

2019 International Summit  
on the Teaching Profession

A Briefing by  
Education International

# The Future of Teaching and Learning

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2019

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Internationale de l'Éducation  
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# Welcome and Introduction

by David Edwards,  
General Secretary of Education International

I am delighted that Finland has offered to host this, the ninth International Summit on the Teaching Profession. Finland has remarkable record in creating one of the most improved education systems in the world not through conflict and imposition but through partnership with teachers, unions, parents and the wider community. In thanking our hosts, the Finnish Government, I would also particularly like to thank OAJ, EI's member organisation in Finland, which has quietly and effectively helped put together a superb programme of pre-Summit and Summit activities.

I also want to thank both our permanent partner in the Summits, the OECD, which has consistently devoted considerable resources to make the Summits a success, and Ministers and teacher union leaders without whom there would be no Summits. Your faith in the Summits is what makes them so successful.

Probably the most remarkable feature of the Summit is the fact that it is not only remains a unique part of the international education calendar but that it has become embedded as part of the international dialogue between teacher unions and governments. In short, this year's Summit demonstrates that the International Summits of the Teaching Profession work.

And this year's theme could not be more relevant. In a world where aggressive nationalism is emerging in some countries, the challenge to multilateral organisations, such as ourselves in Education International, and in the United Nations and the OECD, is to convince governments and their peoples that education can only enhance societies and economies if we learn from each other across country boundaries. We also have to convince those in government, and those who aspire to government, that learning is not stratified

and unidirectional but that the most effective educational developments take place when teachers, educators, school communities and governments learn from each other.

This year's themes are particularly exciting. No Summit has yet discussed how inclusive leadership can be embedded in education systems as a whole. From EI's evidence we know that it is relatively easy to agree good ideas but quite difficult to successfully implement and evaluate them. We know in EI that teacher policies can only be successful if they build on teachers' enjoyment of the job and their knowledge that they are making a positive difference to young people's lives. As has been said repeatedly at past Summits, good educational relations are based on good labour relations. That should be the basis of any education reform.

I am particularly pleased that, for the first time, Early Years Education is a plenary theme. For far too long, Early Years education has been on the periphery of school provision. We now know that ECE is vital to enhancing young people's life chances. This year the Summit has the chance to make sure that Early Years education is no longer an optional extra.

The final plenary gives all delegations the chance to share their most pressing 'wicked problems' as the Summit programme call them. The good thing is that we now have the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as a framework not only for evaluating educational progress but as an aspirational lighthouse for our mutual benefit. Unfortunately, the battle we see emerging in some countries has resulted in education slipping in government priorities. We all need to convince them that the Future of Teaching and Learning is also the future of our societies and indeed our planet.

# Background to the Plenary Sessions

There are three themes in this year's Summit: *Leading Together*, *Building Strong Foundations through Innovative Pedagogies*, and *Towards Sustainable Schools*. *Building Strong Foundations* focuses on Early Childhood Education (ECE) and is the first time that an ISTP has considered this policy area. For this reason, this briefing includes a range of examples both of ECE provision and of the role teacher unions play in influencing its shape and direction. EI is very grateful to unions in its early years group for providing these case studies.

The theme, *Leading Together*, explores the issue of school leadership. The Summit will give participants the chance to investigate and agree strategies on what constitutes coherent leadership throughout education systems.

The title of the third theme, *Towards Sustainable Schools*, could be interpreted as solely focusing on how to ensure schools are ecologically and energy self-sustaining. Yet as fundamental as this issue is, the Summit will be asked to address what is sustainable in the widest sense. How can schools be sustained and develop as thriving institutions ready to provide learning for their students? What will enable them to tackle the complex challenges of modern life when they leave school?

The questions set out in the ISTP programme are wide ranging and no delegation could be expected to agree objectives for every single challenge set out in the programme. As this theme's description itself asks, what can effective, system wide solutions do to tackle the 'wicked problems of our times'? Education International (EI) believes that this theme provides participants with a great opportunity to select what each country delegation thinks is the most urgent of the 'wicked problems' it faces, explore them in the plenary session and prioritise steps towards addressing those problems.

