

23rd

EECERA annual conference

Tallinn, Estonia, 28th - 31st august 2013



Emilsen, Kari & Rohrmann, Tim (2013).

How do working groups of male educators contribute to professionalism and quality in ECE?

Presentation on the 23rd EECERA annual conference, 29.8.2013, Tallinn/Estonia

Abstract

This study analyses male worker's groups and their contribution to processes of professionalization. "Professionalising the early childhood workforce and employing male workers can be seen as independent trends: there is no necessary relationship between the two", Cameron (2006/2012) has stated. Male worker's support groups are one of several strategies towards a more gender-balanced ECEC work force in Germany and Norway. What do they add to quality?

Within the framework of gender theory, ECEC is viewed as an extremely gendered profession. It is stated that more variety in teams and organizations can contribute to better quality. A multi-method approach was used to gain insight into the conditions under which working groups can meet expectations regarding gender-consciousness and improving pedagogical quality. 30 Coordinators and leaders of working groups in Germany and in Norway answered a quantitative questionnaire as well as a short qualitative online inquiry. Moreover, group discussions and a small number of in-depth interviews were conducted and analyzed. As part of the research, results were reflected to and discussed with the participants prior to publication.

We found that working groups address many issues relevant to quality development. On the other hand, fluctuation in participation and inadequate qualifications of group leaders limit their effectiveness. Men's working groups can provide support for male workers and thus bolster their decision to remain in the field. They also can induce processes of change. Experts who coordinate groups need adequate qualification for promoting gender consciousness and dealing with personal issues and group processes.

Keywords

gender, male ECE workers, professionalization, training, masculinities

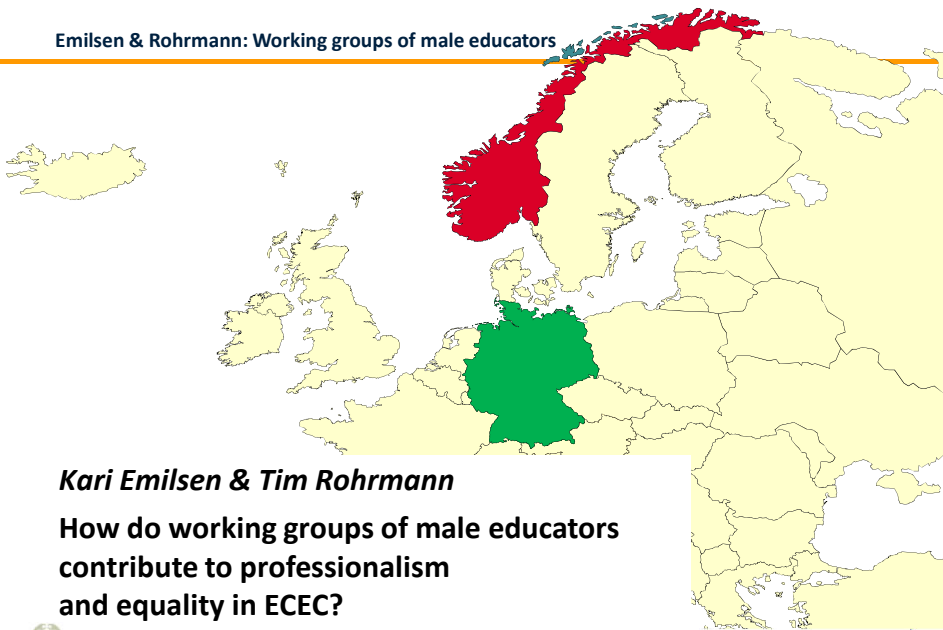
Authors

Kari Emilsen, Associate professor in social science at Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (QMUC), Trondheim, Norway, Kari.Emilsen@dmmh.no



Dr. Tim Rohrmann, Evangelic High School, Dresden, Germany, rohrmann@wechselspiel-online.de

Emilsen, Kari & Rohrmann, Tim (2013).
How do working groups of male educators contribute
to professionalism and equality in ECEC?

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators



Kari Emilsen & Tim Rohrmann
How do working groups of male educators
contribute to professionalism
and equality in ECEC?





