



SUMMARY REPORT OF THE SIXTH SESSION ON 6 NOVEMBER 2007 IN BRUSSELS OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE QUALITY OF CHILDHOOD WITHIN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Chair person: MEP Karin Resetarits

Sixth session: **‘How to let children and adolescents acquire key competences for the world of the 21st century?’** with the Austrian psychologist Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger and the early childhood expert Geseke Lundgren from Sweden.

VIEW FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR CHILDHOOD.

Mr Christopher Clouder remarks that one of the dangers of our work is to emphasize too much the negative and the adverse regarding the Quality of Childhood. However every crisis is an opportunity, and he perceives currently all sorts of positive developments, such as:

- The Kronberg Declaration of an UNESCO meeting in Berlin in August / September of this year regarding social-emotional and practical capabilities, and to values. – see note below
- Foundation Marcellino Bottin (Spain) will publish next year a international survey report on social-emotional learning; which highlights that is a theme that many countries are now taking seriously and devising educational policies around
- In Britain the Ministry for Education was reorganised and refocused and is now called the Ministry of Children, Families and Schools, so that the child becomes a central focus for policy and that such policies are better coordinated
- There is a consensus among teachers and their Trade Unions in the UK that schools are testing too much and that it does not further the education of the children. Altogether teaching by numbers is being questioned in various countries as it is a policy that induces teachers to teach to test, thereby limiting the curriculum and undermining their professionalism,

HOW TO LET CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS ACQUIRE KEY COMPETENCES FOR THE WORLD OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

Dr. Leibovici addresses her subject ‘How to let children and adolescents acquire key competences for the world of the 21st century’ in three ways:

1. The Maslow Pyramid of needs, in this case the needs of children and adolescents;
2. An ecological approach of the core family, having a place in other nested structures;
3. Presentation about her company ARGE-Erziehungsberatung: the environment in which it works, its aims and its concrete activities.

The aim of ARGE-Erziehungsberatung is:

to assist parents and teachers and the general public in Austria by disseminating to many groupings and organizations new psychological insights, which are based on the notion that it is our innate nature to take responsibility for our own situation and to determine ourselves our own way in life.

THE CHILD INDICATES ITSELF WHEN IT IS READY TO BEGIN FORMAL LEARNING. HOW TO RECOGNIZE THIS MOMENT?

Mrs Geseke Lundgren of the International Association for Steiner / Waldorf Early Childhood Education introduces herself by stating that she presents her views as a person with a long experience as a Kindergarten teacher. She is not a researcher.

What is the goal of education?

When you look at the development of children you can look at many different aspects. Often teachers look at the intellectual development, *but the social-emotional aspects are also important*. In this context Mrs Lundgren asks the rhetorical question: what is the goal of education? And her answer is: *'to make children capable to deal with our modern world'*.

Components of the capability to deal with the modern world

- To be able to handle a overwhelming amount of information.
- To be able to fulfil continuously shifting roles in our lives; this is especially true for women, who have a role as worker / professional, mother, partner etc. What do you have to nurture in childhood to help a person to acquire those capabilities?
- To be able to be a creative thinker.

The age bracket of 5-7: a key period to acquire important life skills

Mrs Lundgren explains that when children reach the age of five they don't like to play any more as younger children. They get bored of it. In general pedagogues think that this is the moment the child is ready to start formal learning and in accordance with this view in most countries children are offered formal learning programs.

Mrs Lundgren explains that a grave mistake is made when doing this. She clarifies that when a child of 5 or 6 is bored, that this is an important opportunity for the child to experience this moment of boredom and to learn to create his / her own play. This new play is completely different from the play of a 3-year old. This capability is a very important new capability for the child. It learns in this way to think and act out of its inner core. At the same time the child develops its own identity and self image in accordance with this. The child also knows in this stage that it is playing and alters the way it speaks about its play.

Mrs Lundgren continues with the following conclusions:

- The Nordic Approach helps children of 5-7 years to acquire an active relationship to learning, because they may play until they are 7 years old;
- This method reinforces the creativity in children.
- Children are not school tired in the third class (this has been proved by research) and they have acquired an active approach to learning, instead of the passive approach, which is the predominant attitude when children have followed the Pre-School experience.
- Children develop another self-picture.

For Mrs Lundgren the above mentioned elements constitute the basis of the creativity of the children in the Nordic countries and she states that for her it is very important to preserve these characteristics in the educational system of the Nordic countries.



REPORT OF THE SIXTH SESSION IN BRUSSELS ON 6 NOVEMBER 2007 OF THE
WORKING GROUP ON THE QUALITY OF CHILDHOOD WITHIN THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT

Sixth session: **‘How to let children and adolescents acquire key competences for the world of the 21st century’** with the Austrian psychologist Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger and the early childhood expert Geseke Lundgren from Sweden.

1. OPENING

Mrs Karin Resetarits welcomes the participants and opens the meeting and introduces the various speakers.