The three themes present an exceptionally rich range of opportunities for teacher unions and ministers together to grasp and move forward education policies in their countries.

# Session 1: Leading Together

## Previously...

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One of the three themes ISTP 2012 considered was 'Developing School Leaders'. It concluded that no-one person could carry all the leadership responsibilities of a school and that distributed or collaborative teacher leadership models were necessary. While there was considerable innovation in new models of leadership there was little research into their effectiveness. Some countries, including Norway, New Zealand and Canada committed themselves fostering collaborative leadership with the U.S. agreeing to hold a Summit on teacher leadership.

The 2015 ISTP returned to the theme of promoting and developing effective leadership including instructional leadership. The Summit concluded that a continuing challenge was developing a supply of leaders that reflected student diversity, how to orientate leadership towards instructional leadership and how to ensure that effective leaders were deployed in schools that needed them most.

The 2015 Summit explored in greater depth teacher leadership and noted that it had no settled meaning. For some it was about increasing teacher voice in decision making. For others it was principally about strengthening pedagogy. It was suggested in the Summit that a global study should be commissioned on different forms of teacher leadership. ISTP 2015 also explored the concept of horizontal leadership whereby exchanges of principals and teachers took place across schools and school developed partnerships, clusters and networks.

## So what can be explored at this Summit?

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There are numerous external analyses of the success of Finland's education system. Examples include Pasi Sahlberg's 'What Can the World Learn about Educational Change in Finland?' (Sahlberg 2010) and a chapter on Finland in the OECD's 'Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education-Lessons for the United States.' (OECD 2010)

They both point to the fact that the key principles of the Finnish comprehensive education system are supported by a political consensus among Finland's political parties and the Finnish EI member organisation, OAJ.

Finland is not alone in this. As far back as the ISTP 2011 the OECD concluded that successful education reform could only be embedded if governments and teacher unions together own education reforms without those reforms being imposed. (OECD 2011) In fact it is clear that the most successful education systems globally are products of effective system wide leadership by governments, teacher unions and employers who seek agreement on the best ways to develop education.

Valuable as previous Summit discussions on leadership have been, no Summit has yet addressed the questions on how to achieve collaborative multi-level leadership throughout education systems.

Neither have the Summits addressed how system wide leadership can ensure not only the collaborative design of effective educational reforms but the collaborative implementation and evaluation of those reforms.

EI's recent analysis of data from its survey of union participants in the ISTPs on progress in objectives agreed between unions and governments, found that only a third of unions who had participated in the Summits had been engaged in the implementation and evaluation of agreed objectives. In too many cases the implementation of agreed Summit objectives had been left exclusively to Ministries. (Education International 2018). This coincides with evidence from further data collected by EI from its affiliates for a future OECD publication, Education Policy Outlook. This shows that many more teacher unions are engaged with governments in monitoring the implementation of developments in teacher pay and conditions policies than they are in teacher policy areas such as student assessment, teacher and institutional evaluation, and professional learning and development.

Since effective teacher policy is a central part of successful education systems this is a cause for concern.

***This Summit provides the opportunity for unions and governments alike to establish mechanisms for the joint implementation and evaluation of agreed Summit objectives.***

A further question which hasn't been explored in previous Summits is how far concepts of teacher leadership have been embedded in policy making. In its briefing for the ISTP 2015, EI highlighted the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey 2013 (TALIS) which concluded that, 'it is not only worth school principals devolving some of the responsibility for school level decisions to teachers, but policy makers should consider providing guidance on distributed leadership and distributed decision making at a system level'. The reasons for this were, to quote the OECD, 'teachers' self-efficacy-their belief in their ability to teach, engage students and manage a classroom-(which) has an impact on student achievement and motivation.'

As EI's briefing document said then, there is a single connecting thread between teachers' professional collaboration, teachers' collaborative participation in decision making, countries' educational success and the status of teachers. EI's recommendation then was

that unions and governments should act on the TALIS recommendation and develop such guidance jointly. The agreed objectives of the 2015 Summit showed some countries acted on this guidance but it is not clear now whether the idea of empowering teachers professionally in the classroom and education system has gone forwards or backwards.

