

# ANNUAL REPORT



## EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY AND CARING FOR CHILDREN

92

ANNUAL

REPORT



**EMPLOYMENT,  
EQUALITY AND CARING  
FOR CHILDREN**

**European Commission Network on Childcare**  
and other Measures to reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Network on Childcare and other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities for Men and Women: Report on Work undertaken in 1992</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Mothers, Fathers and Employment 1985-91</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Leave Arrangements for Employed Parents</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Structural Funds and Childcare Services</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>The Council Recommendation on Child Care Introduction - Peter Moss</b>	<b>17</b>

---

---

**Around Europe with the Network**

---

<b>Introduction - Peter Moss</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Belgium: Flemish-speaking Community Fred Deven</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Belgium: French-speaking Community Perrine Humblet, Florence Pirard</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Denmark: Jytte Juul Jensen</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Germany: Monika Jaeckel</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Greece: Vivie Papadimitriou</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Spain: Irene Balaguer</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>France: Martine Felix, Bruno Ribes</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Ireland: Anne McKenna</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Italy: Patrizia Ghedini</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Luxembourg: Jean Altmann</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Netherlands: Liesbeth Pot</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Portugal: Maria Eduarda Ramirez</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>United Kingdom: Bronwen Cohen</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Annex: Text of Council Recommendation on Child Care</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Addresses of Network Members</b>	<b>77</b>

---

# FOREWORD



*Agnès Hubert*

**Women have historically carried most of the burden of caring within the family - caring especially for children, but also for disabled or ill adults and the elderly. They still do. Often, their attempts to reconcile employment and family responsibilities have broken down completely, so**

**that they have to give up employment; or they have managed to work outside the home but at the cost of promotion opportunities, reasonable terms and conditions of employment or their physical or mental health. Apart from this personal cost, the result has been a loss to the labour market of many skilled and effective workers in all sectors and at all levels of seniority.**

**T**he European Community has committed itself to the principle of equal opportunities for women and men, with the Treaty of Rome providing a legal basis for its policies and activities in this area. From an early stage, the Community recognised that successful reconciliation of employment with caring for children was essential for the achievement of its objective of equal opportunities: problems with childcare and other caring responsibilities clearly inhibited equal treatment between women and men. One of the ways in which the Community is addressing this issue is through the work of the group whose activities are described in this Annual Report.

The setting up of the Childcare Network in 1986, under the **Second Medium-term Community Programme: Equal Opportunities for Women**, was in itself a recognition of the crucial importance of childcare. Subsequent initiatives taken by the Community have included, for example, a Directive on the protection of pregnant women or women who have recently given birth; the inclusion of a call for the development of measures to reconcile employment and family responsibilities in the Community Charter of the Basic Social Rights of Workers; the NOW Initiative; and a Council Recommendation on Children.

The **Third Medium-term Community Action Programme: Equal Opportunities for Women and Men** began in 1991. As part of this Programme, the Commission has continued to support the Childcare Network, as one of eight networks which contribute to the implementation of the Commission's Equal Opportunities policy.

The Childcare Network has acquired a new name under the Third Equal Opportunity Programme - **the Network on Childcare and other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities for Men and Women**. This change of name symbolises the Community's recognition that workers with caring responsibilities could benefit from, and should have access to, a whole range of measures; services providing care for children are necessary, but by no means sufficient to achieve reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities. These measures can be demonstrated to be of value not only to employees and the children and adults they may care for, but also to employers and society at large.

The report that follows contains a detailed review of the work of the Network in 1992, setting it in the context of the Community's Third Action Programme. The Programme is effectively a statement of the Commission's policy on equal opportunities for women and men. It sets three objectives: the implementation and development of equality legislation; the integration of women into the labour market; and improving the status of women in society. The work of the Network relates to the second of these objectives, which is concerned not only with increasing employment for women but with improving the quality of women's employment. As the report shows, the Network's activities include an active publishing programme, involvement in conferences and seminars, collecting and disseminating information and examples of good practice and reviewing developments. It is a measure of the energy and enthusiasm of Network members that so much has been achieved.

The report has four main parts. The first gives an account of the Network's work in 1992. The second

contains a number of short items summarising some results from three pieces of work being undertaken by the Network - on parental employment, statutory leave arrangements for parents, and the Structural Funds and childcare services. The third part focuses on an important Community initiative in 1992 - the Council Recommendation on Childcare. The text of the Recommendation is given in full, together with an introduction by the Network. The final part consists of articles written by members of the Network about an issue or development in their own country; within the variety of these articles, there are a number of recurring themes which are considered by the Network Coordinator in his introduction to these articles. A full list of Network members and Network publications is given at the end of the report.

**Employment, Equality and Caring for Children** is a new style of Annual Report for the Network. The aim has been to broaden the contents, improve the appearance and increase the distribution and readership. I hope you will find the report interesting, informative and accessible, and that it helps to give you a clear picture of the Community's increasing interest in the issue of childcare and other caring responsibilities.

*Agnès Hubert*

Head of Equal Opportunities Unit  
Directorate-General V (Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs)

**Commission of the European Communities**

# REPORT ON WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 1992

**The Network is one of eight European Commission networks, supporting the Community's work to promote equal opportunities between women and men. It was established by the European Commission in 1986, as part of the Community's Second Equal Opportunities Programme. In November 1991, the Network began a new programme of work, as part of the Third Medium-Term Community Action Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which continues until 1995. Peter Moss, the Coordinator of the Network, gives an overview of its work during the first year of its new programme.**

## INTRODUCTION TO THE NETWORK AND ITS PROGRAMME OF WORK

The Third Equal Opportunity Programme outlines the general role of the Network: "*to monitor developments, evaluate policy options, collect and disseminate information*". It also refers to a number of specific tasks, including supporting the NOW Initiative and "*establishing criteria for the definition of quality in childcare services*". The work of the Network is further defined by a second important European Community initiative - the Council Recommendation on Childcare [see page 74]. The Recommendation has a broad objective - the reconciliation of employment and the upbringing of children - and proposes a broad approach, including initiatives in four areas: childcare services; leave arrangements for parents; making the workplace more responsive to the needs of employed parents; and promoting increased participation by men in the care of children.

'Childcare', as defined in the Recommendation and in the work of the Network, covers the many and varied measures that are needed to enable employment and the upbringing of children to be combined in a way that promotes equality between women and men, the best use of parents' skills and abilities and the well-being and development of children. This broad perspective, together with the extension of the Network's work to include some issues arising from the care of disabled and other dependent adults, is reflected in the Network's new name, adopted at the beginning of its current contract: the **Network on Childcare and other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities for Men and Women**.

The Network's programme of work covers the four areas outlined in the Recommendation: childcare services, leave, workplace and men as carers. In the first two years of the programme, priority will be given to leave arrangements, men as carers for children and childcare services. 'Childcare services' have always been a priority for the Network. But what do we mean by 'childcare services'? Children receive care while their parents are at work in a wide variety of settings - not only in services people usually think of when talking about 'childcare for working parents' (nurseries, childminders, after-school centres and so on), but also in nursery and primary schools and, especially for children under 3, with relatives. All settings providing care for children, whether or not this is their main function, need to be taken into account.

## WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE NETWORK AT A EUROPEAN LEVEL

The Network consists of an expert from each Member State (with two from Belgium), and a Coordinator; their names and addresses are given at the back of the Annual Report. The Network is the responsibility of the Equality Unit in the European Commission's Directorate-General V (Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs). The Network has a contract with the Equality Unit, which provides the Network with an annual budget to undertake an agreed programme of work. During 1992, the Network has begun a wide range of projects.

**Guide to Good Practice**

Following the Council Recommendation on Childcare, the Commission is preparing a Guide to Good Practice on how to reconcile employment and caring for children in ways that promote gender equality. Members of the Network have been involved in discussions with the Equality Unit about the content of the Guide, and are contributing to its preparation.

Several pieces of work are planned for 1993 which will complement the Recommendation and the Guide by disseminating information about services providing care for children, which exemplify the principles and objectives advocated in these two documents. **Childcare North and South** will present the world-famous services for young children in Denmark and Northern Italy, using videos and an accompanying text. Examples of innovative services in rural areas will be contained in a report on **Childcare Services for Rural Families**, currently being prepared by a Network member (*Bronwen Cohen*, United Kingdom).

**Structural Funds and Rural Areas**

Individual Network members have contributed in their own countries to the childcare component of the NOW Initiative, which is funded from the Structural Funds. More generally, the Network drafted material which formed the basis for the Commission's **Guide to Childcare Measures** in the NOW Initiative. In addition to the NOW Initiative, the Network has a long-standing interest in the wider role of the Structural Funds in supporting the development of childcare services. The Network plans to prepare a Guide to the use of the Structural Funds for Childcare Services as soon as the rules governing the Structural Funds have been reviewed during 1993.

Members of the Network with a particular interest in rural areas (*Eduarda Ramirez*, Portugal; *Vivie Papadimitriou*, Greece; *Anne McKenna*, Ireland; *Bronwen Cohen*, United Kingdom) made study visits to services in Greece and Denmark, following earlier visits to Portugal and France. These visits, together with other material including a questionnaire being completed by Network members, will contribute to the report on

**Childcare Services for Rural Families**, which apart from presenting examples of innovative services, will review current services and policies, examine obstacles to development and consider funding possibilities, including the potential contribution of Structural Funds.

Finally, a report has been prepared by a Network member (*Anne McKenna*, Ireland) entitled **Structural Funds and Childcare, with special reference to Rural Regions** [see page 16 for the report's main recommendations]. In its draft form, this report was circulated for comment to the three different parts of the Structural Fund - the European Social Fund, the European Regional Fund and the European Agricultural Fund. This process has proved to be valuable, both in ensuring complete accuracy in a complex area and in developing dialogue on the role of the Funds in promoting childcare services.

**Information about Services**

The Third Equal Opportunities Programme refers to the Guide to Good Practice "*giving guidelines on the information that Member States should collect regularly in relation to childcare services*". A report is being prepared by a Network member (*Perrine Humblet*, Belgium), analysing the current situation on information about services (both provision and usage) in the Member States, based on a questionnaire completed by each Network member, and making recommendations. Her final report should be completed in the first half of 1993.

**Quality in Services**

In 1991, a discussion paper on **Quality in Services for Young Children**, written by a Network member (*Irene Balaguer*, Spain) and two colleagues, was published by the Network in all 9 official Community languages. Copies have been widely disseminated to regional, national and European organisations through the Network's data-base (discussed below). Comments have been invited from these organisations and a questionnaire was circulated with the discussion paper.

The discussion paper has been very well received and has generated widespread interest; there has been heavy demand for additional copies in several



countries. The discussion paper and its distribution are part of the Network's response to the task of "establishing criteria for the definition of quality in childcare services". Given the diversity of European society, reflected in the services for children, this is inevitably a complex task, requiring a careful process with maximum opportunity for consultation. Network members are currently summarising organisations' responses to the discussion paper (although it is unlikely that more than a minority of organisations will have used the opportunity to comment). After these responses have been considered, a report will be prepared for discussion by the Network, prior to the submission of the Network's recommendations to the Commission.

In addition to this work, the Network has been reviewing minimum standards set for services for children in each Member State, again based on a questionnaire which has been completed by each Network member. A report should be completed in the second half of 1993.

### **Costs and Funding of Childcare Services**

No work on childcare services can avoid the basic questions: what do they cost? how are these costs to be funded? To contribute to discussion of these questions, and to clarification of the principles of 'affordability' and 'coherence' contained in the Council Recommendation on Childcare [see pages 74-76], work has begun on establishing the current situation in Member States - how are the costs of services providing care for children currently funded and allocated? what work has been undertaken already on cost issues, including cost benefit studies? A report will be prepared during 1993.

### **Leave for Employed Parents**

The Network has a long-standing interest in different types of leave for employed parents, including Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave and Leave for Family Reasons. This interest has been reinforced by the inclusion of leave arrangements in the Council Recommendation on Childcare [see pages 74-76]. Information on current leave arrangements has been updated during 1992 by Network members [see page 10 for a summary of the current position on Maternity and

Parental Leave], and was included in a background paper prepared for the Copenhagen Conference (see below). In addition, Network members are currently providing information on how leave arrangements have operated in practice in their own countries (for example, how much they are used, which parents use them). This will form part of a review of leave arrangements which will be prepared in 1993.

### **Men as Carers**

The Network also has a long-standing interest in the issue of men as carers for children, both as fathers and as workers in services; in 1990, a major European seminar on the subject was organised in Scotland. The Network has been encouraged to pursue its interest by the inclusion of this issue in the Council Recommendation on Childcare. The Network has established a Working Group on Men as Carers, to examine ways in which increased participation by men in the care and upbringing of children can be promoted so that family responsibilities are more equally shared. The Group includes some Network members (*Fred Deven*, Belgium; *Patrizia Ghedini*, Italy; *Jytte Juul Jensen*, Denmark), together with participants from Spain and the United Kingdom.

The Group has begun a programme of work, which will lead up to a seminar, organised in conjunction with the Regional Government of Emilia Romagna, to be held in Ravenna in May 1993. The seminar will consider the contribution of leave arrangements, workplace practices and services for children in promoting change and will consider the experience of two Working Group projects - on involving fathers in services and on men working in services.

### **Parental Employment**

In 1990, the Network published a report on parents' employment in the European Community - **Mothers, Fathers and Employment**. This report used data from the 1988 Labour Force Survey (LFS), an annual survey which provides comparable data on employment and unemployment for all Member States. A special analysis of the 1988 LFS was undertaken for the Network by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT). EUROSTAT have

now completed another special analysis for the Network, this time using 1990 and 1991 LFS data. A new report - **Mothers, Fathers and Employment 1985-1991** - has been prepared covering developments in parental employment between 1985 and 1991, and the situation in 1990/91. It is hoped that the report will be available during the first half of 1993. In the meantime, a summary of some of the main results is given on page 10.

**Copenhagen Conference**

A major Conference - **Parental Employment and Caring for Children: Policies and Services in EC and Nordic Countries** - was held in Copenhagen in September 1992. The Conference was jointly organised by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and the European Commission's Equality Unit. The Danish member of the Network (*Jytte Juul Jensen*) and the Network Coordinator were members of the Planning Group for the Conference, and Network members attended and contributed by chairing or making presentations to working groups.