2. VIEW FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR CHILDHOOD.

Mr Christopher Clouder, Director of the Alliance For Childhood European Network Group, starts his presentation with a quote from Mr Franco Frattini, Euro Commissioner for DG JFS who said on 17 April 2007 in the Hearing in the European Parliament: ‘A legal approach (with regards to children ed.) is good, but insufficient’. Franco Frattini then mentioned that families are in crisis and schools are in crisis and he appealed to the audience to develop a broader vision regarding the policy area of children and childhood. Christopher Clouder added to this: that one of the dangers of our work is the approach to emphasize too much the negative and the adverse. However every crisis is an opportunity, and he perceives currently all sorts of positive developments, such as:

- The Kronberg Declaration (see annex 3) as made during an UNESCO meeting in Berlin in August / September of this year. In this Declaration it is mentioned that in the educational institutions of the 21st century more focus should be given to social-emotional and practical capabilities, and to values.
- Foundation Marcelino Botin will publish next year a report on social-emotional learning; he was asked to be chairman of the Working Group to prepare this report.
- In Britain the Ministry for Education and Universities was reorganised and refocused and is now called the Ministry of Children, Families and Schools. The science and higher education part was put into another ministry. This gives a greater emphasis to childhood
- There is a consensus among teachers and their Trade Unions that schools are testing too much and that it does not further the education of the children.
- Children express the same opinions in an enquiry in this area (The Good Childhood Enquiry).
- New programs are being launched with which the quality of childhood is being improved. They take different guises. Sometimes it is a program to stimulate citizenship or democracy, another time it is called social-emotional learning etc.

Mr Michiel Matthes remarks in this context that the media, at least in the Netherlands, have changed their way of reporting about children. Ten years ago the reporting was more on ‘problem children’ and how to repair the ‘problem’. Today the media much more look at the

role of the organisations that are stakeholders in the process, that led to the difficulties, and whether these organisations did what they were supposed to do.

3. HOW TO LET CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS ACQUIRE KEY COMPETENCES FOR THE WORLD OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

Dr. Martina-Leibovici-Mühlberger informs the group that she got her first child in 1989 when she was in the middle of her career as a doctor and gynaecologist. Later she created ARGE-Erziehungsberatung (a counselling company concerned with the raising and educating children). In this way Dr. Leibovici knows the subject both from the point of view of a spouse and parent and from a professional point of view.

Dr. Leibovici begins by remarking that many parents, specially in their role as educators, cannot any longer cope with the dramatic socio-cultural changes of the last 20 years and the pressure on them because of this. As a consequence we see increasing rates of:

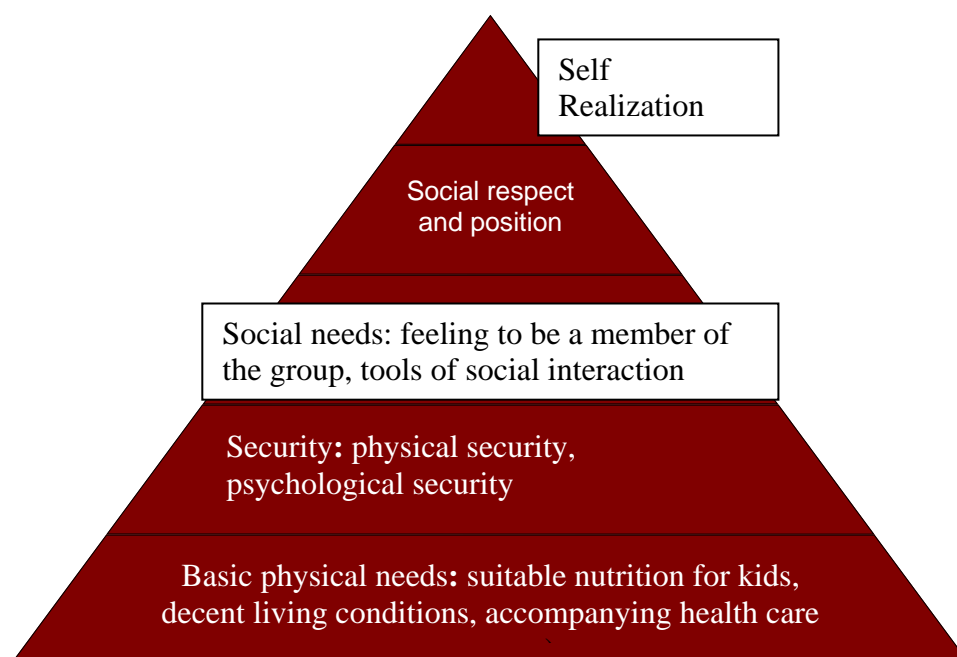
- psychoneurotic behaviour
- anxiety disorders
- attention deficit hyperactivity syndrome
- juvenile depression

Dr. Leibovici addresses her subject 'How to let children and adolescents acquire key competences for the world of the 21st century' in three ways:

1. The Maslow Pyramid of needs, in this case the needs of children and adolescents;
2. An ecological approach of the core family, having a place in other nested structures;
3. Presentation about her company ARGE-Erziehungsberatung: the environment in which it works, its aims and its concrete activities.

