

## **ILRF 2012 PORTO, PORTUGAL**

ILRF II was organized as two self-organized post-EECERA symposia 1st September 2012 in Porto, Portugal.

### **Symposium n:o 1**

Strand: European/international overviews on policies, research, practices, teacher education, professionalism-

#### **Early Childhood Leadership – Cross-cultural learnings from leadership research**

Ulviyya Mikayilova & Yulia Karimova, Azerbaijan

Johanna Heikka & Eeva Hujala, Finland

Jillian Rodd, Great Britain

The symposium deals with the dialog between research and practice in ECE leadership. The presentations open perspectives to leadership research and leadership practice from point of view of pedagogical leadership, distributed leadership, transformational leadership and “managerial” leadership. Leadership will be introduced in different cultural contexts. Empirical leadership studies in Azerbaijan and Finland will be reported.

The leadership research in Azerbaijan child care context examines the nature of leadership to enhance child-centered early childhood education and to gain understanding of the ways to sustain leadership development. In Finnish leadership research leadership is examined both in centre context of the leadership and in whole ECE leadership and management context. Leadership practice and leaders’ managerial work including their roles and responsibilities are examined from point of view of how leaders’ managerial work and their leadership duties are intertwined. Leadership is also examined from point of view of human resources management by studying how leaders are supported by their superiors and foremen in communal ECE context. Distribution of pedagogical leadership in Finnish child care context is studied by investigating how teachers, center directors and administrative leaders in municipalities have experienced distributed and pedagogical leadership.

The symposium will bring some key features of current research into leadership in early childhood, with particular focus on cross-national collaborations. It identifies a number of potential pitfalls in and pressures of cross-national research collaborations, with particular reference to the International Leadership Research Forum and proposes possible pathways for ensuring rigorous research design.

## **Symposium n:o 2**

Strand: European/international overviews on policies, research, practices, teacher education, professionalism

### **Exploring Early childhood leadership in practice within diverse contexts**

Marja-Liisa Akselin, University of Tampere (Finland)

Jenny Green, Integricare Children's Centre, Sydney (Australia)

Leena Halttunen, University of Jyväskylä (Finland)

Kari Hoås Moen, Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (Norway)

Leadership in early childhood is now identified as crucial to the success of a team and the subsequent provision of a quality educational environment. This contrasts with when we were expected to 'manage' staff. The leadership of early childhood education today requires the ability to create, develop and implement strategies to ensure that high quality is secured. It is also evident that the practices of leadership have changed in different contexts

The presentations of the symposium look at the different elements which define leadership in early childhood education as well as some of the elements which are more and more crucial in leading early childhood settings. First, the symposium will look at the nature of organizational culture, the role of the individual educators and the organisational structure in shaping leadership. Second, the symposium will discuss the increased meaning of strategic planning and leading. In addition, the symposium focuses on the training of the future leaders and how this training improves students' leadership skills.

The views of this symposium are from Australia, Finland and Norway and they are all based on research. The Australian perspective is to consider the role of an organisational culture in guiding and defining the work of early childhood leaders. The findings are based on directors of day care centres. The two presentations from Finland explore Finnish early childhood leadership from two views: what defines leadership and what is the meaning of strategic leading in the context early childhood education. In Norway, there is a new model of training of day care directors and the presentation will focus on the findings from its first cohort.