An important objective of the Conference was to disseminate knowledge and exchange experience and information between EC and Nordic countries. Nearly 200 participants from 16 countries attended. A background paper - **Parental Employment and Caring for Children: Developments and Trends in EC and Nordic Countries** - was prepared for the Conference, which included material from the Network on parental employment and leave arrangements for parents. This paper is available in English, French and Danish from the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs, which is also preparing a report of the Conference proceedings.

**Challenging Racism in European Childcare Provision**

This project, which began in 1991, has been concerned with improving the ability of childcare services in the European Community to meet the needs of ethnic minority women and their children. There has been a programme of exchange visits to services involving 4 countries (Belgium, France, Italy and United Kingdom), followed by a European seminar held in Leeds in October 1992, with participants from ten Member States.

The project received financial support from the Commission's Equality Unit, and was initiated in the United Kingdom as part of the Network's programme of action projects. It was developed by a steering group with representatives from the four countries involved in the exchange visits. The visits were organised by the United Kingdom branch of Save the Children Fund and the seminar was organised by Leeds City Council, assisted in both cases by EYTARN (the Early Years Trainers Anti-Racist Network); the overall project was coordinated by the Scottish Child and Family Alliance. A report of the seminar is being prepared, and it is hoped that the Commission will publish this report in 1993. One of the Network's tasks in its 1993 programme is to disseminate the results of the project.



**OTHER WORK UNDERTAKEN BY NETWORK MEMBERS**

In addition to the general activities of the Network, described above, individual Network members have undertaken a variety of work in their own countries: speaking and writing, organising meetings and conferences, answering enquiries etc. Also at national level, all national experts have been involved, in varying capacities, in supporting the childcare component of the NOW Initiative.

An important task for each Network member in the first year of the new contract has been to **establish a data-base** of major organisations in her or his own country with an interest in issues concerning reconciliation of parental employment and caring for children, services for children and equality of opportunity. In addition, the Coordinator has established a data-base of European and international organisations, including relevant networks, departments and institutions. Altogether, Network members' data-bases now cover over 3,000 organisations throughout Europe. The objective of the data-base is to improve the dissemination of information about the work of the Commission and the Network concerning reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities. An initial mailing was made to data-base organisations in 1992; the objective is two mailings per year in subsequent years, including the Annual Report.

# MOTHERS, FATHERS AND EMPLOYMENT 1985-1991

**In 1990, the Childcare Network published Mothers, Fathers and Employment. This report on parental employment was based on an analysis of the 1988 Labour Force Survey (LFS), undertaken for the Network by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). The LFS is an annual survey; it provides comparable statistics on employment and unemployment for all Member States. The Network has completed a new report - Mothers, Fathers and Employment 1985-1991 - based on an analysis by Eurostat of data from the 1990 and 1991 LFS; this report will be available in 1993. A summary of some of the main results is presented below; unless stated, results refer to 1990.**

In the EC - **excluding** Portugal, Spain, and the new German lander (the former DDR) - the proportion of employed mothers<sup>1</sup> increased rapidly between 1985 and 1991 - from 42% to 50%. Over 80% of this increase was due to part-time employment [Figure 1]. Fastest growth in employment was in Netherlands, United Kingdom, Ireland and Germany; slowest growth was in France, Italy, Greece and Denmark [Figures 2-3].

In the EC - **including** Portugal, Spain and the new German lander - 58% of mothers were economically active<sup>2</sup> in 1991 [Figure 4]. Levels of economic activity vary considerably between countries. Highest levels (75% and over) were in Denmark and Portugal. Lowest levels (under 50%) were in Ireland (38%), Luxembourg (42%) and Spain (44%), Greece and Netherlands (46%). In between came Italy and United Kingdom (50-59%) and Germany, France and Belgium (60-69%) [Figure 5]. In 1991, 95% of mothers in the new German lander were economically active, compared to 49% in former West Germany.

<sup>1</sup> Mothers and fathers are parents with children under 10 years of age.  
<sup>2</sup> Economically active - employed or unemployed and looking for work.

Figure 1: **EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT: MOTHERS: 1985, 1991**

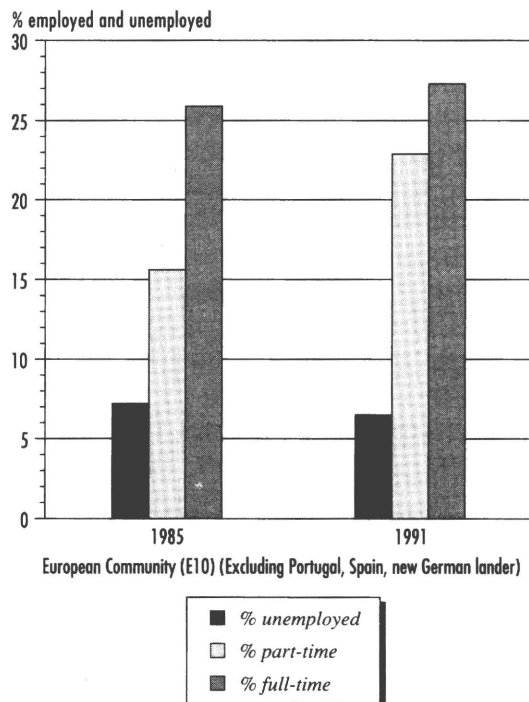


Figure 2: **EMPLOYMENT: MOTHERS: 1985, 1991**

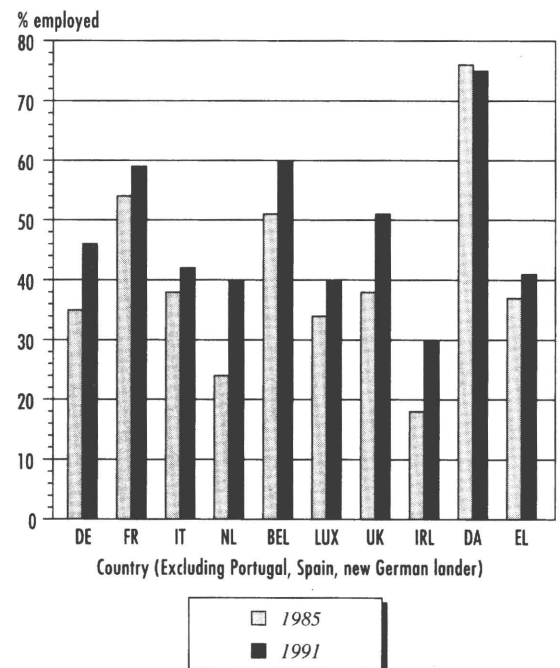


Figure 3: **CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT: MOTHERS: 1985-1991**

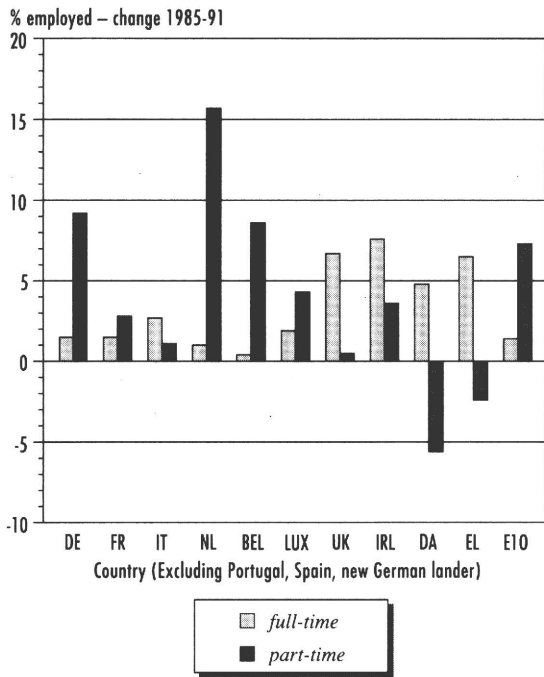


Figure 4: **EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT: MOTHERS AND FATHERS: 1991**

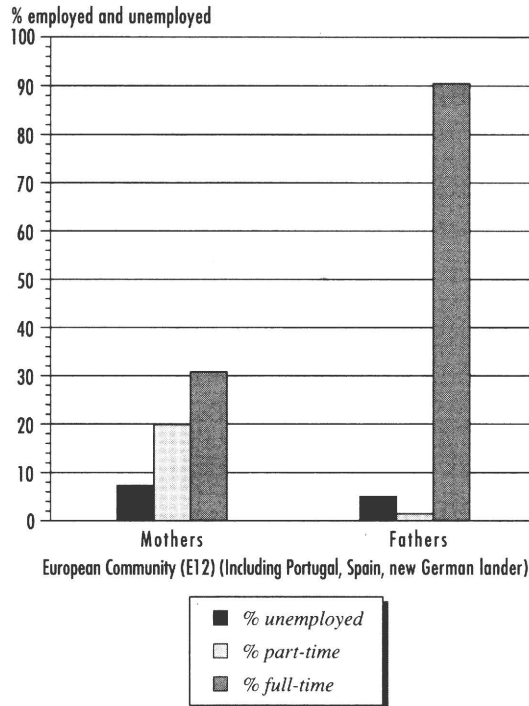
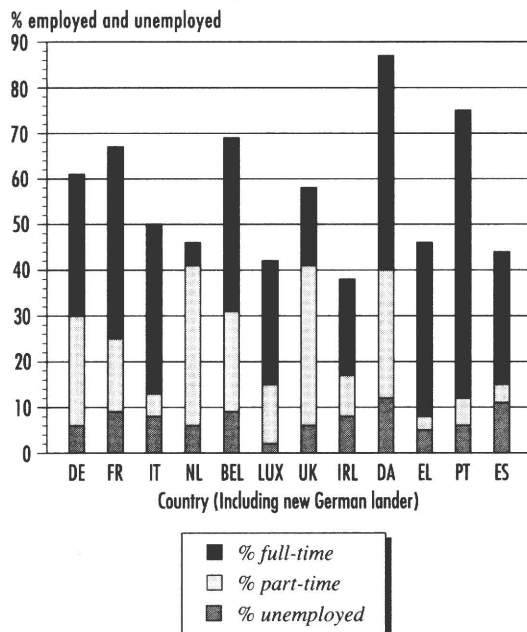


Figure 5: **EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT: MOTHERS: 1991**



	DE	FR	IT	NL	BEL	LUX	UK	IRL	DA	EL	PT	ES
■	31	42	37	5	38	27	17	21	47	38	63	29
□	24	16	5	35	22	13	35	9	28	3	6	4
■	6	9	8	6	9	2	6	8	12	5	6	11

In 1991, part-time employment was highest in Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium and Denmark; more than 20% of all mothers had part-time jobs. Portugal, France and Denmark had the highest levels of full-time employment. In the Community overall, 39% of employed mothers had part-time jobs. More mothers were employed part-time than full-time in the Netherlands and United Kingdom; in the four Southern countries, less than 15% of employed mothers had part-time jobs [Figures 4-5].

In 1991, mothers were less likely than fathers to be employed (51% v 92%), much less likely to have a full-time job (31% v 91%) but much more likely to have a part-time job (20% v 2%). The unemployment rate<sup>3</sup> for mothers was nearly three times as high (13% v 5%) [Figure 4].

<sup>3</sup> Unemployment rate - number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the number of economically active persons.

**ABBREVIATIONS FOR MEMBER STATES IN FIGURES**

- BEL = Belgium
- DE = Germany
- DA = Denmark
- EL = Greece
- ES = Spain
- FR = France
- IRL = Ireland
- IT = Italy
- LUX = Luxembourg
- NL = Netherlands
- PT = Portugal
- UK = United Kingdom

Lone motherhood is most common in northern countries of Europe. In 1990, the United Kingdom (14%) probably had the highest level, followed by Denmark. Then come Germany (9%), France and the Netherlands (both 8%). Lowest levels were in Italy, Spain and Greece (3%). Lone mothers had higher levels of economic activity than mothers in two parent families (60% v 54%); unemployment rates were particularly high. Lone mothers were more likely than other mothers to be employed except in the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Ireland [Figure 6].

Economic activity was lower for mothers with a child under 3 compared to mothers with a youngest child aged 3-9 (58% v 50%) [Figure 7]. The biggest differences between mothers with younger and older children were in Germany and the United Kingdom.

Economic activity for mothers decreased as the number of young children increased -64% for mothers with 1 child, 56% for 2 children and 41% for 3 or more children. The decrease was greater between 2 and 3 children than between 1 and 2 children [Figure 8]. Fathers with 3 children were less likely to be employed than other fathers; in the United Kingdom and Ireland, less than 85% of these fathers had jobs.

Employed mothers worked, on average, 30-39 hours a week. A third (34%) worked these hours, while a fifth (22%) worked 40-49 hours a week; just under a fifth worked 1-19 hours (19%) and 20-29 hours (18%). Few worked over 50 hours per week (4%). Longest hours were worked in Southern European countries and shortest hours in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom where mothers employed part-time worked particularly short hours.