1. The Maslow Pyramid for the Quality of Childhood

Dr. Leibovici addresses this subject after the methodology, developed by Abraham Maslow:



Basic needs:

When we look at the Quality of Childhood this is a first concern. Dr. Leibovici remarks, that in Romania these needs are not fully met.

Social needs

Dr. Leibovici remarks that to her opinion many (young) parents need some coaching and counselling to cope with all the challenges they are faced with. In this context Dr. Leibovici remarks that there are different parenting styles. She is neither an advocate of the laissez-faire style nor of the authoritarian style, but instead a supporter of the social integrating style (later explained in more detail).

Self Realization / Self Fulfilment

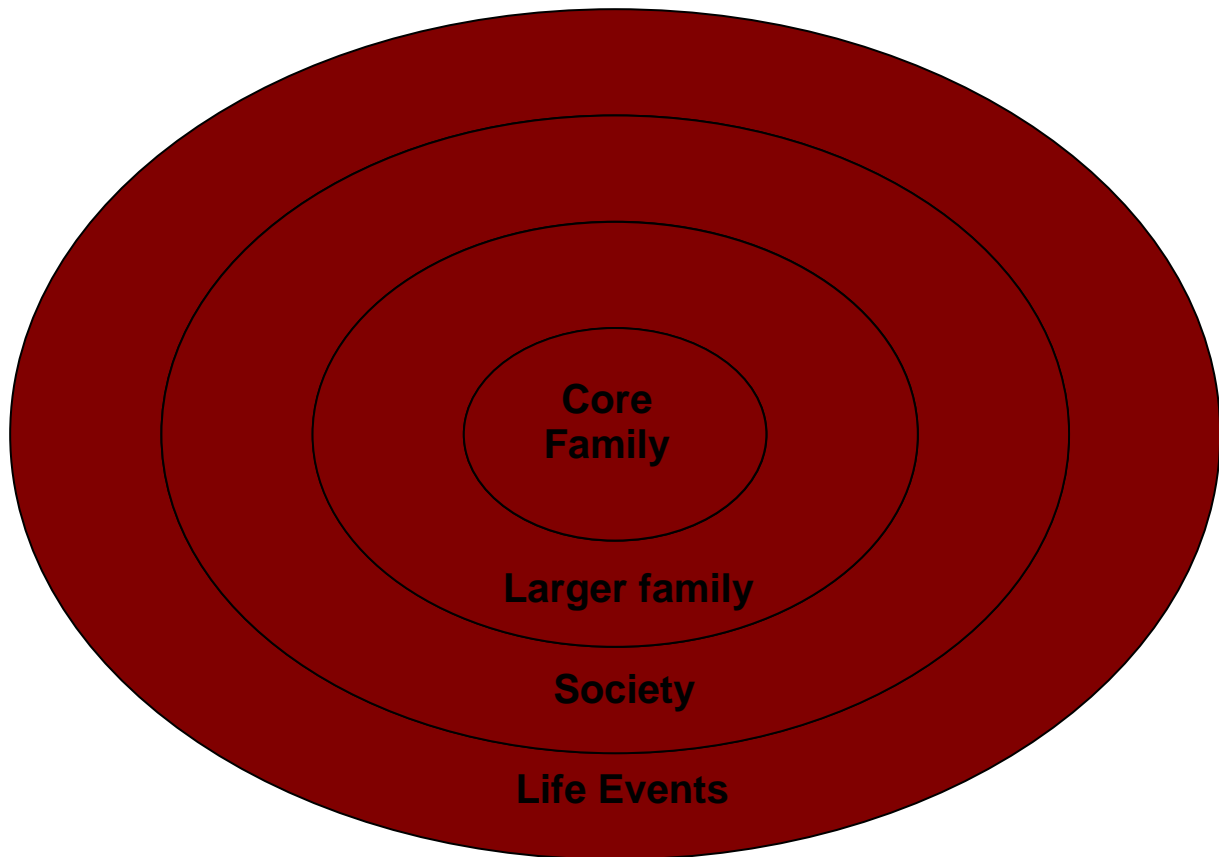
This social need can only be met when the other needs have been met adequately. However, we see in Austria that children claim Self Realization, while the needs lower down the pyramid have not been met. In this respect Dr. Leibovici refers to the circumstance, that children do not have any more meals together with their parents. Sometimes this leads to too much eating and obesity problems. At this moment 17% of the children in Austria suffer from obesity. Currently ARGE-Erziehungsberatung works on a project in this area with the general hospital in Vienna. She says: 'We are now faced in Austria with children of 12 and 13 years old who weigh 170 kg. They refuse any more to go to school and they don't go out any more. They play games on their computer and on the internet'.