QueenMaudsCollege
COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Wechselspiel
Institut für Pädagogik und Psychologie

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

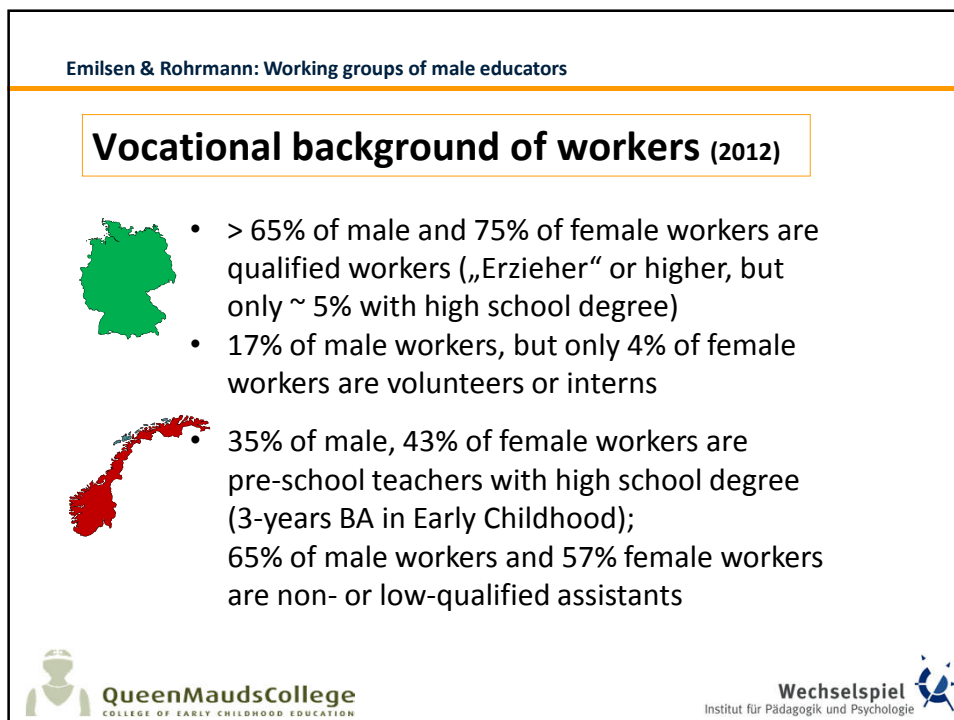
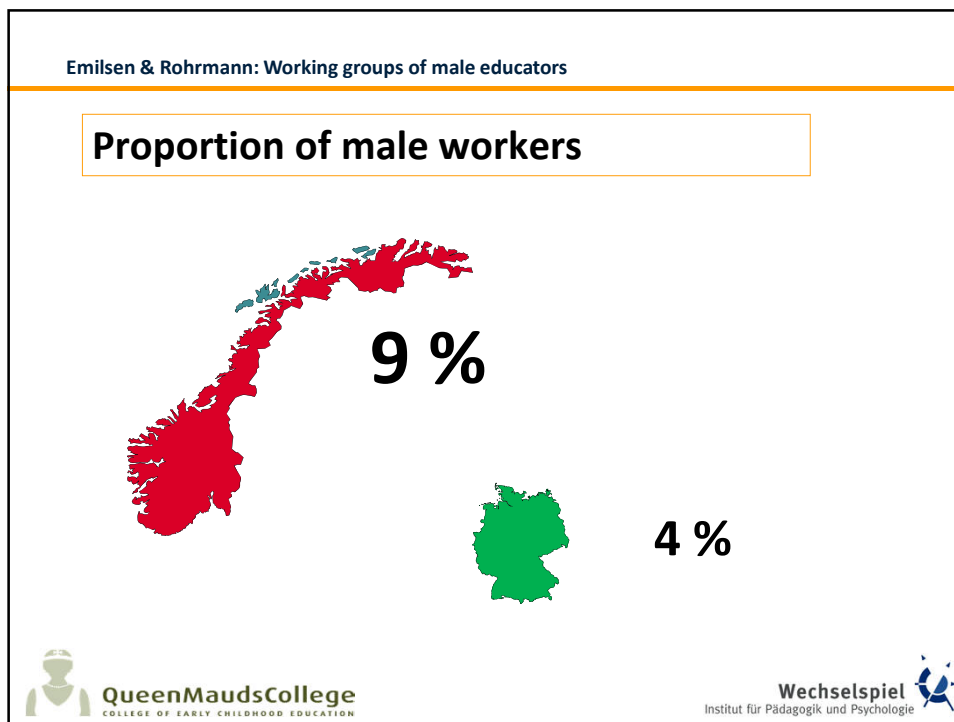
Background

