denmark would be a second example of successful integration within welfare. However, despite the success of these systems, they are, in our view, unlikely to be readily replicated elsewhere. As we have already noted, Finland (but also Denmark) are examples of Nordic welfare systems that share a number of key societal principles with education. Other welfare systems do not generally show a strong emphasis on universal and equitable access, entitlements for all children and the important role of education, so would be less suitable locations for an integrated ECCE.

There is also a practical or political reason why we think integration within welfare is unlikely to become a widespread model. Education is the dominant force in most split ECCE systems, often providing three years provision for most or all children. It is difficult to envisage transferring such extensive provision, including a teaching workforce, into an integrated service within the welfare system.

One very particular issue concerns family day care, a form of individual ECCE provision where an individual carer provides for a small number of children in her own home. This is very different to the nursery or the school, and the question may be raised whether the education system can provide a supportive environment for this type of provision, which is widespread in some though not all countries. Once again, this is bound up with how education is understood and the capacity of the education sector to think broadly; it also merits further study. But it is worth noting now that at least one of our case study countries, New Zealand, has a substantial family day care sector, which was brought into the education system along with other ECCE services, partly at the request of the sector itself, as the national report notes:

Just in time to be included in the (1986 transfer) legislation, Barnardo's New Zealand, the main provider of family day care services in New Zealand, went to the chief executive of the Department of Social Welfare and said they wanted family day care administration to be transferred to Education as well. Barnardo's felt it would be strategically advantageous to 'swim with the tide' and join all other early childhood care and education services. This request did not please the Department of Social Welfare, but it was agreed to (NR).



## Ways forward

We end with a number of broad propositions and suggestions, which we emphasise again refer to higher income countries; our study does not permit us to claim that these comments might extend to lower income countries.

- Countries need to adopt strategies for addressing the problems arising from split systems. *To do nothing is not an option for split systems given their well documented challenges.* There are always alternatives and there may be options other than integration – but if so, these need formulating and assessing.
- Except for a very few countries with well developed welfare systems able to offer universal services with well qualified workers, *if integration is chosen as an option, then it is likely to be in the education system.*
- *Simply moving administrative responsibility for ECCE into education is not enough: it is a starting point for reform. Great attention has to be paid to the subsequent process, including strong re-thinking to complement deep re-structuring.*
- *Integration requires re-thinking of concepts and understandings and re-structuring, covering a range of areas including access, regulation, funding, and workforce.*
- *Re-thinking the meaning of education and the relationship between pre-school and school is an opportunity arising from integration – but it is also a necessity. In short, integration in education must be matched by opening up the meaning of education, and not just for young children – what do we mean by education? what is education for? Integration in education should also open up the question of the relationship between ECCE and schools systems, leading to the creation of a ‘strong and equal partnership’ in part through developing pedagogical meeting places.*
- *Relationships with other services and policy fields must also be re-thought and, if necessary, re-structured.*
- *Integration in education provides an opportunity to explore new types of provision, since integrated systems often inherit a legacy of provision that evolved under split systems. This legacy tends to be different services, each serving a particular group and/or purpose. The development of age-integrated, community-based and multi-purpose early childhood services is one direction to consider.*
- *Successful deep integration requires careful thought about the conditions needed, including the creation of a wide range of support such as pedagogical coordinators working intensively with services and their workers or innovative projects bringing together educators and researchers.*
- *Countries interested in changing from a split system can themselves gain support from developing dialogues with other countries, including those who have undertaken reform and those considering doing so. Context is very important, so*

direct importation is not feasible; yet dialogue with others can help generate new thinking (making the familiar strange) and avoid re-invention of numerous wheels. Dialogue and exchange between countries that have already embarked on reform would also be valuable; international agencies can play an important role here, supporting dialogue and exchange, but individual countries can also seek out and develop working relationships with other countries.

- *More and deeper studies of integration are required across a wide range of countries, with particular attention given to low income countries from the South, who may be starting from a lower baseline of provision, where child health issues are very salient, and which have fewer existing resources deployed.*

This study has shown some positive experiences of one approach to resolving a widespread and dysfunctional feature of ECCE systems – the split between care and education. The cases we have examined show that good results can be achieved in the right conditions, and has indicated what some of those conditions are. The cases have also illustrated how integration in education can contribute to an important democratic debate about the meaning and practice of education, and its relationship to other sectors impacting on children's well-being.