Sometimes Self Realization is directed in the wrong way

Self Realization: often children choose the easy way and do not aim at high goals. Sometimes Self Realization takes the form of "Coma Drinking", meaning drinking much alcohol in a short period of time, so that the person quickly gets drunk and in the worst case ends up in hospital with alcohol poisoning.

2. The Ecological Approach: the Core Family in the Matrix of Society

ARGE-Erziehungsberatung has developed the following diagram for depicting the various structures in which families today function.



Changes in the Core Family

During the past 30-50 years we have seen a dramatic change in the structure of the family: from a multi-personal and multifunctional top-down social construction to a system of inter-connective relations between a small core family and society.

One generation ago many functions were fulfilled in the family:

- Healthcare
- Education
- The father was the head of the household.

The role a parent played 30 or 50 years ago has completely changed since then, because the relationships of the parent with the above mentioned environments has changed profoundly. In this context Dr. Leibovici mentions that 30% of married women in Austria do not wish to have any children. Furthermore many women only get one child, which they often have to raise alone. In this way the parent and the child become psychologically very dependent on each other. Dr. Leibovici states that the child is offered too little communication options for a healthy psychological development.

On the other hand Dr. Leibovici observes that many young adults do not manage to leave the Core Family and remain living with their parent(s), even when they are well into their twenties or thirties, the so called 'nest hookers'. The parent still provides the basic needs of

the 'child' and their salary is considered as 'pocket money'. When the parent(s) try to push the child out of the nest the 'child' starts a new study, so that he/she remains dependent.

The Core Family has shrunk, sometimes only one parent and one child, and many functions have been outsourced, making the modern family much more dependent from society than 50 years ago.

One generation ago the father was the unquestioned head of the household, representing the authority of the state in the 'Core Family' and there was one key rule: that of obedience.

Dr. Leibovici:

'We are all happy that families have evolved since then, but at the same time families must find new ways of meeting the challenges of finding new forms of authority, structure, decision making etc. Modern families and society need emancipated citizens, having acquired democratic attitudes. ARGE-Erziehungsberatung is providing courses for organisations and individuals that train people in these new democratic values, attitudes and behaviour. We call this program 'Fit for Life'.

Changes in the Larger Family

Dr. Leibovici indicates in the diagram a first circle around the core family. This environment she calls 'Larger Family', meaning the grandparents and brothers / sisters of the parents of the core family etc.

We furthermore see in this circle that many modern parents have fewer brothers and sisters. In this way less role models of other parents are available. On top of that grandparents are often not living close to their children and grandchildren, not being available any more as babysitters etc. In this way the organisational setup of the Core Family can be weakened because of this.

Changes in Society

The second circle is called 'Society', with which she points to all other environments around the Core Family, including the media.

Life Events

The last circle is called 'Life Events'. With this Dr. Leibovici means events that have the power to change the course of our lives, for instance the winning of the lottery, the death of a parent, divorce, unemployment, imprisonment etc.

Changes in the Matrix and the Quality of Childhood:

Dr. Leibovici continues by stating that these key competences are learnt during the (early) childhood years. How and where do we teach our children the following competences:

- To be a well connected team player?
- To have self esteem?
- To have the ability to cooperate with others etc?

Dr. Leibovici states that the old educational systems offer little opportunity to acquire these competences, because their methods are still based on the 'obedience model'.

Media:

Dr. Leibovici recalls her own childhood and tells about the programs she could watch on Wednesday afternoons. Today, the situation is completely different: 24 hours per day 7 days

in the week there are programs on television. For the parents it is a challenge to handle the television consumption of their children:

- What to do that my child only watches suitable programs?
- What is the impact on the social-psychological development of my child? etc.

The same is true with the new media: videos, playstation, internet, chatting etc. Often the parents don't even know all the intricacies of the new media, let alone do they know how to guide their child in this new domain.

Fluid structure of the modern Core Family:

The challenge for the parents becomes even bigger due to the fluid structure of the modern family. The partners have the ambition to have a long term relationship, but their expectation has been scaled down, because of rather high divorce rates (50% in Austria, in the section Mailing in Vienna even above 80%). After a divorce the various members of the family must find again a new place in a new situation, often in patch-work families with siblings of a new step parent.

Dr. Leibovici states that institutional support to families in this domain is necessary. However in Austria, it does not exist so far. Currently parents learn their way via trial and error.

Children want a high level of consumption:

Another phenomenon of the modern family is the demand from the children for a high level of consumption. The parents have also to handle this challenge and often cannot cope with it, although they may avail of the income from one or both parents.

3. ARGE-Erziehungsberatung: the environment in which it works, its aims and its concrete activities.

Dr Leibovici remarks that she has given until now a short overview of some key challenges with which modern families are confronted today. Dr. Leibovici: 'As society we have to find answers to these questions, and the children themselves should be involved in the process. It is this broad area in which ARGE-Erziehungsberatung is involved. The aim of the company is:

to assist parents and teachers and the general public in Austria by disseminating to many groupings and organisations new psychological insights, which are based on the notion that it is our innate nature to take responsibility for our own situation and to determine ourselves our own way in life.