***This Summit provides a valuable opportunity for unions to press governments for joint guidance on teacher leadership to schools and to explore how teachers' working conditions can be enhanced to enable their professional voices to be listened to and respected by the leadership in schools.***

## Session 2: Building Strong Foundations Through Innovative Pedagogies

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is now a crucial part of the educational landscape. Academic evidence alongside evidence from the OECD has highlighted how important ECE is to young people's later development and learning. As the OECD has found, investment in ECE pays dividends in students' performance at age fifteen.' (OECD 2016)

Education International (EI) has consistently understood the importance of ECE and the necessity for all young children to have access to free high-quality services. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) in its policy guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel (ILO 2014) suggests the ECE financing benchmark could be at least 1 percent of GDP and 10 percent of public education funding.

The ILO's guidelines further suggest that 'governments review and/or introduce comprehensive policies that are developed in close cooperation with and involvement of direct stakeholders i.e. early childhood education personnel, education support personnel in the ECE settings, teachers' organisations and if required, parents' associations and communities to ensure decent working conditions, a professional development system, and recognition of professional status'.

This requires an infra structure of support around ECE personnel that includes all the elements available to other education professionals. While some countries have made good progress, it is certainly not the case everywhere. According to OECD figures only nine countries exceed the 1 percent benchmark. (<http://www.oecd.org/education/school/SS%20V%20Spending%20on%20early%20childhood%20education%20and%20care.png>).

With the input of its Early Childhood Education Taskforce, EI has campaigned for a much greater global appreciation of both the specificities of early childhood education and the need for quality support than exists currently. OECD has similarly increased its focus on ECE with its TALIS Starting Strong survey which is due to report in 2019-2020. A pilot study is also underway on International Early Learning and Child Well-being (IELS) which again will report shortly.

Both EI and OECD have emphasised that teaching and learning methods need to be inclusive and support equity. It also clear from the evidence (OECD 2018) that the group that benefits the most from high quality ECE provision are young people from deprived socio economic groups. EI has consistently stressed that teachers and support personnel need quality professional learning and development if they are to adapt to increasingly diverse groups of students.

The ILO guidelines provide clear advice around education and training:

'ECE personnel education and training should be comparable to that of primary school teachers with equivalent professional status and responsibilities; and should promote autonomy and creativity in teaching;

Initial ECE teacher education should enable ECE teachers to respond to the learning needs and challenges of all learners;

ECE personnel should be in possession of relevant degree/qualifications from an appropriate ECE preparation institution.' (ILO 2014)

In many countries pre-service education has not served ECE well. Often there are a range of pathways into the profession which involve no pre-service education at all. There has been

a growing realisation that pre-service teacher education is just as demanding as pre-service education for teaching for older children and young people and requires just as much training as primary school teaching. Indeed, OECD could deepen its analysis of early years educators' qualifications, pay and working conditions which TALIS Starting Strong has the potential to do. The Global Teacher Status Survey (Varkey Foundation 2018) also found that less than 17% of TVET and ECE teachers think they have fair salaries.

The focus at this ISTP on ECE provides an opportunity to correct some of these inequities. ECE's ameliorating effects on social inequity and its potential to provide a firm educational and social foundation for all children to have a positive learning journey through school and life mean that it should be have the same status and statutory legitimacy as primary and secondary education.

ECE is also a sector where there is a high level of private provision in a number of countries. It is an area where unions representing teachers and educators have a key role both in securing fair and equitable working conditions, pay and funding across the public and private sectors and in providing a coherent professional voice at both local and national levels.

Within the Annex are examples from three countries where educators' unions have had a significant role in shaping the direction of ECE. They come from EI's Early Childhood Education Taskforce.