We re-iterate that integration within education is not the only option and that good ECCE services can and do exist in countries that have chosen another option for integration. Good work is also possible and clearly apparent in countries with split systems. But integration within education can be recommended as an option worth serious consideration, though bearing in mind the provisos we have tabled, of potential benefit not only to ECCE but to the whole education system by provoking thought and innovation about education and the role and potential of educational institutions.

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# Annex A: Project Document

## Caring and Learning Together: Cross-national Research on the Integration of ECCE

### Context

**E**arly Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) embodies two different traditions: care and education. The former emerged as welfare measures for working parents who needed custodial care for their young children while away from home. The latter was developed as kindergarten or pre-primary education, often to prepare older pre-school children for primary schooling. Given the distinct historical roots, “childcare” and “early education” services embody different visions and understanding of children, programme goals, contents and approaches, often inconsistent with one another. Typically, these services are governed by social and education ministries respectively (described as ‘split systems’), and are structured in very different ways with respect to types of service, workforce, access criteria, funding and administration.

Problems associated with split systems have been documented to some extent: e.g. inefficiency due to duplication and wastage of resources as well as competition and conflicts among the concerned ministries; failure to take a holistic approach to children’s needs; disparities in access and quality due to the differences in entitlement policies, opening hours, regulatory frameworks, staff training and qualification requirements, funding streams and monitoring mechanism; and discontinuity experienced by children transiting from one service to another.

One response to these problems is to create inter-ministerial mechanisms to promote more coordinated approaches to ECCE provision. Evidence suggests that coordination mechanisms can work well to accomplish a specific mission or to focus on a targeted population, but are not successful in promoting a coherent overall policy and administrative framework across sectors. Another, more integrative response is consolidating national responsibility for ECCE into a single ministry. The Nordic countries pioneered this policy approach in the 1960s and

70s, bringing together national responsibility for ECCE within social welfare. Since the late 1980s, the trend has been toward integration of ECCE within education: e.g. Iceland, New Zealand (1986), Vietnam (1986), Spain (1990), Botswana (1994), Brazil (1996), Slovenia (1996), Sweden (1996), England (1998), Jamaica (1998), Scotland (1998) and Norway (2005).

Reasons for designating education as the responsible sector are, e.g.: the importance of lifelong learning and a recognition that children are learners from birth; a concern for laying a strong foundation for successful schooling; a view that the infrastructure within the education sector better ensures quality provision compared to the social sector; and a belief that education offers stronger basis than welfare for developing services based on universal entitlement. Meanwhile, risks associated with this policy option are: turning ECCE services more “school-like” in terms of opening hours, staffing, adult-child ratios, pedagogy and physical settings; and dissociation of ECCE from welfare, health and other related areas.

However, up-to-date and comprehensive research evidence that allows a thorough assessment of the policy option is lacking. Studies and reports published by UNESCO – such as the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007: *Strong Foundations* – and the two OECD *Starting Strong* reports provide some knowledge about systemic and integrated approaches to ECCE. But they include only certain country cases or do not provide substantive and updated accounts of the reform implementation, and thus offer only a partial picture of the moving of ECCE services into the education system.

## **Purpose of study**

The present project will address this knowledge gap. It will focus on the particular policy approach of integrating ECCE services in education, contributing to a better understanding of this policy option by looking at selected countries that have made this move. At the same time, it will provide a better understanding of the perspectives of countries that have not adopted this option, in particular their views on its suitability to their situation. The main outcome will be an evaluation of a major policy development and the generation of policy recommendations that can inform policy-making and improve systems and practices both in countries with education-based ECCE and those considering this option. The information will be disseminated through existing fora and networks, and enrich policy dialogue at national and international levels.

## **Project focus**

The project will seek to understand and evaluate the policy approach of integrating ECCE within the responsibility of one ministry or agency – a major response to the problems associated with split ECCE systems – by looking at selected countries that have integrated ECCE, particularly those within education. Specifically, it will explore the rationales, aims,

processes, progress and consequences of this approach. The project also recognises and appreciates other policy options for achieving more coordinated approaches.

