Social Inclusion and Respect For Diversity

A framework for early childhood programs

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Presentation

1. A conducive landscape
2. Some premises and practices
3. A framework for str and rfd in EC
4. Enhancing the evidence base: The Joint Learning Initiative on Children and Ethnic Diversity
   Step one: Scoping the field
A conducive landscape

Discourses for EC

- Changes in perceived role of women
- Female workforce participation
- Perceived need for compensatory experiences to address children who fail at school
- Increasing the efficacy of the school system by focusing on readiness - including pre literacy, numeracy and social skills of all children
- Addressing support needs for (specific groups of) children and their families
- EC as an entry point for community development
- EC as a way to address macro social issues...eg social cohesion
A conducive landscape

The current landscape affecting EC sector

• Globalization – rapid spread of ideas, western hegemony
• Neo liberalism -reduction in state/govt interventions, unequal distribution
• Economic rationalism-benefits in terms of financial outcomes
• Children’s rights –locus of authority devolved, focus on child’s autonomy
• Diversity --ve outcomes: rapid change - migration, displacement, conflict, war
1. Diversity is a global reality
2. All children are affected by environments where discrimination prevails
3. Mounting evidence on development of ethnic awareness, identity and prejudice
4. Non intervention is destructive
5. Interventions in EY contribute to social cohesion**
Premise 1. A global reality: ‘diversity’ is –ve. All are affected

- **War/conflict affecting millions of young children** (22)

- **Environments marked by deep division and fear** -
  Includes Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Turkey, Croatia, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and others.

- **Border areas/displacements: cross border raids/unpredictable dislocations**. Includes Mexico, Chad, Thailand, Cambodia and Tibet.

- **Underlying divisions/ increased migration**
  No conflict but diversity is a source of bias and discrimination. Children may be subject to stigma because of their ethnic, religious or other cultural inheritance or they may become perpetrators of prejudice and hate. European countries, the USA, Canada, Australasia and the UK are examples of this. (UN Report of the Secretary General, 2006)
Ethnic awareness. Identity and prejudice take hold in early years. Interventions make a difference.

It is possible to increase young children’s ability to recognise instances of exclusion

Preschool Children’s Ability to Recognise that a Child is Being Excluded (%)

![Bar chart showing Preschool Children’s Ability to Recognise that a Child is Being Excluded (Before vs. After)]

- No Awareness Shown: 73%
- Aware That Child Has No Friends: 38%
- Aware That Child is Being Excluded: 50%

It is possible to increase sensitivity re how being excluded makes someone feel

Preschool Children’s Ability to Recognise How a Child Who is Excluded Feels (%)

![Bar chart showing Preschool Children’s Ability to Recognise How a Child Who is Excluded Feels (Before vs. After)]

- No Awareness Shown: 56%
- Aware That an Excluded Child Feels ‘Sad’: 44%
- Aware That an Excluded Child Feels ‘Sad’: 67%
It is possible to increase young children’s willingness to be inclusive of others different to themselves

Preschool Children’s Willingness to Play with a Chinese Girl (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the Time</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Young children are making meaning - non intervention has outcomes
Premises for focus on si and rfd

Premise - Interventions in EY contribute to social cohesion**

A focus on facilitating Si and RfD for young children and their families is seen as a way to counter forces of exclusion, voicelessness, vulnerability and inequities (Laidlaw Foundation foreword pviii - ix).
Practices - si and rfd in ece

BvLF partners and others - documented approaches re using EC programs to ...

- Develop positive self/social identity
- Facilitate a sense of belonging
- Address the development of critical thinking, negotiation, empathy
- Train adults re si and rfd issues
- Network at several levels - work with and within communities
- Model meaningful participation/equity within ‘meeting places’
- Advocate for appropriate policy development

.............................. Basis for the 3rd issue are of BvLF
Program areas of BvLF

**Strengthening the Care Environment** - conditions that promote young children’s physical, cognitive and social-emotional development.

**Successful Transitions: the Continuum from Home to School** ensuring that young children realize the opportunities generated through formal education. (strengthening schools, enhancing access)

**Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity** facilitating the promotion of inclusion and respect as a reality in young children’s lives,

Mission: To develop and support programs that create significant positive change for children up to the age of eight who are growing up in circumstances of social and economic disadvantage.
The BvLF framework
on si and rfd

- Rights base
- Outcome statements
- Key messages
- Guiding Questions – Knowl, Pract, Policy
- Continuum from practice to policy
- Joint Learning Initiative
The BvLF framework
on si and rfd

Rights base

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child

The right of all children to grow up in surroundings that are characterized by equality and respect for diversity, free from any form of discrimination due to their ‘race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status’ (Article 2).
### Outcome Statements

- **Children live in more equitable societies, and within environments that model and encourage mutual respect, empathy and conflict resolution.**

**Sub-goal si**

- Programs model meaningful participation, equity and inclusion for all children and families.

**Sub-goal rfd**

- In everyday settings, the behavior of young children and the adults around them reflect mutual respect and reciprocal understanding.
Key messages

Early life as a critical period during which *all* young children (and their families) will benefit from

1. access without discrimination
2. meaningful participation
3. developing a sense of belonging within their communities and the wider society
4. positive exposure to the many social identities
5. becoming aware of the effects of prejudice and learning to respect diversity
6. deepening their capacities for empathy by imaginative engagement with other people’s realities
7. learning the social skills of negotiation, perspective taking, anger management and conflict resolution.
## Guiding Questions

### Knowledge questions
- What evidence is available or can be generated in relation to interventions which deflect development of prejudice and discrimination in young children?
- What evidence is available or can be generated about the relationship between early childhood programs and services and the ability to address enhanced social inclusion?