*In Germany, the GEW union has campaigned to achieve nation-wide legislation requiring the federal government to provide extra funding to raise the quality of ECE provision in every Lander.*

*In Norway, the Education Union of Norway has funded highly influential research on evaluating children's achievement in the kindergarten. It has also sponsored an annual Climate prize for Early Years provision which is awarded to early years settings for excellence in raising awareness of climate change and sustainable development issues.*

*In Denmark there is a high level of social partnership between unions, employers and*

*government. In early years the BUPL union has secured from government a special pool of funding for early years educators' professional development. It also persuaded the government to establish a group in partnership with the union and researchers to reform the early years curriculum. BUPL also co-finances research into early years provision.*

*These examples show that effective partnerships can be established to enhance early years provision. There are other areas where joint objectives could be agreed including in the areas described in the examples. ECE provision for under three year old children could be expanded especially in socially deprived areas. The ILO's guidelines on spending for ECE reaching 1 percent of GDP and 10 percent of educational funding could be adopted by all countries. A national framework for the provision of training and CPLD for all ECE staff could be adopted. ECE could be deemed to be statutory provision alongside primary and secondary provision.*

# Session 3: Towards Sustainable Schools

This final plenary provides the opportunity to delegations to focus on one or two top priorities which address what the programme's introduction to this section describes as 'wicked problems of our times'. As the Summit's introduction to session three says: 'the session provides an opportunity for countries to raise the most pressing aspects of sustainability challenges that are relevant to their respective countries'. They are challenges which impact on the sustainability of schools as confident, effective and thriving institutions. As this briefing indicated earlier the term 'sustainability' used in this context describes schools and school systems which have the internal strength to take on, manage and respond to the 'complex and multi-faceted challenges' which face them.

This session's introduction could either provide a menu from which country delegations can draw or it could provide a stimulus to identify challenges being experienced in countries which are not referred to in the introduction. Country delegation meetings will take place straight after this session. Therefore, this session provides the opportunity for country delegations to share their challenges with participants to see if other countries might have strategies which can help them.

***EI advises all country delegations to have delegation pre-meetings prior to this session to agree on the priority challenges to be addressed. Delegations could also seek to agree that these are the challenges which will inform the objectives setting discussion which will take place straight after this plenary.***

Priority 'wicked problems' may well include issues of how to achieve coherent system leadership and universal quality ECE. Both

strands are fundamental to the success of education systems. Addressing them could be top priority objectives. It is also worth looking back at the specific areas mentioned in the introduction to this session when they were first considered in previous Summits. They are: digitalisation and the teaching profession and teacher education; how to make the best use of technologies in a pedagogically meaningful way; how can public policy keep teaching financially and intellectually attractive to sustain teacher supply? and can innovative technologies help find new ways of sustainable living?

## **Back to the Future...**

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In its plenary on pedagogies for the future, the ISTP 2018 came to some interesting conclusions.

Bottom-up, teacher led pilot and innovation networks can open education systems to new approaches and to the design of new learning environments.

A number of Summits, including ISTP 2018, have focussed on the innovative potential arising from collaboration between teachers. They have consistently urged that the conditions for teachers to create collaborative cultures should be created.

Both the OECD and delegations at ISTP 2018 concluded that teachers remain essential to helping students to learn and navigate complex learning environments.

Ideas from delegations have included providing platforms for teachers to share and enrich teaching materials and approaches. Indeed, at a previous Summit the New Zealand delegation agreed that a National Digital Platform should be established. EI

and OECD have also had discussions about how to investigate the relationship between technology and teaching and the gaps in knowledge on this issue that still exist.

The debate recognised that systems are looking at how time can be made for pedagogical innovation and how time spent on administrative tasks and routine management issues can be reduced.

A number of countries are increasing the amount they are spending on educational research on pedagogy and developing mechanisms to involve teachers in school-based enquiry and action research.

Previous Summits, including the 2018 Summit, have discussed how to reform evaluation systems in order to encourage innovation but more time still needs to be given to this issue.

A culture which supports teacher leadership must be at the heart of innovative pedagogies. Indeed, as EI's briefing for the 2018 Summit asked, given that ownership of innovation is vital, how can school evaluation systems provide the conditions for experimentation without teachers being punished for any failure?

Networks of teachers across schools and, indeed countries, are the way in which professional initiation and evaluation of new pedagogies can take place. Examples of the possibilities of this kind of networking can be found, for example, in publications by the HertsCam network of teachers- a network described in the OECD Background Document for ISTP 2016 (OECD 2016) and in 'Teachers As Agents of Change.' (HertsCam 2018) Indeed, teacher unions are often at the forefront of this development.