The project will address ECCE from a systemic and lifelong learning perspective, and give special attention – as the Committee of the Rights of the Child suggests – to issues of inclusion, quality, learning and relations with the education system. Important criteria for evaluating the move of ECCE to education are: (1) the organisational implications of integrating childcare within an education ministry; (2) the financial and other resource implications; (3) the relationship between ECCE and compulsory schooling; (4) learning and other outcomes for children and society. Among the outcomes for children and society that the project will examine are:

- (a) access to and inclusion in services of children and families, especially those with most need;
- (b) understanding and enhancement of children’s learning, including any relevant evidence from recent cross-national studies of school performance;
- (c) the health, well-being and participation of children; and
- (d) the relationship of ECCE with other services, both within the school system (e.g. compulsory schooling) and without (e.g. health and welfare), including transitions, referrals and dialogue.

The project will examine similarities and differences in the process and consequences of integration across the participating countries, and seek to identify the opportunities and challenges that the decision has entailed. It will also include investigation of the experiences and perspectives of countries that maintain split ECCE systems, including their views on the advantages of maintaining multiple agency responsibility, on the potential for achieving more coordination within divided systems and on the barriers to integrating early childhood services into education.

## **Project objectives**

The general objectives of the project are to contribute to:

- the achievement of the Dakar Goal 1 on ECCE, i.e. expansion and improvement of comprehensive ECCE services, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- the enhancement of the knowledge base for ECCE policy development and implementation



The specific objectives are:

- to understand and evaluate the policy approach of integrating ECCE within education
- to provide policy recommendations and other information useful for policymaking at national, regional and local levels
- to promote policy dialogue at various levels by disseminating and communicating the project results through existing fora and networks
- to facilitate learning from other countries' experiences and encourage networking among countries

## Outputs

The main outcome will be a monograph and papers providing information and policy analysis relevant to countries that have integrated ECCE into education or are considering such a move. If funding permits, further exchanges between UNESCO and the participating countries will be organized so that countries wishing to improve the co-ordination and coherence of their early childhood services can examine the policy information emerging from the studies and work together on policy issues.

Information will include, e.g. (1) discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of integration within education; (2) a review of effective processes for implementing the integration of ECCE services within education; (3) the conditions that favour or disfavour the adoption of specific approaches to more coordinated ECCE services, e.g. when is integration within education to be considered and when are other approaches more desirable or feasible.

In terms of concrete outputs from the project, the following are envisaged:

- At least 6 papers, prepared by national teams and/or experts of selected countries, edited by UNESCO. To be made available on the UNESCO Education website.
- At least 4 notes, based on interviews with and desk studies on alternative approach countries.
- 1 monograph on the main findings of the project, to be published in English in 2009 and edited by the Steering Committee members.

## Participating countries

The project has two groups of participating countries. One consists of countries or local authorities that have moved ECCE services into the education sector ("integration-within-

education countries”). The other group consists of countries that organise ECCE in a different way (“alternative approach countries”). Alternative approach countries are those that have maintained split systems or have integrated ECCE under social welfare.

Six countries are under consideration for inclusion as integration-within-education countries: Brazil, Jamaica, Sweden, Slovenia, New Zealand. This list comprises three low and middle income countries and three high income countries, thus ensuring a balance of representation from the developing and developed worlds. The selection also ensures regional representations to the fullest extent possible. It also includes a mix of economies and welfare states; and federal and unitary states. In addition to attention to these country-wide system studies, one local study is also envisaged: on Ghent (Belgium Flanders). In Ghent, the integration of ECCE within education has occurred at a local level, but within a national split system. Other interested countries, which have education-based ECCE, are welcome to participate in the project on a voluntary basis.

In alternative approach countries, it is intended that Belgium Flanders, France, Finland and Hungary will be studied through interviews and desk studies, as examples of two alternative approaches – namely, system integration under social welfare (Finland) and split system situations. The interviews may be facilitated by the preparation of a pre-interview note by the interviewee(s); and will be conducted face-to-face or by telephone.