Figure 6: **EMPLOYMENT: LONE AND COUPLE MOTHERS: 1990**

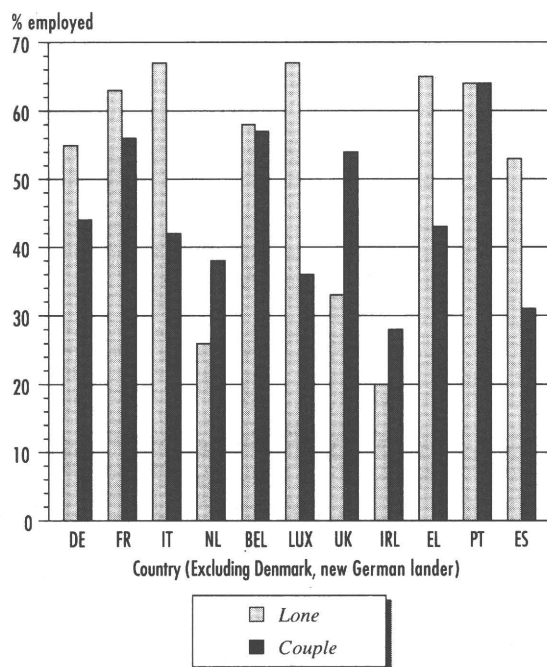
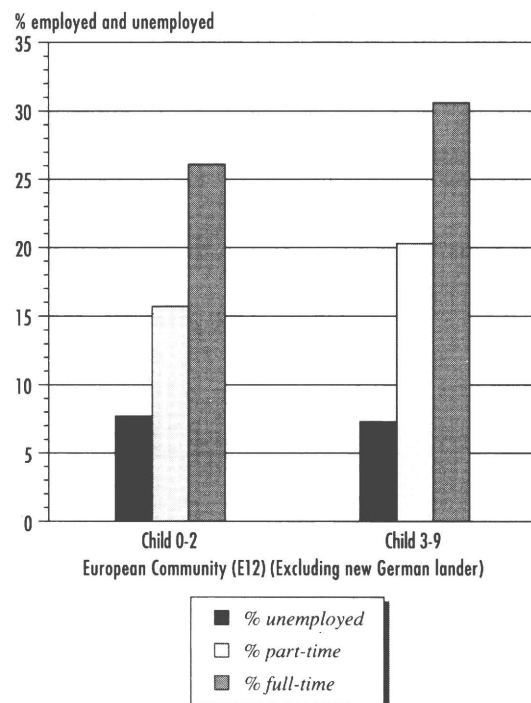


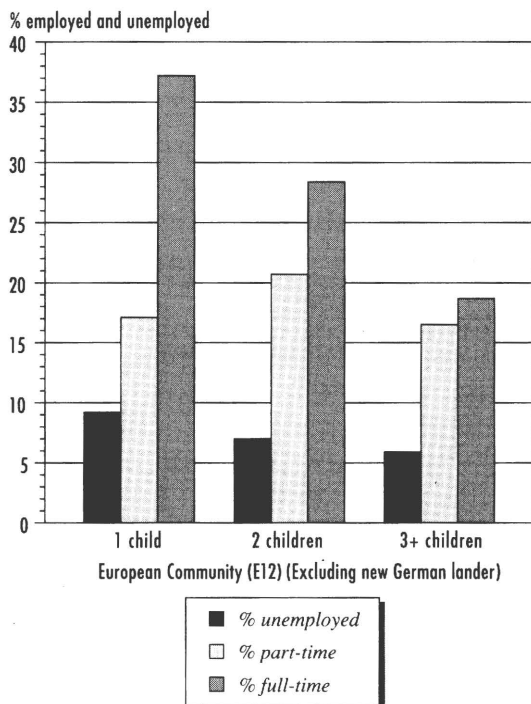
Figure 7: **EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT: MOTHERS: BY AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD: 1990**



Employed fathers worked longer hours than employed mothers, averaging 40-49 per week; they worked longer hours even if only full-time workers are compared. Nearly half of all employed fathers (44%) worked these hours, with a further third (32%) working 30-39 hours. Very few fathers (2%) work under 30 hours a week, but a substantial minority (18%) work more than 50 hours. Fathers work longest hours in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Three-quarters of employed mothers and employed fathers were permanent employees. The other 25% of employed mothers were mainly temporary employees, self-employed workers without employees and family workers. Fathers who were not permanent employees were more likely than mothers to be self-employed and less likely to be family workers or temporary employees.

Figure 8: **EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT: MOTHERS: BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN: 1990**



Three other European Commission reports, published in 1992, provide more information on women's employment in the Community. Employment in Europe 1992 is an annual report from the Directorate-General for Employment, and includes a chapter on 'Men and Women in the Community Labour Market'; it is published by the Office for Official Publications of the EC.

The Position of Women on the Labour Market (Women of Europe Supplement No.36); and Bulletin on Women and Employment in the EC (first number, October 1992) come from another EC equality Network, the European Network on the Situation of Women in the Labour Market. The former is available from the Women's Information Service of the Commission, the latter from the Commission's Equality Unit, both at 200 rue de la loi, B-1049 Brussels.

The report on the Position of Women on the Labour Market presents evidence of increased economic activity of women - but also evidence of continued disadvantage and segregation in women's employment position. It concludes that "*the segmentation of the female workforce into women with stable jobs, those who can hope to work only at the price of precariousness and those who, whatever their wishes, will not find jobs is growing daily in each country*".

# LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR EMPLOYED PARENTS

**The Council Recommendation on Childcare recognises the need for leave for employed parents. There are a number of relevant types of leave, including Maternity and Paternity Leave, Parental Leave and Leave for Family Reasons. The Childcare Network is currently preparing a report reviewing statutory leave arrangements in the EC; this will be ready in 1993. A brief description of two types of leave - Maternity and Parental - is presented below**

**B**asic information on **statutory** Maternity and Parental Leave is given on the next page. This information does **not** include: any additional leave available for multiple or premature births; possibilities for parents to take Parental Leave on a part-time basis (except for the Netherlands, where this is the only way in which parents can take leave); extra Parental Leave arrangements available to parents with a disabled child; or reductions in work hours permitted to employed mothers during the first 6-12 months after birth. Full details of these additional benefits will be given in the Network's forthcoming report.

**Maternity Leave** is a statutory right in all Member States; stringent qualifying conditions in the United Kingdom limit eligibility to approximately 60% of women. Maternity Leave varies from 13 weeks (Portugal) to 40 weeks (United Kingdom). In most countries, mothers can decide how to divide some portion of their leave between before and after birth.

Generally, the full period of **Maternity Leave** is paid at between 70-100% of earnings. The only exception is the United Kingdom, where most of

the long leave period is unpaid, and most of the paid period is paid at a relatively low flat-rate.

**Parental Leave** is a statutory leave in eight Member States (although in Italy, the leave is actually an extended Maternity Leave, which the mother can transfer to the father). The length of the leave period varies from 10 weeks to nearly 3 years. Some statutory **Parental Leave** schemes are unpaid, others are paid but mainly at a low rate. The Danish statutory leave offers the highest payment.

Parental Leave is usually a family entitlement; in a two parent family, parents can decide how to divide the leave between themselves. In two countries - Netherlands and Greece - the leave is a personal entitlement, that is each parent has her or his leave period, and this entitlement cannot be transferred from one parent to the other.

Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg and United Kingdom have no statutory Parental Leave. Belgium, however, has a system of 'career breaks', but these depend on an employer's agreement. Denmark has recently supplemented a statutory Parental Leave period with a similar option, dependent on an employer's agreement. The Belgium 'career break' can be taken for any purpose, although taking leave to care for children is favoured by enhanced payments; the Danish supplementary leave is specifically to care for children.

A Directive on the Protection of Pregnant Women at Work was adopted by the Council of Ministers on October 19, 1992.

This will give a right to a minimum of 14 weeks paid Maternity Leave to all pregnant women: payment must be on a level equivalent to sick pay, although it is recognised that pregnancy is not an illness.

<b>BEL</b>	<b>ML:</b> 15 weeks: 1 week before birth, 8 weeks after, 6 weeks before or after. Paid at 82% of earnings for first month, then 75%, upto maximum level.
	<b>PL:</b> no statutory leave. Workers can take 6-12 months 'career breaks' from employment, subject to employer's agreement. Paid at flat-rate (10,928 BF a month); higher rate if taken within 6 years of birth of second or third child.
<b>DA</b>	<b>ML:</b> 18 weeks: 4 weeks before birth, 14 weeks after. Paid at flat-rate (DKK 2556 a week, equal to approximately 65% of average earnings for industrial worker).
	<b>PL:</b> 10 weeks. Paid as for ML. In addition, workers can take 13-35 weeks of leave, subject to employer's agreement. Paid at flat-rate (DKK 2045 a week).
<b>DE</b>	<b>ML:</b> 14 weeks: 6 weeks before birth, 8 weeks after. Paid at 100% of earnings.
	<b>PL:</b> until child reaches 36 months. Paid at flat-rate (600 DM a month) for first 6 months, then income-related benefit until child is 24 months, last 12 months unpaid.
<b>EL</b>	<b>ML:</b> 14 weeks: 3 weeks before birth, 7 weeks after, 4 weeks before or after. Paid at 100% of earnings.
	<b>PL:</b> 3 months <b>per parent</b> , not transferable from one parent to the other. Unpaid.
<b>ES</b>	<b>ML:</b> 16 weeks: 6 weeks after birth, 10 weeks before or after. Paid at 75% of earnings.
	<b>PL:</b> 12 months. Unpaid.
<b>FR</b>	<b>ML:</b> 16 weeks: 4 weeks before birth, 10 weeks after, 2 weeks before or after. Extra leave for a third or higher order birth). Paid at 84% of earnings, but not taxed.
	<b>PL:</b> until child reaches 36 months. Unpaid for first and second child, then flat-rate (2738 FF a month in July 1991).
<b>IRL</b>	<b>ML:</b> 14 weeks: 4 weeks before birth, 10 weeks before or after. Mother can request extra 4 weeks. First 14 weeks paid at 70% of earnings, but not taxed; extra 4 weeks unpaid.
	<b>PL:</b> None
<b>IT</b>	<b>ML:</b> 5 months: 2 months before birth, 3 months after. Paid at 80% of earnings.
	<b>PL:</b> 6 months. Paid at 30% of earnings.
<b>LUX</b>	<b>ML:</b> 16 weeks: 8 weeks before birth, 8 weeks after. Paid at 100% of earnings.
	<b>PL:</b> None
<b>NL</b>	<b>ML:</b> 16 weeks: 4 weeks before birth, 10 weeks after, 2 weeks before or after. Paid at 100% of earnings.
	<b>PL:</b> 6 months of reduced hours <b>per parent</b> (minimum of 20 hours a week): not transferable between parents. Unpaid.
<b>PT</b>	<b>ML:</b> 90 days: 60 days after birth, 30 days before or after. Paid at 100% of earnings.
	<b>PL:</b> 24 months. Unpaid
<b>UK</b>	<b>ML:</b> 40 weeks: 11 weeks before birth, 29 weeks after. Paid at 90% of earnings for 6 weeks, flat-rate for 12 weeks and unpaid for remaining period.
	<b>PL:</b> None

**ML** = Statutory Maternity Leave; **PL** = Statutory Parental Leave.  
 In many countries, statutory leave conditions are improved for many workers due to collective agreements (for example, most workers in Italy receive full pay while on Maternity Leave); these additional benefits are not included.

**ABBREVIATIONS FOR MEMBER STATES**

BEL	= Belgium
DE	= Germany
DA	= Denmark
EL	= Greece
ES	= Spain
FR	= France
IRL	= Ireland
IT	= Italy
LUX	= Luxembourg
NL	= Netherlands
PT	= Portugal
UK	= United Kingdom





# STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

**The Childcare Network has a long-standing interest in the potential contribution of the Structural Funds - the European Community's own budget - to the development of childcare services, not only through special measures, such as the NOW Initiative, but by mainstreaming childcare services into the routine application of the three main Funds. A new Network report - Structural Funds and Childcare - looks at this issue, with particular reference to rural areas. The report's main recommendations are given presented below. Copies of the report are available, free of charge and in English or French, from the European Commission (DGV/B/4), 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium.**

The collection and documentation of innovative childcare projects in rural areas should be undertaken. This will assist in the preparation of the Commission's programme to fund action projects in rural areas, as outlined in the Third Equal Opportunity Programme<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission should continue to provide information, advice and assistance about Structural Funds and childcare services in the form of: (a) publications such as a written guide to the use of Structural Funds for childcare services, with special reference to the needs of Objective 1 countries<sup>2</sup>; and (b) workshops in these countries to promote the publications and to study the use of Structural Funds for childcare services.

In the preparation of the 1994-97 Structural Fund Programme, which is now imminent, the Commission should highlight for Member States the importance of putting in place the economic and social infrastructure developments of women's training and education and childcare provision; this is of particular importance in non-advantaged areas, including rural regions.

*1 "The Commission will finance innovative (childcare) projects, notably in the rural areas, as a complement to the NOW Initiative".*

*2 Objective 1 is the first of five priority objectives for the Structural Funds - promoting development and structural adjustment in less developed regions. This objective covers the whole of Greece, Ireland and Portugal, and parts of Spain, France, Italy and the UK.*

**T**he European Commission should monitor and provide support and technical assistance to those NOW Initiative programmes with a childcare component.

The childcare component of the NOW Initiative should be evaluated and this evaluation should include an assessment of: (a) its impact on women's employment, education and training; and (b) the degree to which it has been incorporated into mainstream policy and funding of childcare services. In so far as they contain women's training elements (including training in childcare) and/or provision for childcare, the initiatives of **HORIZON**, **EUROFORM**, **LEADER** and **PETRA** should be included in the evaluation.

# THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON CHILD CARE

● **On March 31 1992, the Council of Ministers adopted a Recommendation on Childcare, the latest in a series of initiatives taken by the Community to promote the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities. In the Community's view, reconciliation is a necessary condition for achieving equal treatment between women and men in the labour market. Peter Moss, Coordinator of the Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities, provides an introduction to the Recommendation. The full text of the Recommendation is given on page 74.**

---

## HOW AND WHY WAS THE RECOMMENDATION ADOPTED?

**T**he Recommendation has been adopted as part of the Community's Third Equal Opportunities Programme and the Commission's Action Programme to implement the Community's Charter of Basic Social Rights for Workers. Both the Third Equal Opportunity programme and the 'Social Charter' emphasise the importance of measures to enable women and men to reconcile employment and family responsibilities, as a means to achieving equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market. Because the Recommendation is part of the Community's Equal Opportunities

Programme, and the legal competence for the measure is based on the Community's commitment to equal treatment for women and men in the labour market, the Commission's Equal Opportunities Unit in DGV (the Directorate-General for Employment) has responsibility for the Recommendation and its implementation.

During the first part of 1991, the Equality Unit was involved in drafting and internal consultations, and in June 1991 the Commission agreed a proposal to put to the Council. The proposal was then considered by the European Parliament and the European Communities Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC). Their opinions, both published in November 1991, endorsed the Commission's proposal, but sought to strengthen it through a number of amendments. For example, the Parliament wanted to see Article 3, on services providing care for children, include a specific reference to the needs of children from ethnic minority groups, and it also proposed a stronger statement on the development of services:

*"In the long term, child-care shall be provided for all children. The Member States shall ensure steady annual improvements in the availability of provision, on the basis of an assessment of the real need for child-care services."*

Decision-making, however, took place in the Council of Ministers, between Autumn 1991 and the final adoption of the Recommendation in March 1992. The Recommendation adopted by the Council of Ministers differed in a number of areas from the Commission's original proposal.

