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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Gender, day care and innovation - some preliminary ideas and reflections

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Overview

- About me (in brief!)
- About the learning organization in Norwegian ECECs and innovation
- Some tentative questions concerning innovation, gender and ECEC...



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About me

- Diverse background:
 - PHD in sociology
 - Commission research
 - Quality in ECEC in the municipality of Bodø
 - National competency survey (2012)
 - Survey of open ECEC (2014)

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About me

- Other relevant projects
 - Innovation in public sector: critical infrastructure and Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) welfare technology
 - GENINNO-project: **gender and innovation** in VRI
 - Publications in the pipeline
 - But: I have not studied gender within daycare




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Several changes taking place outside and within ECEC in Norway

- There has been a vast expansion of access to ECEC in Norway
 - 90% of all children between 1-5 in ECEC (2013), risen from 60 % early 2000. 92 % pay for 41 hrs a week or more
 - Rise in numbers of the youngest children: 40 % few years ago to 90 % today
 - Become part of the education system
 - Call for participation of children (ratification of the child convention)
 - Competing for parents - parents as consumers
 - From quantity to quality
 - Problematizing the flaws in competence among the staff




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There has been a vast expansion of the ECEC sector the last decade. We have built capacity, but now I argue for building quality. «You only talk about quality» someone commented to me recently and that is not entirely wrong. But it is because it is so important. And it marks the first budget of the new government. [...] The quality is going to be lifted.



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The learning organization

- A call for change and development in ECEC-organizations
- The solution: ECECs has to become learning organizations
- (critical question: is this a kind of lightning rod?)

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From the ECEC framework plan


- As a pedagogical social institution, the kindergarten must to be able to change and develop. The kindergarten shall be a learning organization, well equipped to meet new demands and challenges. Development of kindergarten quality imply a constant development of the competencies of the staff. (p 22)

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On innovation in health care


Health care



Context

- “The elderly wave”
- Lack of resources is an outspoken problem that frames the issue of innovation:
 - What to do?
 - The competent user (participation and independence)
 - Meet quality standards
 - New generation of elderly
 - More dementia


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Areas pointed to in the report:

- New technology (AAL + new products?)
- Architecture and new ways of living (boformer)
- User participation and independence (egenmestring)
- Research and development




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Innovation as solution (NOU 2011:11)

- Innovation defined as: Within business life innovation is often defined as: “a new product, a new service, a new production process, application or organization form launched in the market or applied in production to create economic value” (White paper no 7 (2008-2009)).
- In our context it could be more correct to say that innovation shall contribute to create added value seen from the perspective of the object of the organization. Innovation does not have to be based on new research or technical knowledge, but can be knowledge applied in a new connection or in a new way. This is often the case in innovation in public service production




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Innovation...

- Jensen et al (2008): Innovation is...
 - ... familiar or new knowledge applied in a new way or new connection
 - ... Ideas converted to a better practice making added value (not only economic)




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Innovation

- Enterprising, daring and experimenting in the form: risk and failure
- A way of relating to tasks: a culture
- A process where the result is not known in advance (adventure)



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Innovation in EU: Horizon 2020

- <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/what-horizon-2020>
 - Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020) – in addition to the private investment that this money will attract. It promises more breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts by taking great ideas from the lab to the market.
 - By coupling research and innovation, Horizon 2020 is helping to achieve this with its emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges. The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.




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Innovation and ECEC- some questions

- What is the difference between innovation and the learning organization?
- The focus on the organizational surroundings an inspiration for development?
- Too commercial?
- Will there be the same obstacles for innovation in ECECs as in health care: resources, culture?
 - A notion such as risk? Unfamiliar?




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Gender and innovation

- An under-researched field of investigation in general
- The GENINNO-project
 - explores the field of gender and innovation connected to a large regional, NRC financed innovation programme in Norway running from 2007-2017: VRI
 - VRI has an action plan for gender balance




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Gender and innovation

- Book chapter for the international handbook of gender and innovation (Kvidal & Ljunggren)
- Discourse analysis and governmentality
- Gender is made relevant insofar as it is useful to the innovation process as it is seen as driven by «different approaches»; women represents difference
 - Connected to a neo-liberal discourse
 - Systemic and integrated in governance




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Gender and innovation

- “crack in the ice”: an alternative gender perspective on innovations
 - Who is included in the processes?
 - What kind of knowledge is acknowledged?
 - Who`s knowledge is acknowledged?
 - For what purpose?



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For the kindergarten...

- The need for a combination of a gender perspective as well a child perspective when approaching innovation in this field.



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