## Project activities

Contract international experts (1st contract)	April 08
Develop conceptual framework and questionnaire for integration-within-education countries	April-June 08
Develop questionnaire for interviews with alternative approach countries	April-June 08
Contact countries / field offices / national experts	April-June 08
Commission reports on the experiences of integration within education	July 08 -
Receive finalised papers from integration-within-education countries	- Apr 09
Conduct and complete interviews with alternative approach countries	- July 09
Prepare draft monograph	Apr-Sept 09
Circulate draft monograph to the participating countries	Oct 09
Edit and print (and translate*) the final monograph	Nov/Dec 09

(\*) If additional funding can be obtained.

## Implementation arrangements

The project will be overseen by the Section for Inclusion and Quality Enhancement, the Division for the Promotion of Basic Education, UNESCO Headquarters. The Steering Committee, set up at the Headquarters, is in charge of planning the project activities and providing technical guidance and input (including the guidelines on the preparation of papers) at different stages of the project implementation.

Two possible arrangements for the preparation of the country papers in the integration-within-education countries can be suggested:

1. To have a small national team (consisting of at least one senior government official and one researcher) prepare the paper. This team could include officers from the UNESCO Field Office, National Commission for UNESCO or UNICEF etc. as appropriate; and may designate a leader who will be in regular communication with the Steering Committee.
2. To have one or two researchers prepare the paper. Supervision of the work of the researcher(s) can be done by the UNESCO Field Office in cooperation with the Steering Committee, or directly by the Steering Committee.

UNESCO regional offices could provide support to the project as appropriate and will be informed of the progress status.

## Budget

The core activities of the project are funded by UNESCO regular budget. Additional funding is being sought for the organisation of a workshop to discuss the monograph with the participating countries in 2010.

# Annex B: Questionnaire for the Preparation of Country and Municipal Reports

## UNESCO Project Caring and Learning Together

**A** questionnaire to guide country reports about the integration of ECCE services under ministry of education auspices

### Context

Within countries, early childhood care and education (ECCE) often embodies two different traditions: care and education. The former emerged as welfare measures for working parents who needed custodial care for their young children while away from home. The latter developed as kindergarten or pre-primary education, often to prepare older pre-school children for primary schooling. Given the distinct historical roots, “childcare” and “early education” services embody different visions and understandings of children, programme goals, contents and approaches that are often inconsistent with one another. Typically, these services are governed by social and education ministries respectively (described as ‘split systems’), and are structured in very different ways with respect to types of service, workforce, access criteria, funding and administration.

Problems associated with split systems have been extensively documented: e.g. inefficiency due to duplication and wastage of resources as well as competition and conflicts among the concerned ministries; failure to take a holistic approach to children’s needs; disparities in access and quality due to the differences in entitlement policies, opening hours, regulatory frameworks, staff training and qualification requirements, funding streams and monitoring mechanism; and discontinuity experienced by children transiting from one service to another.

One response to these problems has been to create inter-ministerial mechanisms to promote more coordinated approaches to ECCE provision. Evidence suggests that coordination mechanisms can work well to accomplish a specific mission or to focus on a targeted population, but are not successful in promoting a coherent overall policy and administrative framework across sectors. Another, more integrative response is consolidating national responsibility for ECCE into a single ministry. The Nordic countries pioneered this policy approach in the 1960s and 1970s, bringing together national responsibility for ECCE within social welfare. Since the late 1980s, the trend has been toward integration of ECCE within education: e.g. Iceland, New Zealand (1986), Vietnam (1986), Spain (1990), Botswana (1994), Brazil (1996), Slovenia (1996), Sweden (1996), England (1998), Jamaica (1998), Scotland (1998), Zambia (2004), Norway (2005).

The move toward integration of services under the auspices of education has often occurred without documentation of the rationale for the move or of the processes that occurred after the decision to integrate was made. The present UNESCO project attempts to address this knowledge gap. It will focus on different policy approaches to integrating childcare and early education services under ministry of education auspices, contributing to a better understanding of this policy option by looking at selected countries that have made this move. At the same time, it will provide a better understanding of the perspectives of countries that have not adopted this option, in particular their views on its suitability to their situation. The main outcome will be an evaluation of a major policy development and the generation of policy considerations, which can inform policy-making and improve systems and practices both in countries with education-based ECCE and those considering this option. The information will be disseminated through existing forums and networks, and will enrich policy dialogue at national and international levels.

