

21st

EECERA annual conference

Education from birth : research, practices
and educational policy.

Geneva, Switzerland, 14th -17th September 2011

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Recruitment of men to Norwegian kindergartens

Presentation on the 21st EECERA annual conference, 16.9.2011, Geneva/Switzerland

Abstract

In this presentation examples on different recruitment efforts worked out in the different counties in Norway will be presented. It is reflected on why it is important with more men working in Norwegian kindergartens, and why there are so few men working there today. The presenter was managing the national project of recruiting men to the kindergartens on the behalf of the Ministry of Education and Research.

In many countries there are very few men in care for young children. In Norway we have a consensus that men and woman should be a part of young children lives, both in home and kindergarten. Gender inequalities have great present interest in Norway. More gender balance in Norwegian kindergarten is outspoken. The government holds that children in kindergarten need to experience that both genders take part in care and everyday life and activities in the kindergarten. This is based on an equal society were everybody can use their abilities and interest, irrespective of gender. Equality between the sexes has to be the foundation of pedagogical activities in kindergarten. In order to give young children a stimulating and pedagogical environment we find it important to provide more gender balance. This is also outspoken in the Norwegian Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (Ministry of Education and Research 2006).

The government therefore, in 2008, urged action to increase the percentage of men working in kindergarten to 20 % among the staff members. The Ministry of Education and Research (2006) worked out an Action Plan for Gender Equality in nursery and primary education 2008 - 2010. Regarding the kindergarten there are two main goals in this plan: 1) The learning environment in kindergarten and basic education shall promote equality between boys and girls; 2) Better gender balance among member of staff in pre schools and basic education.

Action 3.4 in the action plan was the goal to establishing recruitments teams in collaboration with the county. These teams are to do out-reach recruitment work and market kindergarten as workplaces for men, and to get men to full fill an early childhood education.

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In spite of this we find relatively few men in professional care. Research shows that men and woman have different motivations for working with children (Emilsen & Lysklett 2009). There must be space for different motivations in care taking, and different people, men and woman, represent variety (Emilsen & Løge Hagen 2010). It is important for young children to experience diversity, both in play and learning. This is important to have in mind when we recruit men to care for young children.

The methods of the research presented in the paper include literature studies and descriptions on various actions that have been started locally and regionally. Different approaches and methods have been used to arouse an interest in a better gender-balanced work force in Norwegian Kindergartens. It is questioned why the governmental goals are not reached, and why the percentage of men in kindergartens is still only 9 %.