ARGE Erziehungsberatung und Fortbildung GmbH is characterised by:

- Ideological and political independence
- Feel ourselves committed to values of respect for the limits and borders of the other person
- Social integrative model of education
- Democratic style of parenting: freedom within age orientated borders.

ARGE Erziehungsberatung und Fortbildung GmbH has the following activities:

- Education of Trainers and Counselors with the specific focus on families
- Counseling parents and educators about raising and educating children and developing special educational projects
 - parenting courses and workshops
 - weekly column in a leading newspaper

- Online counselling (2000 mails per, reporting about child abuse etc; in some cases intervention took place due to our work; we work with trainees, supervised by a professional psychologist)
- face to face counselling
- SOMO: social moderators – bridge-persons in schools; schools and teachers realise that they are not prepared for all the social problems of students and they seek guidance from ARGE in this area; ARGE helps the school to develop together with the parents and the students an agenda for the school and a Code of Conduct;
- Scientific research
 - qualitative research on single fathers in Austria (Federal Ministry of social affairs)
 - parenting courses from a male point of view
 - becoming a family – long time monitoring of couples becoming a family
 - how to secure the needs of children during a divorce
 - parental expectations about a high quality nursery
- Programs for companies and industry; example: Employee empowerment program (5 workshops):
 - never burn out
 - working mums and single parents – how to make 48 hours out of 24
 - modern Fathers – cuddling or working tiger?
 - Coming back to work after maternal leaf
 - Puberty- when parents become difficult

Activities of ARGE-Erziehungsberatung in Romania:

Finally Dr. Leibovici tells the group of her activities in Romania. This country is characterised by:

- much violence inside and outside the family; (80% alcoholism among men in the lower strata of society)
- High divorce rates
- Dramatic dropping birth rates; under the Ceausescu regime women were forced to have children and they were examined each three month whether they were pregnant and/ or not doing an abortion; the backlash is that women today don't want to have children)
- Aggressive capitalism.

ARGE-Erziehungsberatung works together with the University of Timisoara on the following: Setting up parenting groups and training parenting trainers and pedagogues for nurseries and primary schools. The program is based on the values of social integrative education and mutual respect. The program runs under the title of EU-fitness, to make the population ready for being a full partner of the European Union.

The Financial Picture of ARGE-Erziehungsberatung:

When asked how ARGE-Erziehungsberatung is financed Dr. Leibovici replies:

‘A number of our activities generate a fee income, but the online counselling practice, which is free of charge for the users, is partially financed by the newspaper for which I write a weekly column. They also mention it in the paper and offer it as a service to their readers. The service itself is provided by trainees, who need to do practical work. They are supervised by professional psychologists of ARGE-Erziehungsberatung. For each of the above mentioned activities we have developed a patch-work type of financing, including sponsoring by companies’.

4. THE CHILD INDICATES ITSELF WHEN IT IS READY TO BEGIN FORMAL LEARNING. HOW TO RECOGNIZE THIS MOMENT? Geseke Lundgren of the International Association for Steiner / Waldorf Early Childhood Education introduces herself by stating that she is a Kindergarten teacher and not a researcher. She speaks therefore out of her experience, although she has a keen interest in the outcome of research. Next she states that she discovered many common points with the views expressed by Dr. Martina Leibovici.

John Bennett was on 20 September a good advocate for the Nordic Approach

On 20 September she could not make it, because of missing a flight connection, but she discovered that John Bennett presented a very good comparison between the Pre-School Approach and the Nordic Approach. In the latter approach more emphasis is given to social and emotional aspects. In the Pre-School Approach there is a tendency to start earlier and earlier with formal learning.

She states that in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark the Nordic Approach is still present, with the emphasis on “still”, because we are in the process of losing some of the qualities of the Nordic Approach.

What is the goal of education?

When you look at the development of children you can look at many different aspects. Often teachers look at the intellectual development, *but the social-emotional aspects are also important*. In this context Mrs Lundgren asks the rhetorical question: what is the goal of education? And her answer is:

‘to make children capable to deal with our modern world’.

Components of the capability to deal with the modern world

What are the components of this capability to deal with the modern world?

- To be able to handle a overwhelming amount of information.
- To be able to fulfil continuously shifting roles in our lives; this is especially true for women, who have a role as worker / professional, mother, partner etc. What do you have to nurture in childhood to help a person to acquire those capabilities?
- To be able to be a creative thinker.