## **A note on the UNESCO format and questionnaire**

Please note that each national report should follow the order and content of the main headings in black (1-7), in order to allow comparisons to be made across the countries. Completed reports should be between 16,000 and 18,000 words in length.

After each main section heading, there is a short note on the purpose of each section, followed by a number of questions. The questions have been drawn up to assist the authors of the reports. Their purpose is illustrative and it is not necessary to respond to all questions or to follow strictly the order of questions within each heading. If other issues seem more relevant or more important to the country authors, then these should be included.

Countries that have already submitted reports to UNESCO in past years (i.e. New Zealand and Sweden) will have already included the information requested in sections 1-4. The previous report can be incorporated into the current report, with any revisions decided by the authors and with additional material added, especially covering sections 5, 6 and 7. The

total length of the report, including the earlier material, should come to between 24,000 and 36,000 words.

The participating municipal authority, Ghent, can likewise modify its treatment of certain sections, e.g. more information can be given in section 4, as it is more relevant to local experience than section 3 which deals with central government process.

If you have any comments or queries, please send them to the Steering Committee at any stage: [y.kaga@unesco.org](mailto:y.kaga@unesco.org).

## **1. Introduction**

Please provide a brief overview of your country, including demographic and labour force trends, enrolment rates in primary education, the organisation and extent of present ECCE provision and the general policies in place for early childhood care and education services. In so far as they are available, basic statistics about young children (their number, health status, etc.) should be included.

## **2. Historical context of integration**

*The purpose of this section is to understand the historical context of the split between education and care in your country, and the situation in your country immediately before the transfer of responsibility to education. Questions concerning the rationale for the change are treated in section 3 below .*

- Traditionally, in your country, who was considered responsible for child-rearing within and outside the family? Were these understandings linked to specific environments (rural/urban; social class...). What was the understanding of gender roles?
- Before integration under the ME (Ministry of Education), which ministries or other governmental agencies were involved in early childhood care and education services? What were their responsibilities and what were the main services they provided?
- Were decentralised actors involved: local authorities (regional, municipal, community)? Non-governmental organisations? Private providers? What were the roles of these bodies?
- What responsibilities had the ME for any part of the early childhood field before the integration occurred, e.g. advisory, curriculum, educator training?

- Did your country make any previous attempt to integrate children's services under one sector or ministry? If affirmative, what were the reasons for discontinuing the attempt?

**Note:** Please provide organisation charts (diagrams) of the administration of the sector a) before integration and b) of the current co-ordination structures. Please indicate also the reference years and sources of information.

### **3. Rationales for integration put forward at the time of integration**

*The point of this section is to understand what reasons were put forward for the integration of services? What was the discussion?*

- What was the main rationale for moving early childhood services into education? educational, political, financial, labour market, other (e.g. the decision of one minister or partly)? Were there other reasons for the move? Has integration increased total provision (for which children in particular?) and what are the pros and cons as compared with the previous provision pattern that existed before integration.
- How did the official documents define the goals of early childhood services? As focussed on the holistic development of young children? As enhancing readiness for school? As resolving child and family poverty issues? As an answer to labour market requirements? Other?
- What was the place given to the well-being of children in the discussion – to their rights? to equity of outcomes for young children?
- Were options other than integration proposed or considered? Was the integration solution opposed: by whom? For what reason? How were these different options negotiated?

### **4. Process and transition at ministerial level**

*Here, we wish to understand how integration was achieved at central administrative level.*

- Was the decision to integrate a rapid one or was it preceded by a series of discussions and reforms (please describe very briefly) or by a research based evaluation of the performance of the early childhood system?
- How did your country prepare for the move? Was a commission or research group nominated to provide advice or research on the implications of such a move? Were there broad consultations of the stakeholders, e.g. parents, trade unions, administrators, children...?