***There are strong arguments for governments in partnership with teacher unions establishing digital collaboration platforms to enable teachers to share good practice and evaluate the latest IT education programmes and equipment rather than leaving their evaluation exclusively in the hands of the private sector.***

***A career option could be open to experienced teachers to coach and mentor teachers in other schools and establish cross school networks.***

There are two other areas explored by previous Summits. The first is how public policy can make teaching financially and intellectually attractive to sustain the supply of quality teaching professionals. These debates have been at the core of the Summits. It is worth going back to the conclusions of the first Summit (ISTP 2011) to see the base on which future discussions were built. Then the Singapore delegation made a powerful intervention. Its education system is one where the issue of teachers' pay has been 'taken off the table'. High teachers' pay levels and an entitlement to a significant provision of professional learning are at the core of Singapore's success. It set the tone for the Summit's 'common, take away actions':

Raising the quality and rigour of teacher training programmes linked to professional standards.

Attracting high quality and motivated teachers, especially from underrepresented groups.

Creating a more robust evidence base for teaching and learning including enabling teachers to participate in research.

Designing a comprehensive professional development with input from teachers.

Redesigning training for school leaders to support teaching and learning.

Creating a teacher appraisal system which supports professional improvement and student learning.

Making Policy Development a partnership between governments and teachers organisations. (Asia Society 2011)

Many of these actions were subsequently researched by TALIS 2013 (OECD 2013) and their propositions subsequently underpinned in Chapter 7 of TALIS.

There is however one 'wicked problem' which two Summits have addressed but left open; that of how can schools be sustained in the toughest areas? ISTP 2014 included a theme: 'Attracting and retaining high quality teachers into schools with the greatest need'. ISTP 2018's first plenary was on the theme: 'Schools at the Centre of their Communities'. EI set out a twenty one point programme in its 2014 ISTP briefing on how to attract teachers in tough schools. It included; providing sufficient

learning resources, preparing teachers to work in disadvantaged schools, making it a career advantage to work in such schools, creating a teaching workforce which reflects teachers' demography, guaranteeing employment conditions and job security, and introducing financial incentives to work in disadvantaged schools.

***This year's Summit has the chance to return to this issue. After all schools are often the sole hub of optimism for the future in areas which desperately need it.***

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# Annex: Unions and ECE

## Germany

### ECE in Germany.

Since the 1st of August 2013, Germany has guaranteed a place in an Early Childhood Day Care Center for every child from the age of one onwards. This has since led to a major expansion of Day Care Centres and to similar rise in requests from families for those places. Between 2006 and 2018, the number of children in Day Care Centres under the age of three rose from 287.000 to 790.000; an increase of 175%. Over a third of eligible children in Germany (34%), compared to about a seventh (14%) in 2006, now take up ECE places.

Nevertheless, the actual demand for places has yet to be fulfilled. According to a 2017 survey by the German Youth Institute (DJI), nearly 45% of the parents wished to find places in Day Care Centres for their under 3 year old children and this number is increasing.

Nearly 90% of over three year old children attend Day Care Centres, an increase since 2006 of about 25%. There is no universal system of evaluation of early years children due to Germany's federal education system. Instead some early years staff carry out developmental diagnoses based on established tests on language/communication skills, social behaviour and cognitive development status. However, a number of professionals view these tests sceptically because they believe they are deficit-oriented.

### Equity in access to ECE

Although equity of access to ECE is a very important topic it does not have a high profile. The Bertelsmann Foundation released a workshop report in 2018 on this issue. The Foundation investigated the extent to which the diversity of Day Care providers influenced the composition of the children in Day Care Centres. The report showed that access to Day Care Centres is socially and ethnically selective and that the social background of the child plays a major role in Day Care choice. The results suggest that choice of Day Care Centres can help increase segregation tendencies in centres even beyond the social segregation existing in their surrounding communities. [https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/Projekte/77\\_Kein\\_Kind\\_zuruecklassen/KeKiz\\_WB\\_12\\_gruen\\_final.pdf](https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/Projekte/77_Kein_Kind_zuruecklassen/KeKiz_WB_12_gruen_final.pdf)

### Addressing social inequality through ECE

There is a high degree of social inequality in Germany. ECE is required in the 12th Social-Law-Book to "address and mitigate social disadvantage".