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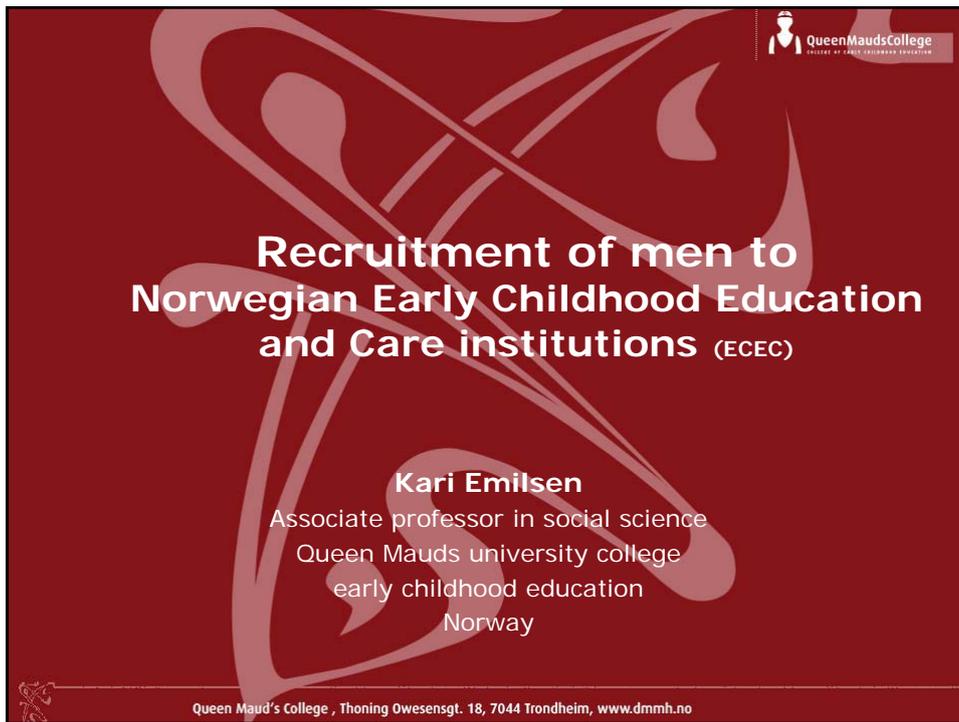
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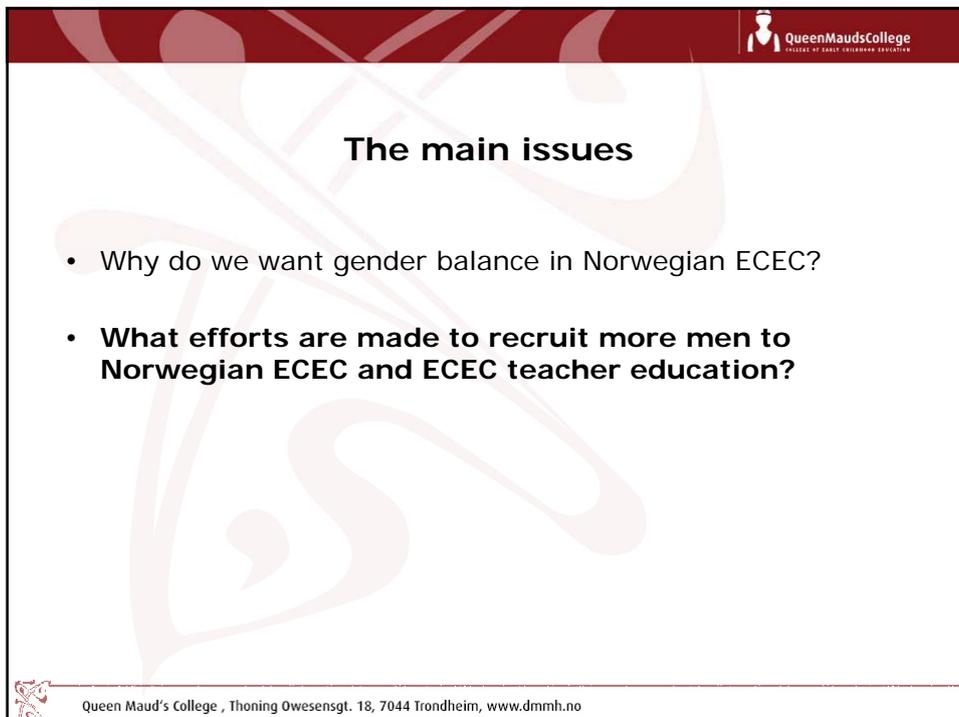


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Recruitment of men to Norwegian Early Childhood Education and Care institutions (ECEC)

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The main issues

- Why do we want gender balance in Norwegian ECEC?
- **What efforts are made to recruit more men to Norwegian ECEC and ECEC teacher education?**

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Background information

- Almost every child in Norway attend ECEC
 - 89 % of the children between 1 and 5 years of age
 - 97 % of the children aged 5 attend a ECEC (SSB 2010).
- The Norwegian welfare state provides opportunity for men to be included in care for young children both private and professional
- Since 2006 ECEC are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research and are considered as a part of children's education and not just a place for care, as a substitute for home.



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Background information

- ECEC have both professional and non-professional employees. The professional staff has a 3 year Bachelor's Degree specialized in early childhood.
- The share of men in ECEC are 9 % (SSB 2010).
- The share of men in ECEC teacher education are 14 %.



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Why do we want gender balance in Norwegian ECEC?

In Norway there is a consensus about the importance of men taking part in young children's lives.

- In order to give young children a stimulating and pedagogical environment it is important to provide more gender balance in ECEC.
- It is important for young children to experience diversity, both in play and learning.
- Gender differences in interaction with children can provide a rewarding diversity among the staff.

This is also declared in the Norwegian Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (Ministry of Education and Research 2006).



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Why do we want gender balance in Norwegian ECEC?

Surveys of the expectations of ECEC staff regarding men's professions show that both women and men believe that men have a special position in ECEC

Men and women are different and can complement each other (Lyskett og Emilsen 2007)

Male staff in ECEC can bring in other activities and manners than women do, and it is positive to have more masculine values in ECEC (Lyskett og Emilsen 2007).