The age bracket of 5-7: a key period to acquire important life skills

When in the life of a child is it sensitive to acquire these capabilities? And what should and can be done to enhance the child’s capabilities in this respect and what environment decreases the chances of growth? Mrs Lundgren remarks in this respect the following:

- Between the age of 2 ½ and 3 they not only copy others, but they also start to interact socially and they begin to make their own plays. Play is a vivid tool to integrate yourself as a child in the larger world and to work through the life issues. This is essential for a child in order to be able to cope with the challenges of life.
- What many people don’t realise is that the child’s capacity of fantasy and imitating play needs to be transformed into the capacity of creative thinking. This transformation normally happens or should happen between 5 and 7 years of age. In most European countries children are already out of kindergarten and fully occupied with formal learning programs, except in the Nordic countries, where primary education starts at the age of seven, although we see since the 1990’s tendencies in Norway and Denmark to shift towards the Pre-School Approach.

- We have been observing children in the age bracket of 5-7, curious to see what is happening inside the child. We asked ourselves the question: is the child able to actively participate in the learning process at this age and is it not only adopting and reacting to what is offered?
- Until the end of its fifth and the beginning of its sixth year a child may lose its capacity to play. As parent you realise that your child gets bored. In our cultures this moment is often looked at as the moment the child is ready to start formal learning. As parents and educators we are inclined to help the child to overcome the boredom. Then they start to give them tasks: water the flowers, put the table, make a drawing etc. The child will be happy to fulfil all your expectations. We teach the child in this way the capability to fulfil the wishes of the environment. This is basically the Pre-School Approach: you start to feed the children with tasks.
- However, according to Mrs Geseke Lundgren, in the above mentioned way the phase of the child is misunderstood and is not used in an optimal way. An alternative is, that you speak with the child, that you look together at his/her boredom and you let it be there. The parent / educator can stimulate the child to think himself / herself what he / she could do, whereby the parent does not fill the vacuum, but instead gives confidence to the child, that it can handle this boredom in a creative way . With this alternative scenario we offer the child the opportunity to exploit this new force in him and to help him / her to transform the fantasy play, which they did until then, into a creative and constructive form of play, whereby images of a real happening are used. For the child this is a new capability, namely to create out of his or her inside a creative and constructive play. This capability is a very important new capability for the child. It learns in this way to think and act out of its inner core. At the same time the child develops its own identity and self image in accordance with this. The child also knows in this stage that it is playing and alters the way it speaks about its play. When they have a certain object, they can imagine it is a car etc.

With the Pre-School Approach this invaluable opportunity is lost

If the parents and educators do not use this opportunity, which is provided by the child being bored, it is lost and you get children that try to fulfil the expectations of the environment. In the Nordic Approach children may continue to play until they are seven years old. In that way they are stimulated to create their own plays and they will go through a completely different growth process.

However, also in the Nordic countries this approach is under pressure and society is pushing in the direction of the Pre-School Approach.

In short: the advantages of the Nordic Approach summed up again:

Mrs Lundgren continues with the following conclusions:

- The Nordic Approach helps children of 5-7 years to acquire an active relationship to learning;
- This method reinforces the creativity in children.
- Children are not school tired in the third class (this has been proved by research) and they have acquired an active approach to learning, instead of the passive approach, which is the predominant attitude when children followed the Pre-School experience.
- Children develop another self picture.
- For Geseke Lundgren the above mentioned elements constitute the basis of the creativity of the children in the Nordic countries and she states that for her it is very important to rescue these characteristics in the educational system of the Nordic countries.

DISCUSSION

We need conscious pedagogues, able to stand up for the interest of the child

Geseke Lundgren: often pedagogues and educators are afraid not to fulfil the expectations of the parents and others and because of this they do not feel secure enough to let the children develop their own things, and as a consequence they start to offer a formal learning program, which can be controlled etc.. She furthermore remarks that when children do not feel secure and when they are not developed motorially and socially they will not learn. These latter characteristics are learnt by the child when it plays.

Question: how is the ratio between adults and children in various countries?

Number of Children per Adult in Childcare centres and Kindergarten

		1 ½ until 3 yrs of age	4-7 years of age	Above 7
Austria/ Germany/ Switzerland			20/25 per adult	20/25 per adult
Sweden	State system	Max 12/13 per 3 adults	16/18 children per 2/3 adults	20/25 per adult
	Waldorf system	5 children / adult Recomm.: 4/adult		

Childcare and Kindergarten are for free in Sweden. In most European countries parents must pay for it entirely or partly.

Geseke Lundgren does not recommend the Swedish system to other countries: the downside of this generous Swedish childcare system, based on the equality between men and women, is that the current parents were already brought up in this childcare system and many of them do not know so well what family life is and what it means to be a parent or what it is to be a child in a family with many different relationships and how to bring about a good attachment / bonding between the child and the parents. The divorce rate is high and many children grow up in single parent or patchwork families.

On top of that many parents in Sweden suffer from the burn-out syndrome, not being able to cope with the demands of both work and family.

Next she remarks that the Swedish childcare system is good, but there should also be sufficiently room for family life. Taken the two parts together she would not recommend the system for other European countries to copy blindly.