---

## WHAT IS IMPORTANT ABOUT THE RECOMMENDATION?

The Council Recommendation carries the unanimous support of all Governments; in other words, it has the political backing of all Governments. The Recommendation represents an important step forward in the process of developing a Community policy to promote the reconciliation of employment and family life in a way that promotes gender equality. There are five features of the Recommendation that are particularly important.

## **1. The Recommendation adopts a broad objective.**

This is reconciling employment with the “*upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children*” [Article 1]. The Recommendation is not just about providing nurseries or other safe places for children to be cared for while parents are employed. It is about ‘caring’ for children in the broadest sense of the word, “*ensuring their various needs are met*” [Preamble]. It also recognises that “*responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children continue up to and throughout the period of children’s schooling*” [Preamble], supporting the need for measures to support parents until their children leave school.

## **2. The Recommendation recognises that this broad objective requires a broad approach.**

In the words of the preamble to the Recommendation, “*child care is a broad concept*” and reconciliation requires “*an overall policy*”. Initiatives are recommended in **four** areas: services providing care for children; leave for employed parents; making the workplace responsive to workers with children; and encouraging more equal sharing of parental responsibilities between men and women [Article 2]. The Recommendation assumes that each area is important - but insufficient by itself.

## **3. The Recommendation recognises widespread responsibility for taking initiatives and clearly implies the need for partnership to achieve reconciliation.**

By referring frequently to “*the respective responsibilities of national, regional and local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organisations and private individuals*” [Articles 2-5], the Recommendation makes it clear that all

these groups have a responsibility for, and a part to play in, developing and implementing reconciliation policy, which needs to operate at a number of levels - national, regional, local and workplace.

## **4. The Recommendation supports a number of important specific principles and objectives.**

For example, services should: combine “*reliable care...(with) a pedagogical approach*”; be “*accessible to children with special needs...and meet (their) needs*”; be “*available...both in urban and in rural areas*”; be “*flexible*”, “*diverse*” but also “*coherent*”; and “*work closely with local communities...to be responsive to parental needs*” [Article 3]. There should be “*some flexibility*” in how leave for employed parents may be taken [Article 4]. Member States “*should promote and encourage increased participation by men (in the care and upbringing of children)*” [Article 6], which implies men caring for children not only as fathers but in other capacities, such as workers in services.

The Council Recommendation makes no explicit reference to quality in services, unlike the original Commission proposal which referred to the need for “*all parents in or seeking employment, education or training to have access to locally based and good quality services*”. However, the preamble to the Recommendation does state that “*it is essential to promote the well-being of children...ensuring that their various needs are met*”, which provides an implicit recognition of the need for quality in services as well as quantity.

Finally, the Council Recommendation establishes the important principle that services should be “*offered at prices affordable to parents*” [Article 3]. This principle of ‘affordability’, together with the Recommendation’s support for the principle of “*preserving coherence between different services*”, has major implications for the cost of services to parents and how services are funded given the widespread current lack of coherence in the funding of services and costs to parents. To give one example, compare the funding and cost to parents of a private childminder (where parents usually pay the market price), a publicly-funded

nursery (where parents usually pay a subsidised fee related to some extent to family circumstances) and a nursery or primary school (which is normally free, except for the cost of meals).

The Commission's proposal was clear about how these objectives of affordability and coherence should be achieved: "*Member States should take measures...to ensure that public funding makes an essential contribution to the development of affordable, good quality, coherent services which offer choice to parents*". In subsequent statements, the Commission has re-affirmed the importance it attaches to the contribution of public funding to overall costs. By contrast, the Council Recommendation is less clear: "*national, regional or local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organisations and private individuals, in accordance with their respective responsibilities, (should be encouraged) to make a financial contribution to the creation and/or operation of coherent child-care services which can be afforded by parents and which offer them choice*" **Article 3**].

**5. The Recommendation builds in a process of monitoring and review.**

Member States will report to the Commission within 3 years on measures taken to implement the Recommendation, on the basis of which the Commission must prepare a report on the Recommendation's implementation [**Article 7**].



**WHAT NEXT?**

Following the Recommendation's adoption, what are the next steps? How can the Recommendation be used to make a positive contribution to promoting the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities at European, national and local levels?

**1. Dissemination, Discussion and Review.**

The Council Recommendation, together with the Commission's original proposal and the opinions of ECOSOC and the European Parliament on the Commission's proposal, are important documents. They should **stimulate debate and raise awareness** about the issues involved in achieving reconciliation; above all they should lead to discussion about how to implement and use the Recommendation. Public agencies and private organisations can play an important role in disseminating these documents and providing opportunities for their discussion in a wide variety of forums.

Debate and raising awareness will contribute to the **three year review** of the Recommendation. The review provides each Member State with an important opportunity: to assess what has been achieved; to identify gaps and problems; to define what developments are needed for the future; and to involve the widest possible range of organisations and individuals in this process. The review will also be an opportunity to consider how effective a Recommendation has been in promoting reconciliation and whether there is a need to consider stronger measures, such as a framework Directive on Childcare which the Parliament called for in its **Resolution on Childcare and Equality of Opportunity** in April 1991.

Finally, the three year review should provide an opportunity to consider whether and where there are gaps in the reconciliation strategy proposed in the Recommendation. The Commission's proposal and the ECOSOC and Parliament opinions included a number of items that were not included subsequently in the Council's Recommendation: for example, concerning quantity of services;

quality of services; recognition of the needs of ethnic minority families; and the essential role of public funding in the development of services.

## 2. Implementation and Partnership.

The Recommendation in its present form is a valuable measure and needs to be implemented. At the Commission level, this involves the preparation of a Guide to Good Practice on the reconciliation of employment, caring for children and gender equality. This will give more detailed guidance about **how** a reconciliation strategy may be implemented, as well as about monitoring and evaluation.

Implementation requires action within Member States. The Recommendation implies the need for a **comprehensive reconciliation policy** - at national, regional/local and workplace levels - covering at least the four areas in the Recommendation and consistent with the Recommendation's principles and objectives. This requires a clear and agreed definition and allocation of responsibilities (discussed below), and, as proposed in the Parliament's opinion, "*the establishment of a framework for promoting the development of close partnership between governments, local authorities, organisations and the social partners*".

## 3. Defining and allocating responsibilities.

Implementation and partnership require a clear and agreed definition and allocation of the "**respective responsibilities** of national, regional and local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organisations and private individuals" (my emphasis). In other words, when it comes to measures to promote reconciliation of employment and caring for children, it needs to be clear who is responsible for doing what. Discussion of the allocation of responsibilities also inevitably means discussion of the allocation of costs.

<sup>1</sup> EC Childcare Network (1990) *Childcare in the European Communities 1985-1990*, Brussels, European Commission; P.Moss (1992) *Reconciling Employment and Caring for Children: Whose Responsibility? What Responsibilities?* Paper given at EC Conference 'Business and the Family', Brussels, March 1992.

The Network has already proposed a basis for the allocation of responsibilities<sup>1</sup>, which is summarised here as a contribution to the discussion on this crucial issue. **Private individuals**, if that means parents, already assume sufficient responsibility for the reconciliation of employment and caring for children; they will continue to carry a large share of family responsibilities. The main issues are the need for more equal sharing between mothers and fathers; and more equal sharing between parents and others outside the family, especially at the workplace and by government representing society.

Ensuring access to **good services for children**, and the **provision of leave arrangements for parents**, is primarily a **public responsibility**. This does not mean that services should be provided exclusively by government; this provider role can be shared with, or undertaken exclusively by, private organisations. It does mean that government assumes responsibility for ensuring that good services are available and affordable, which implies planning, development, resourcing, infrastructure and monitoring functions. Statutory leave arrangements should cover Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Parental Leave and leave for family reasons. Making the **workplace responsive to the needs of workers with children** is primarily the responsibility of **employers and trades unions**. **Government, social partners and private organisations** share responsibility to take action to **promote increased participation by men** in the care and upbringing of children.

In the Network's view, reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities is never simply a labour force issue. It is a complex matter involving issues of social solidarity, citizenship, equality and individual and family welfare. Access to services for children and to leave arrangements for parents should always depend on the needs and rights of women and children - and not on the labour force needs of individual employers or the value in the labour market of a particular parent or the ability of a parent to buy services in the private market. In short, **we should treat services and leave arrangements as social rights, not as negotiated occupational benefits**.

## 4. Broadening reconciliation.

Promoting reconciliation may require further measures concerning children and their care. It also

requires measures to cover **other types of 'family responsibilities'**, in particular the care of more dependent adults. Reconciliation policies are needed, at European and Member State levels, which cover the full range of family responsibilities.

**5. A place for children.**

Any reconciliation policy, with its associated specific measures, needs to be based on clear policies concerning gender equality, children and other groups whose care needs to be reconciled with employment. Reconciliation policy can then be judged against its compatibility with the objectives of these other policy areas. In the Network's view, a problem with the present Community policy on reconciling employment and caring for children is that the Community has a **legal** competence and policy for promoting gender equality - but **not** for promoting the position and well-being of children. The issue is not that the rights of women, men and children are in conflict - they are not: but a reconciliation policy concerned with gender equality **and** caring for children must take account of **children**, as well as of **women and men**.

When it comes to considering what type of services we want to provide for children, four points should be borne in mind: many children in the European Community, about half, have mothers who are not employed; many parents are not continuously employed or unemployed -today's employed mother may not be employed in 12 months time, and vice versa; children with employed parents have many other needs in addition to safe and secure care; and many parents who are not employed need safe and secure care for their children. Bearing these points in mind, we can ask what model of services we want to develop. Do we want to treat children with employed parents in isolation from other children, prioritising their need for safe care while their parents are at work over their other needs? **Or** do we want to treat children with employed parents together with other children and parents, paying equal attention to all of their various needs? Do we want to develop separate services primarily concerned with the care of children while parents are at work and dominated by narrow labour force considerations - **childcare for working parents**? **Or** do we want to develop **multi-functional social and educational services**

available to all children and carers and flexible enough to encompass the various social, educational and other needs of employed and non-employed parents and their children?

This issue is of fundamental importance. But it cannot be adequately addressed by the Community at present because it has no legal competence to take major initiatives concerned with promoting the well-being of children (or indeed other European citizens not already in, or seeking to enter, the labour market, such as non-employed mothers). Serious attention needs to be given to the recent report from the European Parliament Committee on Youth, Culture and Education, on **The Problems of Children in the European Community**, which "*calls for the creation of a legal basis in the European treaties to enable a Community policy on children to be formulated, respecting the principle of subsidiarity*".



**CONCLUSION**

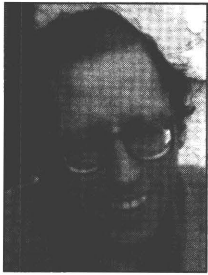
The Council Recommendation on Childcare marks an important stage in the evolution of Community policy on the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities. Its ultimate value will depend to a considerable extent on how it is interpreted and used by all parties who have a responsibility for, or an interest in, reconciliation. The Recommendation, like any political document, contains its share of ambiguities, qualifications and omissions, all of which could be used to justify inaction and disinterest. But as I have tried to show it contains important features that can make a real contribution to improving policies and services if those responsible and interested parties choose to take the Recommendation seriously - in which case, I have suggested some steps that could be taken in response to the Recommendation.

Finally, I hope that the Recommendation stimulates increasing awareness of and interest in the Community's policy on reconciliation of employment and caring for children, and an increasing understanding of the nature and limits of the Community's legal competence concerning gender equality, children and caring

responsibilities. The future evolution of Community policy on reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities can only benefit from increasing public awareness and interest throughout the Community and increased participation by all interested individuals and organisations in the development and implementation of this policy. The adoption of the Recommendation did not attract widespread media or public attention, yet it deals with a subject of direct relevance and importance to millions of children and adults in Europe. It is important to ensure that by the time of its 3 year review, the Recommendation and future Community initiatives on reconciliation have become the subject of widespread interest and debate at all levels in Europe, receiving the attention that their social and economic importance deserve.

A COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON THE CONVERGENCE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES was adopted on July 27, 1992. This recommends that Member States should "adapt and, where necessary, develop their social protection systems...to contribute to fostering the integration of persons who, having brought up children, wish to enter the labour market...and to help remove obstacles to (employment) by parents through measures to reconcile family and professional responsibilities."

# AROUND EUROPE WITH THE NETWORK



Peter Moss

**Members of the Network have written articles about a development or issue in childcare services in their own country, chosen for its national importance or particular personal interest to them. Peter Moss, Coordinator of the Network, introduces the articles, beginning with an overview of childcare services in the European Community<sup>1</sup>.**

**ning with an overview of childcare services in the European Community<sup>1</sup>.**

## CHILDCARE SERVICES IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY: AN OVERVIEW

**T**his brief overview looks at services providing care for children while parents are at work. Starting with the youngest age group, **children under 3**, it is important to recognise the development of leave arrangements for employed parents; for example, 9 out of 12 Member States in the EC now have some system of Parental Leave (see page 14). This trend for parents to be entitled to increasing periods of leave after the birth of a child has potentially important implications for the use of services for very young children, especially if and when payment levels and flexibility of leave arrangements improve.

All EC countries provide some publicly funded services for children under 3. In all countries, publicly funded provision is made in nurseries or

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller description of services, see the Network's 1990 report *Childcare in the European Communities 1985-90 (Women of Europe Supplement No.31)* published by the European Commission.

other centres providing group care, while a few countries - for example, **Denmark, France, Belgium, Portugal** - have extensive or developing systems of publicly funded family day care. In **Belgium** and **France**, many 2 year olds are in nursery school; for example, in 1991 a third of all French 2 year olds attended this service.

Levels of publicly funded provision for children under 3 are mostly low, covering 5% or less of the age group. In most of the EC, most care for very young children with working parents is entirely private. Relatives, especially grandmothers, are the main carers. Other provision is made by private childminders and babysitters, and to a lesser extent by private nurseries. There is no recent information on the number of private, unsubsidised nurseries in the EC. Levels of provision are probably highest in the **United Kingdom**, where places have trebled in the last 5 years; even so, these private nurseries provide for only 2% of children under 5.