Social inequality can be addressed by the professionals if they have the necessary skills and sensitivity to social imbalance. However, there are no standards for ECE and therefore in the majority individual federal states, addressing of social injustice is increasingly becoming a challenge. For further information go to <https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/kultur/zukunft-bildung/253853/bildung-keine-wunderwaffe>

## Curriculum alignment with pre-primary and primary

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### Work organisation in ECEC including working hours, child-staff ratio, salaries, qualifications, pre-service and in-service training, licensing for family or any other day care, infrastructure and the teaching and learning environment.

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Since 2010, the Education Union GEW has been strongly involved in discussions with government representatives, information events throughout Germany, publications and actions by the colleges. This has led to a nation-wide law being adopted on January 1st 2019 on the further development of quality in ECE. The aim of this law is to introduce equal care and education conditions nationwide. Although many demands from GEW, such as the introduction of a scientifically-based 'Professional Child Key', have not yet been introduced, the first important step has been taken. For the first time, the federal government will financially support the federal states in order to improve the quality of their ECE facilities. This means that unions will continue to make efforts to achieve the necessary improvements in the framework conditions and to prevent funds being used in their entirety for structural rather than qualitative improvements.

### Approaches to pedagogical practice in ECE.

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As a result of the significant expansion of ECE, in 2016/17 79% more people were trained as ECE educators than in 2007/08. Vocational training is the central qualification profile for an ECE professional. Vocational training courses (child care and social assistance) as well as study programs at universities of applied science, colleges of education and universities, including early childhood education and childhood education, have been established. For further information see <https://www.fachkraeftebarometer.de/>

The ECE curriculum in Germany is based on the individual education and training recommendations of the federal states. These were designed in a participatory process by professionals, representatives of organizations, experts and politically responsible persons and are valid in all 16 federal states. Their diversity is due to the intention to take the individual life reality of the children into account and plan individual support and support options for each child. Furthermore, cooperation between ECE and elementary schools can be observed during the children's later years in ECE, with the aim of making the process of transition child-centered. This is also a key topic in all federal state recommendations.

## Norway

The Union of Education Norway (UEN) has highlighted and developed practice in kindergarten through research. Assessment in ECE is a topic which UEN has discussed at national level, and it has initiated and funded a research project on assessment in ECEC (<https://nettsteder.regjeringen.no/barnehagelarerrollen/files/2018/04/Flere-barn-p%C3%A5-blokka.pdf>). The project was carried out as an interactive research and development programme over a period of 18 months, involving researchers, a mentor and participants from two kindergartens. The focus was on the advancement of the kindergartens' work in assessing the wellbeing and all-round development of the children in their care. One conclusion in the project is that kindergarten teachers and head teachers have established a more systematic and informed assessment routine in the kindergartens. More children are recorded on notepads, assessed and then followed up. Kindergarten teachers say that they have learnt both to view their own assessment practice with a more critical eye and to show a greater awareness of circumstances in the kindergarten context that can have a negative effect on children's wellbeing and all-round development.

UEN has sought to inspire the practice of the kindergarten through the development of an annual Climate prize. UEN wants Norwegian education to engage children and young people in climate issues to an even greater extent than they are now - and to provide increased knowledge of both climate problems and climate solutions. All ECE centres, schools and teacher training institutions in Norway can apply for the prize.

The aim of the award is to motivate teachers and promote the work of education for sustainable development throughout the education. A prize winner must satisfy at least one of the following criteria:

- **having excelled in their work on education for sustainable development.**
- **having actively contributed to finding or raising awareness of solutions to climate challenges. The solutions can often be local and, for example, related to energy use, waste, purchasing or transport.**
- **having integrated efforts for sustainable development in learning.**

## Denmark

### Social dialogue and ECEC in Denmark

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There is a strong tradition of social dialogue between the employers and the unions in Denmark. This is the case both at a local and a national level. For many years the Danish National Federation of Child and Youth Educators (BUPL) had the right to negotiate on all issues relevant to educators' every day work in Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres.