- When did integration occur? Was it gradual? Was there any consideration of different age groups? Please provide a detailed timeline of the integration process.
- How was ministerial responsibility transferred? Was transfer of authority made wholly to the ME or were other overview or co-ordination mechanisms also created, e.g. inter-ministerial co-ordination mechanisms; prime minister's office...
- Did the ME take the whole sector in charge through its own administrators or did it incorporate administrators from other ministries, who formerly had responsibility for children's services and policy?
- Were previous regulations concerning children's care and education services incorporated into the existing education statutes or was a body of new legislation passed?
- Describe how the ME has exercised its responsibility for young children: From the centre (uniform regulations, inspection and curriculum across the country...)? Through decentralisation, with ME offices at regional or divisional levels? Or is there devolution to independent municipal and local authority offices?
- Is there a specific unit within the ME for early childhood matters? Or has ME integrated responsibility for the early childhood sector and primary education?
- If decentralisation is the rule, are there specific ME regional and/or local offices for early childhood matters or is this sector subsumed under schooling?
- Did the process involve any discussion of the relationship between ECCE and compulsory school?
- Were other children's services, e.g. free-time/out of school services transferred to the ME at same time or later? If not, who is responsible for other children's services?

## 5. Process and transition at local level

*In this section, we wish to understand the processes and implications at local level.*

- What was the statutory responsibility of local government for early childhood services? What responsibilities did they assume, e.g. provision, support, funding? Had most local authorities integrated childcare and early education prior to the national decision or did most follow the lead of central government (i.e. how far was the process of integration driven centrally or locally)?
- Has the responsibility of local authorities diminished, remained the same or increased since integration? In what respect and areas?



- Today, how do local authorities normally integrate ECCE services? Do they have separate welfare and education departments? Is there a section or unit at municipal level with integrated responsibility across 0-6 services? Does the ME or regional education authority provide guidelines, advice or support to municipalities? Do some municipalities integrate responsibility for ECCE and schools?
- How much autonomy is allowed to each early childhood centre in the following areas: financing? recruitment policies? curriculum adaptation; pedagogical practice...

## 6. Consolidation and new reforms

*In this section, please outline what steps the ministry of education and/or other bodies have taken to carry forward the integration of the sectors, and the opposition (if any) that they encountered.*

- What happened immediately after integration was decided? Did the ME immediately take on administrative responsibility for all services or was there a period of transition? If so, for how long? What were the discussions that took place in the immediate post-transfer period?
- Was integration followed by new reforms and new initiatives?
- The creation of a single structural framework to replace a dual care/education structures?
- What were the features of this framework? A reform of regulations (e.g. new licensing and accreditation laws; new quality standards; new inspection systems)? Changes in the profiling of the workforce (recruitment, initial and professional education, changes in status and remuneration of staff?) New funding arrangements (e.g. a change in public expenditure? In funding patterns? In parental fees...)
- Have changes been made to the pattern of services? Were new types of integrative provision created, e.g. Children's Centres
- Have changes been made to make the system more inclusive, for example improving access to all children and families, improving provision for children with disabilities
- Has co-operation between education and other local services been reinforced or weakened? E.g. co-ordination with the health and social welfare services to

provide comprehensive services<sup>17</sup> for children and families who need additional supports.

- Was there opposition to the reform? From what quarters? For what reason? With what consequences? Has that opposition continued or died away?

## 7. Consequences of integration

*This important section should describe the concrete changes that integration has brought to the lives of young children and families and its impact on education sub-systems, programme quality and the achievement of wider social objectives.*

- Was the integration process preceded by an integrating concept of education and care such as ‘pedagogy’ in the Nordic countries, ‘early education’ in New Zealand? Has an integrating concept emerged since formal integrations?
- Have the values and principles of public education systems been extended to all ECCE services, e.g. access to high quality services seen as a universal entitlement; free or subsidised attendance with services recognised as a public good funded substantively by the state and not (as ‘childcare’ is still considered in some countries) as a private commodity. Are equitable access and equivalent outcomes for all children pursued as a central value?
- What impact has integration had on matters important for young children and families?
  - On the care and wellbeing of children
  - On the learning of children
  - On affordability
  - On access
  - On outreach to families and communities

**N.B.:** Please discuss each case whether the impact has been similar or different for all children and families, in particular whether there have been differential impacts for low income and other socially excluded groups and for children with disabilities.

- What impacts has the changeover had on the important education subsystems?