There are exceptions to this general picture. In **France** and **Belgium**, publicly funded provision is made for about a fifth of all children under 3, although much of this provision is accounted for by 2 year olds in nursery education. In 1990, **Germany** had publicly funded provision for 17% of children under 3. This provision, however, was unequally distributed, reflecting the different circumstances and policies in the two parts of Germany before re-unification; West Germany had places for under 2% of children, East Germany for 50%. The most striking exception is **Denmark**, which has places in publicly funded services for nearly half of all children under 3. More than half of children under 3 with parents at work are in publicly funded services, and only a small proportion are cared for by relatives; this limited involvement by relatives is probably due to the availability of alternative services, which gives parents more choice, and a diminishing supply of relatives willing or able to provide care as employment rates increase among older women.

Increasingly, children **between 3 and compulsory school age** in the EC have 2-3 years of pre-primary education. In most countries, children enter some form of nursery education or kindergarten before the age of 4, with 3 being the most common transition point. Already **France, Belgium, Italy** and **Denmark** provide for more than 80% of over 3s in nursery education or kindergarten. The **German** Government is committed to providing kindergarten places for all



children by 1996, a level of provision already achieved in East Germany. Similarly, the **Spanish** Government is committed to extending nursery education, already available to most 4 and 5 year olds, to cover 3 year olds.

Hours of opening for nursery schools or kindergartens vary, within and between countries. For example, in **Germany**, a minority of kindergartens are open for a full-day, that is at least 8 hours, but most are open only in the morning or for a morning and short afternoon session. In **Italy**, most nursery schools are open at least 7 hours a day, but about a third have shorter hours. Generally, nursery schools and kindergartens are open for shorter hours than nurseries for children under 3, and are also closed for long holiday periods.

The main exceptions to this general picture are the **United Kingdom, the Netherlands** and **Ireland**. These countries have no nursery education or, in the case of the United Kingdom, limited provision. Instead, many children are admitted from the age of 4 into primary school, that is before compulsory school age. The vacuum caused by the dearth of pre-school education has also been filled by playgroups, a private service often run by parents themselves, but generally badly resourced and offering far shorter hours than nursery school or kindergarten, on average just 5-6 hours a week.

In the EC, therefore, many children with working parents join other children in pre-primary education from the age of 3 until **compulsory school age** - which is 6 in most countries, 7 in **Denmark** and between 5 and 6 in **United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Netherlands** and **Greece**. Primary school itself then provides care for part of the day, depending on school hours which vary considerably between countries -from 4 hours a day or less in much of **Germany, Italy** and **Denmark** to 6 hours a day or more in **Belgium, France, Spain** and the **United Kingdom**. Working parents must often make additional arrangements for their children to be cared for when nursery or primary schools or kindergartens are not open. Private provision (from relatives, childminders or babysitters) is most common with the exception of **Denmark, France** and **Belgium**, where provision is more widely available in publicly funded centres.

## INTRODUCING THE ARTICLES: SOME RECURRING THEMES

### Stimulating Development

For this year's Annual Report, Network members have had a free hand to decide an issue for their article; no attempt has been made to impose a common subject. The result is a diverse set of articles reflecting personal and national concerns. Yet, within this diversity, a number of broader themes recur in articles from several different countries.

A number of articles refer to factors stimulating the development of services; some are new social or economic developments and needs, others are institutions or organisations. In her article, *Anne McKenna* refers to the role of regional or community development in **Ireland**; increasingly, childcare services are seen as a necessary condition for this development and form a part of development projects. *Liesbeth Pot* reports on growth in services in the **Netherlands**, due to a short-term Government programme intended in particular to provide services for the children of working mothers. In the **Flemish-speaking Community of Belgium**, *Fred Deven* describes the role of the Community Ministry of Employment in stimulating school-age childcare centres as a means to reduce unemployment. Services for working parents in the **United Kingdom** have grown as the number of employed mothers has increased; but because the Government has defined childcare arrangements as an essentially private responsibility, the impetus for service growth has come from an expanding private market and some support from employers.

Not only economic and labour force considerations have been important. The *contrats enfance* programme and the 'family allowance fund' (*CNAF*), described by *Martine Felix* and *Bruno Ribes*, have stimulated a wide range of developments in **France**. A new education law (*LOGSE*), the subject of *Irene Balaguer's* article, has been influential in **Spain**; *LOGSE* makes all services for children from 0-6 the responsibility of education authorities and defines them as the first stage of the education system. The evolution in **Italy** of new and diverse services for young

children and their carers, about which *Patrizia Ghedini* writes, has been the result of increasing awareness of social and demographic changes and the new needs they generate.

## ■ Partnership

These developments, or most of them, require partnerships in the provision of services - between different public authorities, private organisations and employers. Partnerships are not new in the direct provision of services in many countries, where publicly funded services are often delivered by private organisations. In **Denmark**, publicly funded services are delivered by a mix (roughly 60/40) of public authorities and non-profit private organisations; a similar mix occurs in **Germany**. **Luxembourg**, by contrast, has a long tradition of private organisations providing services; *Jean Altmann* describes how the development of publicly funded childcare services depends on Government agreements with these organisations. **Ireland** and the **Netherlands** have similar traditions.

In the Netherlands, the short-term programme to develop services, that is the subject of *Liesbeth Pot's* article, assumes a partnership between Government and employers (as funders), local authorities (as funders and allocators of funds) and private organisations (as providers). Partnerships involving public authorities, private organisations and employers are also reported in the **United Kingdom** and **Ireland** articles, by *Bronwen Cohen* and *Anne McKenna*, though without any element of Central Government funding. Central Government does play a central though indirect role in **France**, via the *CNAF*, which contributes funding and other support to the development of services in partnership with local authorities and, sometimes, private organisations.

There are trends in several countries to decentralisation of government responsibility for services and increased involvement of private organisations in providing services. The 1980s saw some regional governments in **Spain** acquire responsibility for education and, under the new education law, for all services for children from 0-6; *Irene Balaguer* also cites the example of one region which, despite not having this overall responsibility, has created a partnership with national government and local authorities to ensure an effective development of services. In the **Netherlands**, responsibility for welfare services was decentralised to local governments in 1987.

Here, and in other examples of decentralisation, this process brings opportunities for new developments - but also risks of growing inequalities in the quantity and quality of services without some mechanism to ensure certain common levels and standards of provision. So far, there is no example in the EC of an effective balance between decentralised responsibility for services and equality of access to good services. Local and regional inequalities in publicly-funded services are widespread. Private market solutions, and employer supported services, introduce other inequalities, based on income, family circumstances and parents' labour market values. Within this general context of inequality, rural families are often particularly disadvantaged, having least access to publicly funded or private services; the needs of these families in **Greece** is the subject of *Vivie Papadimitriou's* article.

*Eduarda Ramirez* reports two relevant developments from **Portugal**: a proposed decentralisation of public responsibility, from national government to local authorities, with attendant risks if the right conditions are not put in place; and renewed emphasis on the role of private organisations as providers of services, following a short period, after the 1974 revolution, when Government took more direct responsibility for services. In **Italy**, also, there is a new interest in the role of private organisations in providing services.

Partnership is an important concept. It can prove difficult to implement. In the **Flemish-speaking community in Flanders**, there are tensions between different Ministries with an interest in school-age childcare. *Liesbeth Pot* reports conflicts between local authorities and social partners in the **Netherlands** over control of Government funding to stimulate new services. *Eduarda Ramirez* describes problems in developing collaborative work in **Portugal**, partly because of a lack of experience and awareness. *Liesbeth Pot* and *Eduarda Ramirez* also refer to concerns, expressed in some quarters, about the inadequacy and inconsistency of the standards imposed on private organisations receiving public funds.

Partnership raises questions about who should be partners and the roles of the partners. The examples of partnership in the **United Kingdom** mentioned by *Bronwen Cohen* rely on local authorities, private organisations and employers. Central Government excludes itself from any active role in service development, except for some very limited short-term funding, but emphasises the role that

employers can play in helping workers with childcare services and, indeed, in resolving other work-family problems. In **the Netherlands**, another country where emphasis is placed on parental responsibility for the care of children, employers are also expected to play a major role in financing services. In both countries, public funding to stimulate services is short-term and intended to encourage support from employers.

This raises a number of issues. *Bronwen Cohen* reports a welcome increase in awareness of work-family issues among some employers in the **United Kingdom**, but concludes that employers cannot be expected to meet the need for childcare services. Employers, as *Liesbeth Pot* concludes, have other priorities than the welfare of children and families. Places in services in **the Netherlands** are increasingly tied to jobs and available only to parents whose employers are prepared to provide substantial funding; public authorities are trying to reduce their share of funding, shifting an increasing share onto employers and parents. In these circumstances, various groups lose out: women with jobs not covered by collective agreements, low income and other economically disadvantaged parents - and parents who are not employed.

### **Diversification, Coherence and Innovation**

Employer-supported provision is, at best, likely to be available only to limited numbers of employed parents, to favour more advantaged employees and to be inaccessible to the 25% of employed parents who are family workers, self-employed or on short-term contracts. The developments in **the Netherlands** and the **United Kingdom** emphasise that employer-supported childcare services can supplement, but never substitute for, a proper system of local services accessible to all children and parents. They raise a more fundamental set of issues. Are services an occupational benefit for certain workers or a right of citizenship for children and parents? Can a recognition of the economic importance of services be combined with a recognition of their social and educational importance? Should services for children with employed parents be conceived and developed in isolation from services for other children? **The Netherlands'** programme to stimulate services, part publicly-funded, has a strong emphasis on services for working parents; it is intended that 70% or more of new places will be specifically

sponsored by employers. Government policy in the **United Kingdom**, that the provision of care for children with working parents is essentially a private responsibility, also promotes separate solutions, in this case through a private market in childcare services and trying to persuade employers to support services.

Before reunification, an extensive network of childcare services developed in **East Germany** the main purpose of which was to provide care for children with employed parents. Now unemployment is growing, and many mothers who have lost their jobs are unable to use the services. There is a need now, *Monika Jaeckel* reports, for more multi-functional provision, for employed and non-employed parents, which is able to work with and support a wide range of self-help and other community groups. A similar conclusion has been reached in Northern **Italy**, where extensive nursery services for working parents have developed over the last 25 years. These services have already gone through one evolution, which has produced an emphasis on their educational as well as social role. More recently, there has been further evolution of thinking about the role of services, described by *Patrizia Ghedini*. Providing for children with employed parents remains a main function of nurseries, but some regional and local authorities are now recognising a need to develop more diverse services which are also able to respond to the needs of non-employed parents, as well as some of the carers (such as relatives) who look after children informally. Developments in **France** stimulated by the *contrats enfance* programme are moving in the same direction, encouraging a range of services for employed and non-employed parents and their children in multi-functional centres.

Childcare services in many European services lack coherence; there are major inconsistencies and inequalities between different types of services. To take the most obvious example, compare publicly funded services for children under 3 and nursery education services for children over 3, both of which provide care for many children with employed parents. They are funded differently, and the costs to parents differ. Staff receive different levels of training, pay and conditions, those working with the youngest age group doing worse. Nursery schooling will be more widely available, but the hours of opening will be shorter. Finally, the services will tend to emphasise different objectives - care for children under 3, education for children over 3.

A widespread division of public responsibility for services between two (or occasionally more) departments - typically health or social welfare on the one hand, and education on the other - reflects and maintains this lack of coherence. Generally, education assumes responsibility for children from about the age of 3 or 4. Health or social welfare may only have responsibility up to that age, whilst in some cases this responsibility continues until compulsory school age. This can lead to overlapping responsibilities for the same age group, for example for 2 year olds in **France** and **Belgium** and for children between 3 and compulsory school age in the **United Kingdom, Portugal, Greece** and **Ireland**.

Some attempts are being made to tackle this division of administrative responsibility and to create a more coherent approach to care and education services for young children. The major reform of the education system in **Spain** makes education authorities responsible for all services for children from 0-6. The reform is recent, and implementation has so far been limited, especially for children under 3; however, the law provides a framework which offers the opportunity to develop a coherent system of care and education services for children from 0-6. The country which has gone furthest in developing a coherent system of early childhood care and education services is **Denmark**. All services for children under school age are the responsibility of one department, both nationally and locally - social affairs. All services have a care and a pedagogical function. Hours of opening are similar for services for children under and over 3. Workers in services have the same levels of training, pay and conditions. Denmark provides considerable diversity in terms of types of services offered, and the management of services, but consistency across services in key areas; the end result is a coherent system of early childhood care and education.

One consequence of an integrated responsibility for services is the possibility of developing centres that can provide for all children under compulsory school age, replacing the old divisions between 'nurseries' (for children under 3) and 'nursery schools' or 'kindergartens' (for children over 3). *Jytte Juul Jensen* describes the development in **Denmark** of age-integrated centres, for children from 0-6 or sometimes older. Centres for children from 0-6 have begun to develop in some other countries: they are one of the models for developing early childhood education in **Spain**; and they are being introduced in Nordrhein-Westfalen

and some other parts of **Germany**, with some centres taking children from 0-12. A new model of service in the **French-speaking Community in Belgium**, the subject of *Perrine Humblet's* article, can take children from 0-6. An important distinction in these centres concerns how the children are grouped: in **Danish** age-integrated centres, children are usually in mixed-age groupings; in **Spanish** centres, it is more common to organise children into narrower age groupings.

Age-integrated centres are one example of innovative services developing in the EC. The articles give examples of others, which are developing for a number of reasons. The new services in **Italy** are an attempt to provide more flexible and diverse provision to meet the needs of a wider range of families. The same is true of the innovative services being developed in **France** under the *contrats enfance*; as in **Italy**, some of the services are free-standing, others are attached to existing nurseries.

A unique innovation in **Denmark** are 'forest kindergartens'. As their name suggests, these services are situated in woods, which the children play in for much of the day. There are already over 60 'forest kindergartens', which are proving popular with workers, parents, politicians and children.