Bargaining on salaries must be settled by an agreement with employers at national level. When it comes to educational content and educators' daily working conditions these issues are dealt with both at national and local level.

At national level BUPL has an established right to be heard and included in debates and dialogue on the aims and content of

the educational work in ECE centres. This is carried with the Ministry – currently the Ministry of Children and Social Affairs – but also with Parliament and through lobbying the Government and the various political parties.

At local level the Branches of BUPL and the representatives of the Union in the centres are involved in debate with the local authorities and councils on almost everything relevant to the everyday work of educators including the working environment and the staff-child ratio. In each centre, a centre-based forum for dialogue has been established including the head of the centre and representatives of the teachers.

In 2018 BUPL succeeded in including, as part of the general agreement on salaries, a special pool for financing educators' continuous professional development. Members of the Union can receive up to 3.500 € to access CPD and at least 20% of the costs are be paid by the Center.

BUPL is involved in the process of distributing CPD money to its members. The funding covers education fee and books and a substitute teacher for the educator while away.

CPD is typically used for Diplomas and specific subject courses but also for Masters level education. BUPL surveyed its members who received financial support in 2018 and discovered that 23% of those who received CPD afterwards were paid a higher salary.

### The Union's influence on the educational content

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Just as important to educators as working conditions is the content of the educational work with children. As a result, this question is central to the activities of BUPL.

BUPL is deeply engaged in seeking to raise public understanding, respect and support for the professional autonomy and judgment of ECE educators.

July 2018 a new stronger pedagogical curriculum for early childhood education based upon research and the knowledge and professional experiences of our members was introduced.

Initially the Government wanted to change the curriculum in the direction of more academic skills focusing on literacy and numeracy. BUPL's response was to propose a group with researchers, BUPL and the Ministry of Children and Social Affairs. The group's task was to define the core values and aims of early childhood education.

The group recommended that young children's development, learning and well-being based on play and a very broad and comprehensive concept of a learning environment should frame the curriculum. Importantly the group found that the decision about how to implement the curriculum should be based in each ECE centre.

Afterwards working groups, including members of BUPL, wrote guidelines for the different pedagogical themes of the revised curriculum. These recommendations were passed by the Ministry and the Parliament. This process made the importance of professional educators in high quality early childhood education more visible to the public and the authorities.

## **The Union's role in promoting research**

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BUPL now understands that it should support the development of knowledge and research. It has invested annually in research projects and has co-financed a research centre: The Danish Centre for Research in Early Childhood Education and Care at Roskilde University.

The Centre's research activities focus on everyday life and educational and caring (pedagogical) practices in child care centres such as nurseries, kindergartens and age-integrated institutions for children 0-6 years of age.

## **BUPL funded Research**

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BUPL has a pool for research - 700.000 € every second year – max 100.000 € to each single project.

The four research themes in the pool are:

- **Educational learning environments and evaluation**

- **New educational job areas and structures**
- **Development of the ECE profession**
- **Strong communities for 0-18 years**

Pool for members own developmental educational projects

BUPL offers maximum of 15.000 € including external support and substitutes for member's own projects.

The development themes for which BUPL members can currently apply for financial support for are:

- **Creativity, play and the physique**
- **Parent cooperation and child's perspective**
- **Educational learning environment and evaluation**
- **A dream project**

## **Lobbying for high quality ECE**

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For a number of years BUPL has opposed cuts in the budgets which have resulted in less staff. It pointed out that children at risk are losing important pedagogical support with fewer educators in centres. Also, it argued that it is crucial that early intervention is protected in general and specifically in order to include children with migrant and refugee backgrounds.

BUPL argued successfully that the Government should add extra funding to centres where there are significant numbers of children with special needs. As a result, the Government recently announced an extra 1 billion Danish Crowns (approximately 135 million Euros) for the next 4 years to be paid to have more educators for children at risk as well for early intervention.

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# The Future of Teaching and Learning



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