Question: should we offer coaching to young couples, and if yes, how can it be done?

Then a question is raised about the coaching of young couples that just had a child. In Sweden when a baby is born in a family they get individual support from a midwife. But on top of that the midwife organises group meetings, on a voluntary basis, among some 6 to 8 couples who she attends to. These groups come together once a month and share experiences about having a baby, being a family, work-life balance, grand parents, childcare etc. Mr Matthes remarks that this model may be attractive for many other countries.

5. FOLLOW-UP OF THE SESSION ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2007

In the Action List of 20 September 2007 it was agreed that Mr Matthes, with the help of Mr John Bennett / professor Peter Moss (UK), would prepare a proposal for MEP Karin Resetarits regarding re-installing the EC Childcare Network. Please find below the proposed text. Mrs Resetarits remarked that she used this text and that she brought it into the Comité des Femmes during its October meeting.

Comité des Femmes:

The Comité des Femmes takes note that a European Commission Childcare Network, which was accountable to the Equal Opportunities Unit in the DG on Employment and Social Affairs within the European Commission was dissolved in 1996 after 10 years of successful and fruitful work.

The Comité des Femmes recommends to the European Commission to re-establish the Childcare Network for the following purposes:

- *To monitor and support the implementation of the European Council Recommendation of 31 March 1992 on child care (92/241/EEC), an important statement by member state governments on principles and objectives.*
- *To contribute to the implementation of the Communication of the Commission entitled 'Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child', Brussels, 4.7.2006 COM (2006) 367 final, in particular with respect to childcare and related services.*
- *To assist in coordinating these areas of European policy with the European Council's recommendation in its meeting on 15 and 16 March 2002 in Barcelona of levels for the provision of childcare by 2010 (SN 100/1/02 REV 1, page 12).*

**PARTICIPANTS OF THE SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE
QUALITY OF CHILDHOOD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2007**

Name	Function	E-mail Address
Mrs Karin Resetarits	MEP	kresetarits@europarl.eu.int
Mrs Michéla Pfeifer	Assistant of Mrs Resetarits	kresetarits-assistant@europarl.eu.int
Mr Michiel Matthes	Secretary of Working Group	michiel.matthes@scarlet.be
Mr Christopher Clouder	European Council for Steiner Waldorf education	cclouder@dsl.pipex.com
Mrs Geseke Lundgren	International Association for Steiner / Waldorf Early Childhood Education	geseke.lundgren@telia.com
Dr. Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger	ARGE-Erziehungsberatung	martina.leibovici@fitforkids.at
Mrs Alexia Maniaki Griva	Assistant of Mrs Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou	mpanayotopoulos-assistant@europarl.eu.int
Mrs Andrea Szabo	Assistant of MEP Magda Kosane Kovacs	magda.kosane Kovacs@europarl.europa.eu
Mr Claes Solberg Pedersen	Kempler Institute, Denmark	solborg@get2net.dk

UNESCO ADOPTS KRONBERG DECLARATION

UNESCO and the German UNESCO Commission have published the "Kronberg Declaration" on the future of education ("Kronberg Declaration on the Future of Knowledge Acquisition and Sharing"). Among other things, it promotes extensive, value-oriented education as necessary, in addition to normal professional knowledge.

The 18 international experts from 13 countries were in agreement that the education sector faces dramatic changes. These are primarily driven by the rapid development of information and communication technologies. Forms of learning, the role of teachers, the institutional framework and the appraisal of competencies will change dramatically over the coming decades - according to the Kronberg Declaration.

The educational institutions of the future need to dedicate themselves much more intensively to emotional and social capabilities and convey a more extensive, value-oriented education concept. The importance of acquiring factual knowledge will decline significantly, in favour of the ability to orientate yourself within complex systems and find, assess and creatively utilise relevant information. The learner will take on a much more active and self-responsible role in the learning process, including the creation of content. Experts in the Kronberg Declaration emphasize that those teaching in the future will act as managers of learning processes and tutors.

Against this background, experts are promoting the development of long-term political strategies, together with users of the technologies and the private sector. In Public-Private-Partnerships, the viable ideas for utilising information and communication technology are to be developed for the purpose of acquiring and conveying knowledge. The Declaration emphasizes that methods for examining knowledge and capabilities must be adapted to the requirements of an increasingly globalised world.

As, for example, migratory movements are increasing, these methods must be internationalised.

In the constitution of Unesco, education is mentioned in Article 1. Therefore, this plays an outstanding role in the global work of Unesco. At the Sofia Conference on Adult Education in 2002, Unesco adopted a "Call for action" in adult education. In this, it states that access to education is also a basic right for adults and not only for children and young people.

Source: UNESCO website EAEA News 2007-08-20



INVITATION FOR ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE WORLD OF OUR CHILDREN

hosted by
MEP Karin Resetarits,

Working Group on the Quality of Childhood within the European Parliament.