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Why do we want gender balance in Norwegian ECEC?

It has been pointed out that boys in particular need an adult man as a role model. At the same time, kindergarten employees believe that personality and aptness are most important, not gender (Lyskett og Emilsen 2007) .

ECEC need different men and females.

About 9 out of 10 women believe that more men in ECEC are important for the children's development and for the working environment (Lyskett og Emilsen 2007).

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What efforts are made to recruit more men to Norwegian ECEC?



Moderate gender quotas and positive affirmative action is ...

Positive action is to treat the sexes differently in order to promote Equality between women and men. Moderate gender is a form of positive discrimination.

It is generally accepted to give special treatment of women to positions and programs in which they are in the minority to achieve gender equality (cf Equality Act § 3 a.) (Reform 2009)

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What efforts are made to recruit more men to Norwegian ECEC?

Governmental Action Plans for Gender Equality

“Action Plan for Gender Equality in Kindergartens 2004–2007” (The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs)

“Action Plan for Gender Equality in nursery and primary education 2008 – 2010” (The Ministry of Education and Research).

Gender equality work requires us to act here and now but also entails systematic and long-term work on attitudes. This Action Plan deals with the most important measures the Ministry wishes to implement to promote gender equality in ECEC and primary and secondary education and training” (KD 2008)



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What efforts are made to recruit more men to Norwegian ECEC?

Regarding the ECEC there are two main goals in the action plan:

- 1) The learning environment in ECEC and basic education shall promote equality between boys and girls**
- 2) Better gender balance among member of staff in ECEC and basic education.**

Increase the percentage of men in ECEC to 20% within 2010

Increase the percentage of male students in teacher education (KD 2008)



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What actions are made to recruit more men to Norwegian ECEC?

Networks for Men in ECEC (MIB)
Was established in a number of municipalities and regions

Demonstration ECEC
The ECEC commits itself to inform and guide other about how ECEC should recruit and keep men in ECEC and to develop their own activities further.



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What actions are made to recruit more men to Norwegian ECEC?

Recruitment teams
" In collaboration with the county governors recruitment teams for men in ECEC will be established. These teams are to do out-reach recruitment work and market ECEC as workplaces for men, for example directed towards pupils in basic education, school owners, at educational fairs, towards the Labour and Welfare Services and other places where young men meet" (KD 2008).



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What actions are made to recruit more men to Norwegian ECEC?

National meetings
- Conferences/meetings

Sharing experiences
- Learn from each other

Common web site to all "actions"



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What actions are made to recruit more men to Norwegian ECEC?

Many of the recruitment teams report that they have:

The teams were broadly put together and this strengthen the efforts to achieve a common goal.

Most recruitment teams have collaborated well with the demonstration ECEC.

Many have achieved much with little resources.

This work relies on enthusiasts.

It is essential that the funds are earmarked for recruitment efforts.

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Do we see some results?

Never before have we seen so many male applicants to ECEC teacher education as in 2011!

In 2008 it was 12,9 % male applicants
In 2011 it is 14, 5 % male applicants

We had 19.2 % male applicants at Queen Maud University College



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What efforts are made to recruit more men to Norwegian ECEC?

13 % of the ECEC have reached the target of 20 per cent men, and several are above the target.

ECEC that succeeded have used the following measures:

- Marketing the ECEC, and an active use of media
- Focusing on the advantages and priority areas of the ECEC in a manner that is attractive to men.
- Having many male employees makes it easier to recruit more men
- Formulating job vacancy advertisements that appeal to men
- Supporting continuing and further education of male employees
- Requesting male students for in-service practice periods
- Recruiting boys who have chosen vocational practice in lower secondary education
- Requesting male apprentices who plan to become children and youth care workers
- Cooperating with the MIB (Men in ECEC) networks and the university colleges
- Placing the topic on the municipal agenda (KD 2008).



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We see some challenges

- The goal on 20% men is too low
- Recruitment is too slow
(Both in teacher education and in ECEC)
- There is not sufficient interest for the recruitment of men either nationally or locally.
- New action plan, what will it contain?
- We have challenges in the field of practice in relation to attitudes to gender balance in Norwegian ECEC

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A glimpse of Norwegian children in "Nature and Outdoor ECEC".



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