The new, small centres (*MCAEs*) opening in the **French-speaking community in Belgium** seem able to offer more diverse provision, especially in rural areas. But this innovative service is mainly being introduced as a means to reduce costs. This concern to find lower cost solutions is motivating innovations in other countries. **Italian** local authorities are making agreements with non-profit private organisations, especially cooperatives, as a more flexible and less expensive way to provide the new, diversified services. In **Denmark**, a new 'pool' scheme enables local authorities to give 'a bag of money' to groups - parents, housing cooperatives, employers - to establish their own services. This initiative is intended to stimulate more flexible services and greater choice.

An important area of innovation concerns the relationship between parents and services. Parent-run nurseries are encouraged, and publicly funded, in **France**; and there are now over 1,000 of these *crèches parentales*. A new action programme in Germany (*Orte für Kinder*), supported by the Federal Government, includes work to develop closer collaboration between services and parents

(as well as community and self-help groups, local children and other carers such as relatives and childminders). New legislation (*Kinder- und Jugend-wohlfahrtsgesetz*), from the beginning of 1992, requires: public authorities to incorporate parent-initiated services into the mainstream system, giving them the same funds and support as other services; regular surveys of local parental demand for services; and that the board of parents, that already exists in each service, has more influence over staffing, physical environment and pedagogy. A similar trend is occurring in **Denmark**, where there is a strong tradition of close cooperation between parents and workers in services, with parent committees for each service; new legislation gives increased powers to these committees in staffing, pedagogy and budgets. The new education law in **Spain** places great emphasis on parents' involvement with services.

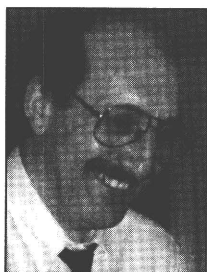
### **The Search for Quality**

A final theme running through a number of the articles is the search for quality. In the last two years, several countries have taken initiatives to regulate, or better regulate, private services. *Jean Altmann* writes about a new law currently before the **Luxembourg** Parliament to regulate private services, and a similar law was approved in **Ireland** in 1991. Private services have long been regulated in the **United Kingdom**, but new legislation that came into force in 1991 introduces wider and more stringent regulation of services for children from 0-8. As already noted, the articles from **the Netherlands** and **Portugal** express concerns that publicly-funded but privately managed services are currently not subject to consistent and sufficiently rigorous control and regulation.

These developments are concerned with a 'regulatory' approach to quality, with an emphasis on ensuring certain 'structural' conditions (environment, staffing, management etc) in individual services. This approach may well be important as a means to protect children and workers against poor conditions and harmful experiences; it can even have a contribution to make towards promoting positive experiences and developments.

Yet by themselves, such regulations are unlikely to be sufficient to promote and ensure quality. This requires that service systems and individual services have clear social and pedagogical objectives, defined through a democratic process including workers, parents, local communities and the wider society; an ability and willingness to review and revise objectives in the light of changing needs, circumstances and perspectives; and an infrastructure that will support and promote the achievement of objectives. This infrastructure may include: programmes of experimental and innovative projects; research, both theoretical and applied; high standards of initial and continuous training for workers, leading to a professionalised workforce with a strong identity, commitment and morale; managers who are technically competent; active participation by parents; and processes for evaluating the achievement of objectives, with support for workers to assist them to improve practice. For these conditions to flourish, in turn, requires a consistently supportive climate of public and political opinion - a culture and a political context - based on a recognition and understanding of work-family issues and of the needs and rights of children, women, men and families.

# THE DYNAMICS OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDCARE IN FLANDERS



*Fred Deven*

**During 1991/2 the childcare agenda in Flanders has been largely dominated by developments concerning school-age childcare. To better understand the situation in Flanders, it may be helpful to mention some key features. First, in Flanders and Belgium in general,**

**most welfare and care services are provided by private organisations, but are regulated and subsidised by public authorities at different levels. Second, compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6, but more than 90% of children aged 3-6 attend nursery schooling. School normally starts at 8-8.30 and finishes at 15.30-16.00, with a lunch break of about an hour and a half; schools are closed on Wednesday afternoons. Third, the school system has a variety of managing bodies, including municipal and provincial authorities, an Autonomous Council for Community Education (ARGO) and representatives or affiliates of the Roman Catholic Church; primary schools, therefore, are mainly provided by Roman Catholic bodies and local communes.**

## PRACTICE AND INITIATIVES

It is estimated that about 300,000 children between the ages of 3 and 12 regularly attend some form of school-age childcare. The most important provision is made by grandparents and other relatives. There are some centres specifically providing school-age childcare. However, the three major formal services are schools, playschemes and childcare services for young children.

Partly as a result of competition to enrol pupils, schools have become the major providers of school-age childcare: most provide care before and after the school day, but provision is less common on Wednesday afternoons and rare during school holidays. Children are cared for by teachers, parents and volunteers. As there is no additional funding from the Ministry of Education for this service, any costs come from the regular school budget and parental fees, which are generally very low; sometimes, local communes provide some funding. There are no general regulations on standards; quality suffers from inadequate funding and infrastructure and the absence of a pedagogical concept.

More than 300 playschemes take care of over 175,000 children during school holidays. They are regulated and funded by the Ministry of Culture and staffed by young people who receive a short period of training. Playschemes were not designed to provide care, and often do not wish to be involved in school-age childcare, as they feel this would interfere with the quality of play; only 15% are open for 8 hours a day or more.

Finally, publicly funded nurseries and family day carers, primarily providing for children under 3, may accept children aged 3-6 outside school hours.

The limited numbers receiving school-age childcare at these services is due to the practical problems of accepting older children; training is also not oriented to work with older children.

Until recently, therefore, no general policy existed on school-age childcare. Many services were used for this purpose, although their standards and funding were inadequate. But since 1989, school-age childcare has received increased attention and there have been a number of new developments.

Some developments following government action - *Weer-Werk* - in 1991 aimed at getting adults who have been unemployed for several years back into the labour market. To this end, the Flemish Ministry of Employment decided to stimulate the establishment of school-age childcare centres. Long-term unemployed people, mostly women with low levels of education, have been recruited and trained to work in these centres; salaries are paid for a limited period by the Ministry of Employment. Local communes are expected to provide the infrastructure, while parents pay running costs. The first centre was opened in mid-1992, and agreements have been signed for the equivalent of more than 1,000 full-time jobs.

The authorities of the province of Limburg have pioneered several developments in school-age childcare. They commissioned a comprehensive study of practice and of the needs and preferences among parents and other carers (R. De Boeck and L. Vints (1991), **Onderzoek Kinderopvang in Limburg**, Hasselt: LISO/ GOM Limburg). A Provincial Commission has been created to develop a coherent policy and a major programme of in-service training is planned for 1993.

The critical issue of training and selection of staff for school-age childcare is rather well provided for in Flanders. Besides the overall concern of *Kind en Gezin* (a public organisation funded by the Ministry of Family and Welfare, which is responsible for the regulation and funding of childcare services for children upto age 6), this is largely due to the

prominent role of the Centre of the Training in the Care of the Young Child (*Vormingscentrum voor de Begeleiding van het Jonge Kind*) in Ghent. Besides designing and implementing training packages tailored to specific needs, educational materials are also developed. In 1992 the Centre produced a manual specifically for workers in school-age childcare (D. Brants, J. Peeters and M. Vandenbroeck (1992), **De school is uit! Een handboek voor medewerkers buitenschoolse opvang**, Gent: VBJK ism VCOK en VDAB), and also contributed to a guide on school-age childcare which resulted from a collaborative effort involving the Bureau of the Women's Labour Commission at the Federal Ministry of Labour.

## ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL-AGE CHILDCARE

In May 1991, the Community Ministry of Welfare and the Family initiated a Round Table Conference on school-age childcare (*Ronde Tafel Conferentie Buitenschoolse* = RTC). This initiative was awaited for some time, once the issue of school-age childcare came onto the political agenda. However, this Ministry has responsibility for childcare services for children under 3, not for school-age childcare. Authority in this area is claimed, and partially acted on, by the Community Ministries of Education and of Culture.

The RTC was given a number of tasks: to take stock of existing initiatives (including a survey of parents' needs and preferences); to design a structure to guarantee the quality of services; and to make policy recommendations. The RTC had some 45 members, mainly representatives of a variety of

organisations and lobbies reflecting different ideological and/or political interests, senior civil servants of several Ministries and a few experts; it was chaired by the Administrator-General of *Kind en Gezin*. In practice, about ten members met regularly to discuss most of the issues involved. The RTC delivered a substantial interim report in December 1991, reflecting the responses of many organisations to a questionnaire. In the meantime, practitioners joined forces to develop and present their perspective in a publication.

In July 1992, the RTC presented its final report. It recommends developing services by two separate means. First, making optimal use of, and expanding, existing services, for example by providing extra resources to schools to provide care before and after school, at lunch-time and on Wednesday afternoons (when schools are closed), and encouraging playschemes to provide school-age childcare especially in holidays. Second, the report recommends the creation of "centres for school-age childcare".

These proposals recognise and accept a variety of services and the involvement of several Ministries. A Working Group of members of the different Ministries involved (Culture, Education, Employment, Welfare) has been set up and requested to act on the RTC recommendations. But differences of interest remain, and different bodies and Ministries wish to keep their positions, not least because of the prospect of new public funding. For example, the "Youth Council" immediately issued a statement claiming that school-age childcare for children over 6 should be the sole competence of the Administration of Youth Work in the Ministry of Culture. It especially opposed the idea of providing incentives and extra financial support to new initiatives, such as centres for school-age childcare.

At present (December 1992), noticing that important differences remain and that no single policy decision has emerged from the Working

Group, the Ministry of Welfare and the Family submitted this issue to the Flemish Government. The item was postponed three times, finally ending on the agenda of the Flemish Government for mid-January 1993. Meanwhile, two memos taking rather opposing positions have been submitted for consideration, one from the Minister of Welfare and the Family, the other from her colleague, the Minister of Employment and Social Affairs. It remains probable that the differences in view and interest, leading to what outsiders perceive as a very Belgian recipe: compromise.

By now, a substantial diversity in type and quality of services can be noticed in school-age childcare. A well-documented examination of the current situation, based on the quality indicators of the EC Childcare Network discussion paper on **Quality in Services for Young Children**, points to a number of problems (M. Vandenbroeck (1992), 'Buitenschoolse opvang: een stand van zaken', in R. Baeckelmans et al., **Werken aan een betere kinderopvang**, Gent: ODDK ism VBJK). First, there is a lack of cooperation between all parties involved, at local and community levels. Second, no formal standards exist for the qualifications and the training of staff in school-age childcare services; there is a need for professionalisation. There is also a very limited involvement by men as workers in these services. Third, considerably more funding is needed to cover a diversity of costs (infrastructure, personnel, training, monitoring, advice and support, research). Finally, public discussion largely triggered by the RTC needs to be continued.



# COST, AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY



Perrine Humblet<sup>1</sup>

**Within the French-speaking community of Belgium, O.N.E. (Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance) is the organization which regulates and funds childcare services for young children on behalf of the Government. O.N.E. does not have any significant additional funds to meet the growing needs of parents of young children. Finding alternative childcare services at a moderate cost, without compromising the quality of care, is an increasingly important task - but not an easy one.**

<sup>1</sup> Co-author: Florence Pirard, Service de Pédagogie Générale et de Méthodologie de l'Enseignement, Université de Liège.

## THE COMMUNE CHILDCARE CENTRE: A VALID ALTERNATIVE?

**W**ishing to increase the number of places in childcare services, but finding traditional nurseries (*crèches*) too expensive, the O.N.E. has sought new solutions. Since 1991, the O.N.E. has experimented with a new type of childcare service, the commune childcare centre (*maison communale d'accueil de l'enfance* = MCAE). The MCAEs involve a smaller subsidy from O.N.E. They are funded in the same way and at the same level as organised family day care schemes (*service de gardiennes encadrées*), that is a payment per day per child attending; this costs less than the funding of nurseries (*crèches*), which involves subsidising salaries.

Services for children under compulsory school age in Belgium are divided according to the age of children. Children under 3 using services mainly go to nurseries or family day carers, some of whom operate in publicly funded organised family day care schemes; nearly all children from 3 to 6 attend nursery schools (*écoles maternelles*). So, at age 3, children experience a break in services; indeed, publicly funded nurseries and organised family day care schemes cannot take children over 3.

The MCAEs, however, do not require children to make a complete break in services when they reach three. The MCAEs can enrol children from 0-6, and they are open at least ten hours daily, five days a week. Children aged 3-6, for example, could attend part-time or occasionally, even if they also go to nursery school. At a local level, this facilitates continuity between the various services which are offered for young children (MCAE, school, playschemes, etc.). The MCAEs are relatively

small - 12 to 18 places. They are particularly suited to rural areas, where communes may hesitate to organize larger nurseries which may not get fully used. With the MCAE, a choice between centre-based childcare or family day care becomes a reality in these areas.

The MCAEs are open to the same families as other childcare services. But unlike the more traditional services, the MCAEs give some priority to children whose parents are of a lower socio-economic level and/or to children with severe disabilities. Financial incentives support these priorities; the MCAEs receive an additional subsidy for these children, which encourages the development of social projects in the area of childcare.

For a project such as the MCAE, the O.N.E. becomes the partner of public and, eventually, private organisations; being a partner with financial resources promotes more synergy among all of the involved parties. To this end, the O.N.E. provides the salary for a programme coordinator (1/4 time) as well as a daily subsidy based on the presence of children under three; although older children may attend, no subsidy is paid if they do so. Apart from the coordinators, workers in MCAEs are recruited from unemployed childcare workers and paid by the Regional Government; this financial contribution from the Regional Government enables the O.N.E. subsidy to MCAEs to be lower than the subsidy to traditional nurseries. As well as O.N.E., the MCAE must make an agreement with the Region and the local commune; most MCAEs are managed by communes.

The interest in this innovative form of childcare is not only because of its lower cost, but because it raises a debate about quality of care. The O.N.E. has specified in a document the conditions for quality childcare. To be approved, the MCAEs must conform to the highest standards of organisation and facilities, and have both social and pedagogical programmes. At the same time, the O.N.E. supports research to accompany these new

programmes during the first two years of their implementation. This research is done at the Faculty of Psychology and Education at the University of Liège (*Faculté de Psychologie et des Sciences de l'Education*). It could possibly be the spark which sets off a dynamic growth of social and pedagogical development at a **local** level.