- Most children in Norway and Germany attend ECEC institutions
- ECEC centers are seen as a part of children's education and not just a place for care or as a substitute for home.
- There is strong societal and political support for participation of men in private and public care and education



QueenMaudsCollege
COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Wechselspiel
Institut für Pädagogik und Psychologie



Public funded measures towards more men in ECEC's



- Since 2001: action plans on gender equality
- Recruitment teams in every county; national coordination
- Networks for Men in ECEC (MIB) were established in several municipalities and regions



- Since 2010: public funded measures
- Coordination office for men in Kitas (ECCs), funded by the Ministry of Family Affairs
- European Social Fund (ESF) model projects
- Working groups for Men in ECE were supported or established in many regions



Our study

Support groups for men in ECEC are a source as well as a measure for more men in ECEC in Germany and in Norway

What role do they play:

- In the development of professionalism and quality?
- In recruiting more men in ECEC?



What are „working groups of male professional caretakers/educators“?

- self-initiated support groups of men working in ECEC centres *or*
- professional-led groups for male ECEC professionals (ranging from collegial consultation to supervision)
- working groups supporting measures and actions aiming at more men in the field of ECEC



Methods

- quantitative surveys in Germany (2011/2012) and Norway (2013)
- our experiences with national coordination (Norway 2010-2012, Germany 2011-2013)
- group discussion with coordinators in Germany (2012)
- in-depth interviews in Norway (n=2) and Germany (n=3) (2013)



Emilsen, Kari & Rohrmann, Tim (2013).
 How do working groups of male educators contribute
 to professionalism and equality in ECEC?



Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Quantitative results: Germany

- 2011 and 2012 leaders and coordinators of working groups for male ECEC workers completed a mostly quantitative questionnaire.
- In 2012, 26 colleagues took part.

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Quantitative results: Germany

Participation

- On average, 12-13 men took part in a meeting
- The number of participants varied from „two to four“ up to 55 (!)
- The number of interested men who at least sometimes joined meetings was much higher, sometimes more than three times as high
- Altogether, more than 600 men in Germany had taken part in a working group at least once (but that's less than 5% of male ECEC workers in Germany)

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Quantitative results: Germany

Frequency and duration of meetings

- Most groups meet quarterly or every second month, few groups every month
- On average, meetings last 2-3 hours
- Some groups organise day workshops

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Quantitative results: Germany

Who takes the lead?

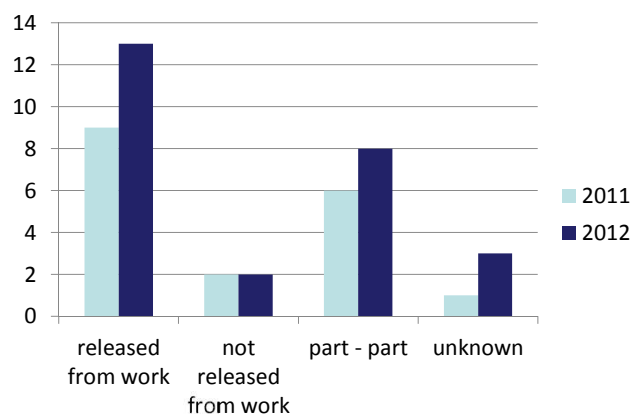
- Few working groups are self-organized by ECEC workers
- Many working groups are moderated by a professional
- Only a few working groups are led by a professional trainer or supervisor with experience in counseling, group dynamics and/or gender issues

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Quantitative results: Germany

Working time or off-work?

Do providers release men from daily work so that they
can participate in the groups in (paid) working time?