Sixth session: **‘What approach to take to improve the Quality of Childhood in the European Union?’** with the well-known Austrian psychologist Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger and the early childhood expert Geseke Lundgren from Sweden.

Time: Tuesday, 6 November 2007 from 13.00 until 15.00 hours

Location: European Parliament, Rue Wiertzstraat 60, Brussels, Entrance Spinelli, Room ASP 5G 375.

This program was developed in cooperation with the Alliance for Childhood European Network Group, whose members are:

The Linkedness Project, Belgium

Gie Deboutte

Kaat Pattyn

Project Experiential Education, Belgium

Ludo Heylen

The Kempler Institute, Denmark

Claes Solberg Pedersen

Legambiente, Italy

Vittoria Cogliati Dezza

Lorenzo Vicario

Universal Education Foundation (NL)

Marijke Sluijter

Korczak Foundation, The Netherlands

Theo Cappon

Center for Youth and Development, The Hague

University for Professional Education, The Hague

Roosevelt Academy, Middelburg (NL)

René Diekstra

Verein mit Kindern Wachsen, Germany

Lienhard Valentin

Sabine Heggemann

University of Cordoba, Spain

Rosario Ortega Ruiz

Rosario Del Rey

International Association for Steiner / Waldorf

Early Childhood Education (Sweden)

Geseke Lundren

Oliver Langscheid (Germany)

European Council for Steiner

Waldorf Education, Brussels

Christopher Clouder

Alliance for Childhood European Network Group,

Brussels

Michiel Matthes

Dr. Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger

Dr. Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger is one of the leaders in Austria in the area of counselling parents and educators about raising and educating children. She has set up a counselling company called ARGE-Erziehungsberatung with a team of 13 counsellors. She has degrees in a.o. the following areas: medicine, gynaecology, psychotherapy, mediation in the area of learning and NLP.

Disseminating new psychological insights

The strength of Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger is to disseminate to many groupings and organisations, and also to the general public in Austria new psychological insights, which are based on the notion that it is our innate nature to take responsibility for our own situation and to determine ourselves our own way in life. Her programs encompass a.o.:

- Her column in one of the leading newspapers in Austria;
- Her frequent participation in television programs;
- Her on-line counselling practice;
- Her program to counsel young mothers in the work place, and the organisations that employ them, to learn to acquire a good work-life balance. The companies are very interested in this approach because so many young mothers suffer from burn-out and consequently leave the company;
- Her program to counsel schools on the basis of a dialogue between students, teachers and parents, treating each other with mutual respect, and developing together an agenda for the school.

Fit for Kids / Fit for Life

Her counselling company furthermore offers Fit for Kids / Fit for Life programs for managers and employees of child care centres, kindergarten and schools. The basis of the training is again to learn to take responsibility for the own situation and respect for the children and students and their parents.

Romania:

Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger works futhermore on a project in Romania, a country that is struggling with its transformation from an autocratic system towards a more respectful way of living together. Meanwhile the country is faced with:

- much violence inside and outside the family;
- high divorce rates;
- dropping birth rates.

Her project addresses this transformation process and the challenges to people in connection herewith.

Working Group on the Quality of Childhood and the Working Group Alliance for Children

Personally I have been involved for some time in the activities in this area and I am deeply concerned about the quality of childhood in the member states of the European Union. For this reason I have taken the initiative to set up the Working Group on the Quality of Childhood within the European Parliament. Together with the Alliance for Childhood European Network Group we hold a number of sessions, the sixth of which will take place on 6 November 2007.

Objectives of these meetings:

- To gain a better understanding of the Quality of Childhood in the EU member states; this time we will focus on the theme 'What approach to take to improve the Quality of Childhood in the European Union?'
- To think about the role that the European Parliament could play to improve the situation
- To get to grips with the principles and approaches that could lead to a betterment for children
- To form an effective working group and to get a sense of how to move on.

I take pleasure in inviting you for the sixth session on 6 November. I believe that we as members of the European Parliament working together with likeminded NGOs and committed individuals can and should play an important role in this area.

Yours sincerely,

Karin Resetarits
Member of the European Parliament

Program Outline for Tuesday 6 November 2007

Time	Subject	Speaker / facilitator
13.00	Opening	Karin Resetarits, Member of the European Parliament and Chairman of the Working Group
13.05	View from the Alliance for Childhood	Christopher Clouder, board member of the Alliance for Childhood European Network Group
13.15	How to let children and adolescents acquire key competences for the world of the 21 st century.	Dr. Martina-Leibovici-Mühlberger, founder and director of ARGE-Erziehungsberatung in Vienna, Austria
14.15	The child indicates itself when it is ready to begin formal learning. How to recognize this moment?	Geseke Lundgren of the International Association for Steiner / Waldorf Early Childhood Education. This presentation was originally planned for the workshop on 20 September, but Geseke Lundgren was prevented to deliver it.
14.45-15.00	Discussion	Karin Resetarits