## RESEARCH SUPPORT: A NEW APPROACH

The first principle of the research support is to consider each MCAE as a unique initiative. The research gathered from 40 centres shows that a number of factors determine the quality of the childcare: the origins of the service, the particular socio-geographical context, the human and material resources available, but also certain specific constraints of the service. An MCAE can be either a new structure, or the adaptation or extension of structures that already exist. The childcare provided varies according to the background of the service and the work histories of the personnel.

Next, the researchers define, in consultation with the team members of each service which has been created, the conditions necessary for quality childcare which is the foundation of the MCAE. Both those sponsoring the project and the personnel involved are invited to participate in a formative evaluation targeted towards action. This evaluation is based on the social and pedagogical programmes which were specified for each centre at its inception. The parameters taken into consideration have been mainly based on the EC Childcare Network's discussion paper on **Quality in Services for Young Children** and the advice of experts from the Council of Europe:

- lay-out of space, both interior and exterior;
- program for the children, daily routine;
- relationship with parents;
- organisation of work;
- relationship with other childcare services for young children;
- synergy with other related organisations;
- integration with the local community; and
- financial partnership arrangements.

The research attempts to develop the pedagogical and social programme not only as an ideologically shared concept, but above all as a common approach shared by the staff team. Research support is limited to one intervention per week at the centre. It consists of helping the participants to redefine their educative and social objectives, to place them in an historical and social-geographical context, and above all to make them operational in terms of the defined quality parameters. The **evaluation** consists at this point of analyzing whether there is a coherence between the practices taking place in a given context and the social and educative objectives of the pedagogical programme. The **action** consists of validating the work already done by the staff team, researching ways for improvement, and working with the team towards the resolution of problems. Another area of work consists of inviting the researchers and the MCAEs to help in the writing of a 'planning guide' on the creation and functioning of future MCAEs.

## **AFTER A YEAR'S INTRODUCTION, THE DEBATE BEGINS**

The research collected to date on the MCAEs raises several questions:

- What financial conditions are necessary to achieve the overall objectives of the project? Should not all childcare centres have the same access to similar financial resources to ensure equal quality of service?
- Providing subsidies only for children under 3 years hinders the attendance of older children. Does not the method of subsidising therefore determine the type of service provided, in spite of guidelines which support a wider age range?
- Is the preparation of a pedagogical and social programme as a condition for funding enough to guarantee quality services? Research shows that such a programme by itself is not enough; it must be accompanied by a staff team which not only implements the programme but continuously revises it as a result of collective reflection on practice.
- Finally, how can quality childcare and the return of unemployed women to employment be made compatible goals? Observation shows that what matters most is the recruitment of a staff **team** which is involved in the pedagogical and social programme from the start. Having professionals available to work with the team and answer the inevitable questions that will arise, especially when the centre first opens, will also contribute to successful implementation.

MCAEs could become a truly innovative service in Belgium. Sixty projects have in fact already been submitted: 32 have been accepted, while 28 are in the process of being approved. This will produce about 700 new places in smaller towns and semi-rural areas. The MCAEs are the result of a desire to increase both the availability and quality of childcare services. But limited resources may threaten their quality of service or their very existence.

# AGE-INTEGRATED CENTRES IN DENMARK



Jytte Juul Jensen

**In this article I shall look at the educational and psychological philosophy behind mixing a wide age-range of children in groups in centre-based child-care services. In particular, I shall focus on age-integrated centres (aldersintegreede institutioner), the type of**

**service which has the widest mix of ages. I know that it is a provocative view, but I would like to submit that being with playmates of varying ages is extremely important, and even a central factor in children's social development. Children need other children - not only of their own age but also those who are younger and those who are older than themselves.**

**G**rowing up in a setting where there are children of different ages is important for development, because the child in this situation experiences and enters into many different kinds of social relations.

In mixed age groups of children there are opportunities for playing various roles and taking different positions. There are also opportunities for acquiring forms of social competence that are qualitatively different from those acquired in groups of children with a narrow range of ages.

Mixed age groups are very family-like - in Sweden they are called 'sibling groups'. The same children and staff can be together in the same group for years, enabling friendships to be built and maintained. The tradition in Danish childcare services stresses play and social interaction, and **not** preparation for primary school. As Danish children spend so much of their youngest childhood in childcare centres, it is very important that adults organize a setting where children's own culture can grow. School-age childcare is leisure time or free time for children. The rationale for school-age childcare services is not the same as for schools and they should not be organised on the basis of strict age segregation.

There has not been much research into interaction in mixed age groups. Of the research on children, over 90% deals with child-adult relations (and especially the child's relationship to the mother). The research that deals with child-child relations has been characterized in the following way in a review article on 'peer relations' written by Willard Hartup in 1983:

*"Approximately 90% of the existing studies on child-child relations deal with the interaction among age-mates, that is, children within 12 months of one another in chronological age. Usage alone (of the word "peer" that means*

*"equal standing")...did not bring about this state of affairs. Children have been most accessible to social scientists in schools and other institutions which...are age-graded. Unable to track children on the playground, in city streets and in farmyards, psychologists have unwittingly generated an age-graded data base."* (In P.H.Mussen (ed.) **Handbook of Child Psychology, Fourth Edition, Volume IV**, New York: Wiley and Sons)

Furthermore, when children's lives outside institutions are studied, it turns out that there is significantly more mixed age play than one is led to expect on the basis of the dominant research that has been carried out in age-segregated institutions.

In Denmark, awareness has arisen in recent years of some of these limitations and attempts have been made to counteract some of the institutional age-segregation. These attempts have focused on elementary instruction in schools and on centres for children below compulsory school age (which is 7 in Denmark).

The educational and psychological philosophy behind the establishment of childcare centres for mixed age groups was expressed in 1972 in a government report about the restructuring of these centres. Two issues are emphasised in the report. One of them concerns identification models: living

in a typical Danish family of today, with its 2 children born soon after each other, means that the average child does not live with other children of a completely different age with whom he/she can identify. It is important that childcare centres compensate for this situation. The other issue concerns language development: small children's vocabulary and understanding benefit greatly from the presence of older children. Being with peers does not provide the same language stimulation.

The traditional types of centres in Denmark for young children are nurseries (*vuggestuer*) for children under 3 years and kindergartens (*bornehaver*) for 3-6 year olds. But age-integrated centres have become more and more widespread since the first ones were established 20 years ago. Most age-integrated centres have children from 6 months to around 6 years, but some centres take children up to the age of 10, 12 and even 14. Age-integrated centres for children aged 0-6 have seen an especially large growth in recent years and it seems possible that they will become the most common type of centre for children under school age.

The Table below shows the contribution in 1992 of age-integrated centres to the full range of non-school publicly-funded childcare services for children aged 0-9. It can be seen that age-integrated centres accounted for 20% of all children enrolled,

Age range	Organised child-minding schemes	Nurseries	Kindergarten	Age Integrated centres	School-age care centres <sup>1</sup>	Total number enrolled
0-2	56,317	21,591	2,877	<b>11,188</b>	9	91,982
3-6	14,439	2,055	89,474	<b>42,655</b>	22,695	171,318
7-9	492	1	554	<b>12,297</b>	60,253	73,597
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,248</b>	<b>23,647</b>	<b>92,905</b>	<b>66,140</b>	<b>82,957</b>	<b>336,897</b>

<sup>1</sup> The figure for school-age care centres includes children attending centres in schools (*skolefritidsordninger*) (66%) and children attending centres independent of schools (*fritidshjem*) (34%).

including 12% of under 3s, 25% of 3-6 year olds and 17% of 7-9 year olds (who use the centres for school-age childcare). The Table also shows the very high level of publicly funded services in Denmark. These services provide for 49% of under 3s, 75% of 3-6 year olds (while in addition nearly all 6 year olds and some 5 year olds go to nursery classes in primary school) and just under 46% of 7-9 year olds.

In age-integrated centres children up to 3 years are often in one group, while 3 to 6/10 year olds are in other groups. But some centres do have children from 0 to 6/10 in the same group. At the same time as the growth of age-integrated centres took place, the more traditional types of centres have also mixed the ages much more in their groups. Earlier it was very common in nurseries and kindergartens to divide children into two or three groups according to age; today it is most common to mix the ages, so children aged 0 to 3 and 3 to 6 are in the same groups. It should be said that staff in the centres have a lot of freedom to decide in what way to mix the children; there are no external regulations on this issue.

A study of the staff of 14 age-integrated centres with children aged 0/3 to 14 gives some insights into how they feel about working in these types of centres; although the work was done in centres which included children over the age of 6, the same results would probably be found in age-integrated centres only providing for children under 6 (for further information on this study see: J.Jensen and O.Langsted (1988) *Age integration in an age segregated society: mixed age groups in Danish daycare centres*, in K.Ekberg and P.E.Mjaavatt (eds.) **Growing into a Modern World**, Trondheim: the Norwegian centre for Child Research).

As one of the greatest advantages of mixed age centres, staff emphasize the fact that the children can avoid having to change their surroundings. The greater number of years that the children can

remain at the same centre gives continuity for the individual child, especially when the staff also work in the institution for many years which they actually do. It also gives continuity to the children's group which contributes to good group cohesion. Norms and rules are known in the group and are often passed on from the bigger children to the smaller ones; thus, it is not only staff who perform this function.

Age-integration means that the children can find playmates of the same developmental stage and this is not always the same as being of the same chronological age. Also, the children have the opportunity to practice roles and positions which they might not be able to do in more age-homogenous groups. The older children are often models for the younger ones, who can learn much from them, and the young children receive care and attention, not only from the adults, but also from the bigger children. The oldest children are also placed in situations in which they are expected to take responsibility and show consideration for the smaller children.

One concern in connection with age integration has been whether the bigger children would be too rough with the smaller ones. However, in practice there are only very few conflicts between the older and younger children. Conflicts arise most often between children of the same age. When conflicts arise among the younger children, the older children tend to intervene and take part in the resolution of the conflict. Competitiveness is also less pronounced, since there are fewer children of the same age to compete with - competition which often centres around seeking the favour and attention of adults.

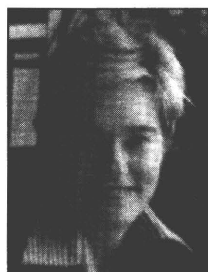
As a whole, staff are very satisfied with working in age-integrated centres. It creates variety in the work, just as the social interaction is varied. In the care situation with the very small children, in playing football or playing doll games with the middle age group and in the conversation-between-

equals with the oldest children, the requirements are rather different. There is satisfaction in being able to follow the children for a longer period of years, to see them develop and to see the results of the work undertaken with them. Dissatisfaction is not so much concerned with mixed age groups, but rather with the unsatisfactory features of the physical and economic context within which the work is carried out.

The broad age span in the age-integrated centres provides the possibility for siblings to be in the same centre and in the same group for a longer period of time. Parents seem to be very pleased about the age-integration. Parents and staff get to know each other well when the children attend the same centre for many years.

The social competencies that children develop will be different if their experiences in their everyday lives involve interactions with other children of the same age or with children of a mixed age range. But it may also be that children need **both** kinds of experience in order to develop a broad spectrum of social competencies.

# SNAPSHOTS AFTER REUNIFICATION



Monika Jaeckel

**How long it will take until stable economic and social conditions are re-established in the "New Bundesländer" (the former GDR) is still unclear. In these transitional times, women and children are seriously affected. The majority (up to 75% in some areas)**

**of the unemployed are women. They are faced with a situation they never expected and for which they were not prepared in the society where they grew up: to be at home with small children.**

**In the former GDR having children was part of the general life style: however, they were looked after 10 to 12 hours a day by public childcare institutions. Although the infrastructure of childcare institutions has been largely maintained so far, many unemployed women have taken their children out of these institutions or reduced the hours that their children attend. Many cannot afford the increased costs, which are about three times higher than before re-unification.**

**S**ince 1989 there have been some reductions in the supply of public childcare, but mainly the institutions which were closed down were those connected with companies which made up about 12% of the total supply. Many other institutions have reduced the number of places or their opening hours to adapt to the new situation. This process will continue, especially with the 3 year Parental Leave, which has been introduced for all Germany since January 1992.

Especially just after reunification, much dissatisfaction was expressed about the quality of the public childcare institutions, for example concerning rigid and centralised curriculum and schedules, the non-participation of parents and the ideological approach to child raising with an emphasis on developing "a socialist personality". Despite these criticisms, in general the public childcare institutions are still very much accepted by parents. They are seen as the place where children can meet other children and "have more fun" than at home. Most parents, however, would prefer fewer hours of attendance at public childcare, especially for the youngest children (under 3s).

Unlike other East European countries, women in East Germany have retained a strong job identity and orientation. All recent studies have shown that staying at home with children as a housewife is not an attractive life-style for the large majority of women in the New Länder, even if it was economically possible (for example, if the husband could earn enough money to support the family). There is a dominant perspective: all people should have children and that all people should go out to work (although part-time employment is a preference among mothers with small children). By contrast, West German women see employment



and family more as competitive areas of life. They are more likely to perceive a choice of different life styles; some women place more emphasis on employment, while others place more emphasis on family life.

In the former GDR having children was unquestioned: 70% of women had their first child before the age of 25. Choosing to be single, or not to have children, was very rare and against the societal norm. A 1992 study by the Federal Ministry for Women and Youth shows these attitudes continuing after reunification. The decision of a woman not to have a child is understood or tolerated by 85% of women in West Germany, compared to only 69% in East Germany; while 77% of women in the New Länder compared to 55% in the Old Länder agree that "As a woman life is happier if you have a child". Given these attitudes, it is even more striking that there has been a large fall in birth rate since reunification (almost 50% fewer births) and an increasing number of young women are getting sterilisations in the hope that this will increase their chances on the job market.

On the other hand, divorce rates, which were among the highest in the world in the former GDR, are decreasing. In times of insecurity, it seems that women "hold on to what they have", especially as the social and economic status of single mothers has seriously deteriorated since reunification. The loss of social security benefits available under the old regime has put single mothers in a very precarious situation. Before, their jobs were secure and they had many special benefits, including better chances to obtain housing; now they are often the first to lose their jobs and their housing.