QueenMaudsCollege
COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Wechselspiel
Institut für Pädagogik und Psychologie

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Quantitative results: Norway (N=11)

In general...

- ... it seems that men's working groups have less impact than earlier – only few groups are still working
- Groups vary according to the number of participants (5 – 60)
- Groups are usually organized by local authorities
- Most men get the opportunity to attend meetings during working hours
- The group leader may often have a role as a representative



QueenMaudsCollege
COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Wechselspiel
Institut für Pädagogik und Psychologie

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Quantitative results: Norway (N=11)

Duration of meetings

- On average, meetings last 3 hours
- Groups organise meetings themselves or attend different arrangements

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Quantitative results: Germany

Germany: Issues

- colleague exchange (the „what’s going on“ exchange)
- current events and developments
- specific themes and issues, e.g. ...

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Quantitative results: Germany

Issues (2011-2012, N=24)

- Working as a man in a female team (9)
- The „general distrust“ of men (8)

*These issues are very important
for the men, and there is no other
frame/context in which they can
be discussed.*

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Quantitative results: Germany

Issues (2011-2012, N=24)

- Working as a man in a female team (9)
- The „general distrust“ of men (8)
- Role as a man in the institution (7)
- Reflection of masculinity, male identity, autobiography (7)
- Exchanging every day practices, general and specific educational issues (10)
- Gender sensitive pedagogy & gender mainstreaming (7)
- Public Relations for more men, boys' vocational orientations (7)
- *and many other issues ...*

Quantitative results: Norway (N=11)

Norway: Issues

The focus for groups is varied at each meeting.

- Meet other men in the same “position”
- Recruitment
- Gender sensitive pedagogy and gender mainstreaming
- To socialise and to network

In-depth interviews

What group leaders think about:

- Importance of male workers’ groups in general
- Importance of male workers groups for recruitment of more men (Norway)
- Role and qualification of the moderator / leader of the group
- Contribution of men’s working groups to professionalism and quality in ECEC
- Conditions needed for continuity of groups

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

Why are working groups for men important to male ECEC workers?

- To meet other men: experience solidarity and empathy among men
- To be inspired and motivated
- To develop as a professional carer
- To keep men and recruit more men to ECEC centers
- To be a “watchdog” –
(to make sure that official guidelines are followed)

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

What do working groups contribute to professionalism and quality?

Working groups can contribute to the development of professionalization and quality in ECECs

because...

- For the time being: “Men recruit men”
- Men in ECECs seriously reflect on their contribution
- Many male groups work systematically on gender issues and male identity.

Which conditions are needed for men's working groups, for enabling them to work continuously over a longer period of time?

- Support of providers is crucial for regular participation of workers (both funding and opportunity)
- Coordination could be placed in higher ranks of institutional hierarchies
- Motivation and devoted group leaders are essential
- Qualifications of group leaders is an issue which should be addressed



Conclusions: Professionalism & quality

Men in ECECs claim that they make a difference – they challenge the culture and traditions in ECECs. Men's working groups ensure this by

- supporting men and thus keeping them in the field;
- giving room for reflection of gender issues and the role of men and women in ECEC;
- working on many others issues which are relevant for the further development of ECEC.



Conclusions: More men in ECEC

Men in ECECs claim that

- they are the best representatives for recruiting more men to ECEC
- they are role models for boys' choice of career.

but

Male workers often do not have much time to engage in activities for **"more men in ECEC"**.

Using men's working groups as a resource for these activities can get in conflict with other objectives of the groups, e.g. exchange and reflection.

Conclusion: Do we need men's working groups?

*If we had 30% male workers
in ECEC centers, there would be
no need for specific groups
for male workers.*

German worker

Emilsen, Kari & Rohrmann, Tim (2013).
How do working groups of male educators contribute
to professionalism and equality in ECEC?

Emilsen & Rohrmann: Working groups of male educators

**If you have further questions
please contact us:**

Dr. Tim Rohrmann

Wechselspiel – Institute for pedagogy and
psychology

rohrmann@wechselspiel-online.de

Kari Emilsen

Associate professor

Queen Mauds University College

kem@dmmh.no



QueenMaudsCollege
COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Wechselspiel
Institut für Pädagogik und Psychologie