17 Comprehensive services – A comprehensive services approach to ECCE goes beyond curriculum and activities for children to focus also on the home and community environments. Typically, a comprehensive services approach works in co-operation with other community services and pays particular attention to the child’s home environment and parents. A comprehensive centre will provide, for example, courses and advice on children’s health, parenting (in particular, how to support child development), leisure activities for parents as well as employment and job training.

- On financing (e.g. on the level of public expenditure in ECCE services; on changes in funding methods, less duplication of spending, greater efficiency...)
- On the recruitment, training: and remuneration of staff.
- On ongoing inspection and support.
- On data collection and monitoring.
- On compulsory schooling? Has the change affected the relationship between ECCE and compulsory school? Has a strong an equal partnership been created? Have early childhood approaches and an integrated pedagogy been brought upward into the junior school? Has there been schoolification?
- What impact has integration had on programme quality?
- On educational concepts (e.g. understandings of young children, learning theory, the role of the lead educators...) and curriculum
- On the initial recruitment, training and certification of staff<sup>18</sup>
- On continuous professional development, documentation and practitioner evaluation
- On child:staff ratios
- On the pedagogical environment: is the environment motivating and open for young children? Is the outdoors given sufficient time in the curriculum and sufficient importance as a pedagogical tool?
- On the curriculum: Is the focus on the development of the whole child? Are the natural learning strategies of young children encouraged? Has an integrated concept of pedagogy (care, upbringing and learning) been retained?
- What impact, if any, has integration had on the achievement of wider social objectives?, e.g.
- Since integration, are there improved linkages with other sectors concerned with children and families?
- Has the overall health of young children improved? Are there reliable statistics available on this issue? Is there a specific national early childhood health programme?
- Has labour market access for women increased? e.g. through greater access of children to services or through extending the traditional education opening hours to cover a full working day?

18 Ministries of education generally train lead staff to tertiary degree level, but they may not require their certification in early childhood pedagogy.

- Has integration led to greater gender equality, e.g. have the recruitment levels, qualifications and working conditions of early childhood personnel improved?
- Has the move into education brought greater social and cultural inclusion, e.g. has access and the welcome given to children from low-income or other vulnerable groups, e.g. children with disabilities, improved?
- Is integration bringing greater social and educational success? e.g. are children from at-risk families participating more and better prepared for school?
- Are other social or educational objectives important for your country? (please specify)
- Since integration, has the changeover been formally evaluated? How? When? Is the evaluation complete?

## 8. Lessons, implications and remaining challenges

Authors are asked to offer conclusions on the following topics (indicating when necessary if these conclusions are based on evidence from research evaluations).

- What are the main lessons and implications to be drawn from integration in your country?
- What are the main benefits and disadvantages of the present integrated system?
- What are the essential factors for successful integration? What are the possible obstacles to successful integration?
- Are there further challenges to be faced? Are there ongoing discussions about aspects of integrations e.g. schoolification, fewer comprehensive services,<sup>19</sup> less access by certain groups, lack of co-ordination with other ministries and services.

<sup>19</sup> See footnote 1 for a definition of *comprehensive services*.

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) generally embodies two different traditions: care and education. The former was often developed as welfare measures for working-class children who needed care while their parents were at work; the latter as kindergarten or pre-primary education, providing middle-class or all children with enriched educational activities prior to formal schooling. This division between care and education has strongly influenced the organization and conceptualization of ECCE, and resulted in discontinuities and inequalities between childcare and early education sectors due to differences in access, availability, resourcing and quality.

To reduce the adverse effects of 'split systems', two main strategies have been employed: greater coordination and integration. *Caring and Learning Together: A Cross-National Study on the Integration of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) within Education*, a new UNESCO study on ECCE governance, focuses on examining the policy option of integrating ECCE within the education system, which is being adopted by a growing number of countries. It analyses and documents the experience of five countries - Brazil, Jamaica, New Zealand, Slovenia and Sweden - and one municipality - Ghent in Belgium Flanders - which have chosen this option, to generate a better understanding of the rationales, processes and consequences of integration-within-education. It also looks at why other countries have not followed this course of action.

This UNESCO study offers a rare assessment of the policy of integrating care and early education services within education, and provides key policy insights and recommendations on the subject.



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