### Practice questions
- What do we know about strategies for influencing and facilitating social inclusion within early childhood environments?
- What processes are related to the creation of inclusive and respectful environments for young children and families?

### Policy and advocacy questions
- What kinds of polices are supportive of enhanced social inclusion and respect for diversity?
- What evidence, processes and strategies are successful in influencing policies?
The BvLF framework

Continuum from practice to policy

Supporting *inclusiveness and mutual respect* through

- the development of quality early childhood environments,
- training and support to educators and other childcare professionals,
- awareness raising with all relevant parties,
- the meaningful participation of families in decision making and service delivery,
- integration of projects and programs into community networks.

- **evidence gathering and documentation of experiences and lessons learnt,**

- **the development and dissemination of advocacy messages that acknowledge and promote the potential of early childhood programs to contribute to cohesive and respectful societies.** (Evidence base)
What we want to know -

- Methodology(ies) for measuring SI and RFD outcomes
- Indicators of effective programs/services
- Dissemination of findings in a way that will influence policy makers
Joint Learning Initiative on Children and Ethnic Diversity

Hypotheses

*It is possible to develop effective EC programmes that address issues of si and respect for diversity*

*Interventions in early childhood make a contribution to creating more integrated and socially cohesive societies.*
Contributing to the evidence base for change

International framework

Advocacy for
Policy development
Sustainable change

Knowledge generation

Research in Practice
## Goals and activities of the JLI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collate and enhance knowledge base</th>
<th>Support research in practice</th>
<th>Influence Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To scope the field.</td>
<td>To build capacity among researchers and ec professionals</td>
<td>To facilitate an intl network of academics, policy-makers and practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To disseminate and share findings.</td>
<td>To support innovative approaches to research and evaluation</td>
<td>To raise awareness of the importance of ec services for social cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify research needs</td>
<td>To use findings towards the development of effective diversity programs.</td>
<td>To engage strategically with key policy makers, multi-nationals, govts &amp; agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop research projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>To secure policies and other supports for the development and delivery of effective early years diversity programs.</td>
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</table>
Plan for the JLI 2007-2013

1. Bring together players and experts (steering comm)

2. Organise Learning Groups – north/south – Themes
   1. War/Post conflict/Displacement/Divisions
   2. Methodology
   3. Policy
   4. Networks
   5. Other

3. Choose representative regions (capacity build)

4. Undertake empirical research which will provide evidence of effectiveness

5. Identify generalisable processes and context specific approaches

6. Identify messages for advocacy (levels and contexts)

7. Disseminate findings at all levels (throughout)
   - Website
   - International conference(s)
   - Books and publications
Step one: Scoping the field

Dr Oscar Odena
Advantages of Systematic Searches

Systematic review systems are established in Medicine and Social Sciences (Cochrane & Campbell collaborations)

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES:

• Questions & criteria to appraise the studies reviewed
• Explicit & detailed methods used collaboratively / Transparency

ADVANTAGES:

• More clarity in reporting search strategies than in standard academic reviews (e.g. criteria for including/excluding studies)
• Policy makers & professionals less likely to misread research for their own purposes
• Possibility of replication / Accountable / Easy to update
Joint Learning Initiative on Early Childhood and Ethnic Diversity (JLI-ECED) – Phase 1

Two main search questions

• 1 What research has been published to date on young children’s acquisition and development of ethnic attitudes and identities?

• 2 What research has been published to date that describes and/or evaluates early childhood programmes that include a focus on ethnic diversity and that aim to promote social inclusion, mutual respect and/or pro-social behaviours amongst children within and/or outside settings?
Inclusion Criteria for Systematic Search

• For publications they needed to be:
  – original research (qualitative or quantitative), thus omitting opinion/theoretical publications and reviews;
  – in English or Spanish;
  – on children aged 0-8 years;
  – and they needed to include a focus on either acquisition/development of ethnic attitudes or diversity education programs aimed at ethnic inclusion/respect/pro-social behaviours.

• ‘Ethnic’ and ‘Ethnicity’ are used in a generic sense to refer to people’s group identities, based upon one or more of the following: race, nationality, religion, language and/or shared history.
Some results: systematic searches with international databases (*Dialnet, ERIC, etc.*)

• Key words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>DIVERSITY</th>
<th>PROGRAMME</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>early-childhood</td>
<td>cultur$</td>
<td>curricul$</td>
<td>anti-bias</td>
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<tr>
<td>early-years</td>
<td>ethnic$</td>
<td>initiative</td>
<td>cohesion</td>
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<tr>
<td>preschool</td>
<td>race</td>
<td>intervention</td>
<td>empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young children</td>
<td>racial</td>
<td>program$</td>
<td>inclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Searches: (1st) early-childhood AND cultur$ AND curricul$
• (2nd) early-childhood AND cultur$ AND initiative...and so on
• From 64 combinations...up to 384, if needed
Example of documents retrieved from *ERIC* until 17 August 2007

• Summary table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documents retrieved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documents omitted</td>
<td>925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents included (with Abstract)</td>
<td>122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documents included (without Abstract)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of documents without repetitions</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Currently analysing the emerging data
Comprehensive early childhood care is key to creating a world characterized by hope and change rather than by deprivation and despair and to building countries that are thriving and free (UNICEF, 2001)

Social inclusion and respect for diversity within any situation or context do not take hold by happenstance (Friendly and Leroy pg 20).

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Based on...


- Odena. O. (in progress) *Review of literature on young children and ethnic diversity, BvLF*


AND

120 (BvLF supported) projects or programs around the world