The high unemployment rate in the New Länder is a social as well as an economic problem. Unemployment has contributed to growing violence against foreigners and increased support for right wing ideologies, but it has also adversely affected family life. Physical and sexual violence against women and children in the family has

increased dramatically. Women at home with small children feel extremely isolated. Because of their strong identification with employment, they do not feel "at home" at home. They are not used to being with their children all of the time - being a parent used to mean spending some hours in the evening, and the weekends, with your children.

*"What am I supposed to do all day with the children? They don't do anything on their own. The constant demands on me are driving me crazy, and then I start screaming or I even beat them. Afterwards I'm so sorry and ashamed. But I just feel so overwhelmed. I never expected this kind of life, when I decided to have children. I never expected to be the only one dealing with them. And it never was a burden before. I enjoyed the weekends we had together and we went out and did a lot of things together. Now I feel caged up with them and in a mother role I never prepared for."* (from a newspaper article by Anna Krätchell in the **Rheinescher Merker**, 14 June, 1991).

Against this background, the question of childcare services develops another dimension. They are not only important as a part of the infrastructure that enables women to go out to work. They are also important as a place where women and children can get out of a stifling isolation at home. This broader perspective however, involves childcare institutions adopting a more parent- and community-oriented approach than was their practice in the former GDR.

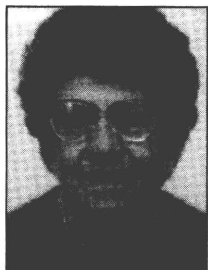
Opening out to and supporting parents' groups, initiating and cooperating with self-help initiatives and neighbourhood networks (for example mothers' centres, playgroups, grandmothers, family day carers, shelters for victims of domestic violence and for girls who run away from home because of increased violence or because they are expected to take full responsibility for looking after their younger siblings etc.) are important tasks for childcare institutions in the present very unstable

situation in the New Länder. This is not an easy task as neighbourhood networks and self-help initiatives were discouraged or forbidden before. But some model projects along these lines are beginning now in the New Länder.

Meanwhile, on the level of social policies former West Germany has profited from reunification:

- The extension of parental leave to three years in January 1992 was a way to bridge the gap between the extensive supply of childcare institutions for young children in East Germany and very limited provision in West Germany. In 1990, there were places for about 50% of children under 3 in public services in East Germany, compared to places for 2% of the same age group in West Germany.
- At the legislative level, a decision has been made to give every child from the age of 3 until school age the right to a kindergarten place by the beginning of 1996. This probably would not have happened on a national level without reunification. East Germany already has places for nearly all children in kindergartens (for 95% of 3-6 year olds in 1990); levels of provision are substantially lower in West Germany (70%).
- The decision to grant every kindergarten age child the right to a kindergarten place was associated with the debate on the abortion law. Before reunification there was a strong lobby in West Germany to make the abortion regulations, which already allowed abortion only under certain conditions, more strict. Legislation and practice was more liberal in the former GDR, allowing abortion in the first three months of pregnancy. More liberal abortion legislation, nearer to the East German approach than the West German, has been passed in the Federal Parliament. This involved a rare coalition of members of parliament crossing party lines, for instance East German members of the Conservative Party voting against the Conservative Party line. This decision has not been ratified yet, and there is a possibility that it will be outlawed by the Supreme Court.
- Leave to care for sick children, paid at 100% of earnings, has been increased from 5 days to 10 days per parent per child, up to a maximum of 25 days per parent. This is also a consequence of unification, and the need to close the gap that existed between East and West German social policy in this respect.

# CHILDCARE IN THE RURAL AREAS



Vivie Papadimitriou

**For the European Community, the term 'developing areas of the southern countries' mainly refers to rural areas and particularly to those which are situated well away from urban centres. These areas experience depopulation as a result of migration of population towards the cities. This particular phenomenon is very important for Greece. During the decades after World War I, the Greek economy was mainly based on agriculture, with the largest part of the population employed in farming. A mass migration movement occurred in Greece during the period after the end of World War II. The main reasons for this movement were the harsh living conditions after the civil war, the lack of infrastructure, the limited possibilities for education, and the search for opportunities for a better life in urban areas.**

**T**his migration movement had a major impact on the Greek family. It greatly affected not only its qualitative structure and the interrelation between its members, but also its demographic nature. The extended form of the Greek family has gradually declined, leading to the eventual predominance of the 'nuclear family'. Many problems also arose owing to parents going away and leaving the supervision of their children with grandparents.

In Greece, the rural population can be classified into the municipalities and communities situated: (a) in flat country or plains; (b) in semi-flat country, that is, either at the foot of mountains or in an area covering parts of both a plain and a mountain, and (c) in mountainous country. The greatest problems occur in mountainous areas, where the lack of infrastructure and programme planning concerned with families and their individual members is most acute; these inadequacies of infrastructure and planning cover both physical facilities, such as roads and water supplies, as well as health and social services. While the end of the 20th century finds developed countries engaged in a race to develop new technologies and promoting research, these areas still require a lot of attention to improve the basic quality of life.

Research studies have shown that the main factors creating the present problematic condition of rural areas are:

- Limited agricultural land, which prevents extensive use and exploitation.
- High levels of bureaucracy, centralisation and the inaccessibility of public services. These features constitute a major obstacle to the communication of information. As a result of this lack of information, inhabitants of rural

areas do not take advantage of opportunities to which they are entitled and make very limited use of national or EC programmes (for example, projects funded by the EC Structural Funds).

- The inadequate social environment (for example, lack of childcare, health and training services), which adversely affects the personal and family life of the inhabitants of these areas.

The national Ministry of Health and Welfare provides kindergartens (*pedikos stathnos*), most of which are open from 07.00-16.00 and take children from 2.5 to 5.5 years, the age at which children start primary school; some kindergartens take children from 8 months of age and there are also some nurseries for children under 2.5 years. Provision of these services in rural area is limited: most services are in urban areas, especially in and around Athens. The Ministry of Education provides nursery education (*nipiagogion*) for children aged 4 to 5.5 years, but only for 3.5 hours a day.

Local authorities in Greece may develop social and cultural services, for example childcare centres. But such initiatives are very limited even in the Municipalities (larger towns), and even less common in the Communities (villages/small towns). Most childcare services provided by local authorities are, again, in urban areas and especially in and around Athens.

Here we must stress the important contribution of private organisations (church, voluntary and local) in providing services in rural areas, especially for children and elderly people. For example, the National Welfare Organisation (*EOP*) provides a range of services in rural areas, including 84 kindergartens, open all the year, and 73 'seasonal' kindergartens available during the busiest farming months in the summer.

Rural families in Greece continue to face major problems. Women's opportunities for education, training and employment remain very limited.

Without access to childcare services, and with extended families rarely found today even in very remote areas, young children do not have adequate opportunities for socialising, and mothers are obliged to take children with them when they do their farming work or else entrust them to older siblings. Primary schools are found only in some villages, so children must travel long distances daily for education, while there are no facilities in schools for providing meals during the day. Services providing school-age childcare and leisure activities are non-existent.

Nevertheless, the possibilities for rural development do exist. I would like to conclude by making some proposals about the type of services that might form part of this development:

- Creation of mobile units for the provision of medical and social services to infants, pre-school and school-age children as well as mothers in rural areas.
- Establishment of childcare services for young children, but also for school aged children where they could go before and after school to be offered lunch and opportunities for creative activities and assistance with homework; provision could also be extended during the summer months for children who do not participate in children's holiday camps. As well as the children of employed parents, childcare services should be open to children of non-employed parents for regular or occasional attendance; this will offer children the chance to socialise with other children. Services could be organised on a cooperative, associative or voluntary basis, for the promotion of civil society.
- Increased provision of seasonal childcare services, for children with parents employed in seasonal occupations (for example, farming, tourism).

- Establishment of organised family day care schemes, including training of family day carers, especially for areas where centre-based services do not exist. At present, family day care is not common in Greece.
- Implementation of pilot projects in very mountainous areas with scattered populations, and the creation of mobile units able to offer a number of diverse services to infants, children, parents and elderly people.
- Creation of multi-purpose centres offering social and other services, together with the training of unemployed young people.
- Opportunities for regular in-service training for staff working in services for children.
- Educational assistance to mothers in matters regarding the care and upbringing of children.

# LOGSE : A NEW DIRECTION IN SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



Irene Balaguer

**In October 1990, a major new education law (*Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo = LOGSE*) was passed. This law had long been awaited and widely discussed. The entire educational system of the country required profound changes:**

**democratic principles, new social needs and membership of the European Community made such a transformation indispensable. The LOGSE was designed to respond to the new and future reality of the nation.**

**T**he LOGSE regulates children's education from infancy to the age of eighteen. Education is organised into three stages: Early Childhood Education (age 0-6), Primary Education (age 6-12) and Secondary Education (age 12-18). It is a schematic law, allowing additional development by those Autonomous Communities which have jurisdiction over education (in Spain, there are seventeen Autonomous Communities; six - Andalusia, Canary Islands, Galicia, Catalonia, Basque Country, Valencia - have full jurisdiction over education). The LOGSE can be adapted to any new situation that may arise.

Many have wondered why Spain has adopted education legislation that covers children from infancy up to the age of six, when in most of Europe the education system takes responsibility for children only from the age of 3 or even older. The history of the development of the LOGSE can supply part of the answer. At the end of the 1970s, there was a strong professional and social movement in Spain for more attention to be paid to education and educational services for children up to six years of age. This movement was adamant about the need for a law governing early childhood education and called on the Government to accept responsibility for the drafting of legislation.

Towards the end of the 1979-82 Parliament, the Socialists in the Congress of Deputies, at that time in the opposition, presented a proposal for a law governing early childhood education. In so doing, they lent their support to the demands of this broad social movement for reform. In 1982, when the Socialist Party came to power, they were in doubt for some time about whether they should present their plans for early childhood education as a separate law or within a broader legal framework; eventually the latter course was decided upon.

From 1985 to 1990, the Ministry of Education undertook a lot of preparatory work leading up to the new law. The Ministry supported a number of experimental projects for those parts of the education system for which changes were anticipated. In 1987 the Ministry published a discussion document 'Project for Educational Reform', followed in 1989 by a 'White Paper' on the reform of the education system; these stimulated widespread discussion, for example in School Councils (an institution through which the whole school community - teachers, other staff, pupils, parents - can participate in the management of the school) and gave rise to negotiations between the Government and various groups concerned with education including the Autonomous Communities. In 1989, the Ministry of Education produced a Basic Curriculum Plan (*Diseno Curricular Base*) for Early Childhood Education. The first results of the experimental projects also appeared at this time. In early childhood education the results achieved by the projects were very positive and encouraging. This was particularly true in the case of the special teachers training project, which offered access to initial training and a teaching qualification to workers with experience of working in nurseries and other childcare services but no kind of qualifications.

As a result therefore of long-term pressure rooted in the past and the Socialist Party's participation in the Government from 1982 onwards, children from 0-6 years old have finally been included in the Spanish educational system. The Law makes the national Ministry of Education and Departments of Education in Autonomous Communities with jurisdiction over education responsible for **all** services for children from 0-6, which include nursery education in schools, nurseries for children under 4 and centres taking children from 0-6 (these nurseries and centres are renamed 'infant schools' (*escuela infantil*)). What are sometimes referred to as 'childcare services' and 'nursery education' services have been brought together within the education system.

Infancy to six is the first stage of the education system, which is referred to as 'early childhood education' (*educacion infantil*). This first stage of education is, in turn, divided into two 'cycles' - 0-3 and 3-6. Children will be taught by trained teachers (and there have been changes in teacher training to enable specialisation in working with children from 0-6); workers with other, lower levels of qualification are permitted to work with children aged 0-3. Finally, for the first time, private nurseries must be regulated and supervised by public authorities; minimum standards for these services have been prepared by the Ministry of Education.

So, education for the 0-6 age group has a prominent position in the LOGSE. However, implementation leaves a lot to be desired, especially for children under 3. Since the LOGSE was approved, the Central Government has not introduced any plan of action for the development of education services for this youngest group of children. This may be due to a number of different reasons: the priority given to other parts of the education system, in particular the expansion of secondary education and the upgrading of professional training; the economic recession; the transfer of education responsibilities to the Autonomous Communities; uncertainty as to the jurisdiction of other Ministries, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, in matters of early childhood education, etc. Early childhood education services for this youngest age group have been mainly handled by local authorities, mainly town councils without legal duties and therefore with limited financial resources, who have nevertheless tried to meet the need of the local population to a greater or lesser extent, providing higher or lower quality services.

In addition to limited publicly funded services mainly provided by town councils, there is a private for-profit sector providing services for young children. A recent Government survey (1991) of 400 nurseries (105 public, 296 private) in

9 Autonomous Communities shows how much work still needs to be done to improve conditions, especially in private nurseries. Nearly half the staff (37% in public nurseries, 62% in private nurseries) needed to improve their training. The most outstanding problem was inadequate staff levels: two-thirds of the nurseries (76% in the private sector) had more than 9 children aged 1-2 years for each member of staff, and in 42% of nurseries there were more than 12 children for each member of staff. Three-quarters of nurseries had no parent association, and many did not accept children under the age of 2.

The two cycles of within the Early Childhood Education stage have not had the same degree of priority from Government. The Government has set a target of educational provision for all children aged 3-5 before 1995. At present, almost all children aged 4 and 5 receive education, and provision is being extended to 3 year olds. Guaranteeing education for all these children undoubtedly indicates significant progress; moreover, this education will be free of charge. But for the first cycle of education, for children aged 0-3, there exists only a vague statement - "to satisfy the demand" - with no timetable.

The LOGSE also stipulates the quality of education to be provided. It has introduced measures which will inevitably improve the quality of services: it reduces the number of children per group in the second cycle of early childhood education from 30 to 25 and stipulates four teachers for each three groups of children; it provides for an open and flexible curriculum; it emphasises the value of each of the educational stages rather than simply viewing them as springboards for future development. The LOGSE is less progressive regarding the pedagogical conditions for the first cycle, for example with respect to the number of children per group and authorising the employment of teachers and other workers with a lower level of training. Such conditions do not support the recognition and development of the first cycle of Early Childhood

Education. In addition, this cycle has made great progress in professional approaches which will be difficult to maintain if dependent on the support of local authorities alone.

## THE LOGSE IN CATALONIA

Catalonia is an Autonomous Community with full jurisdiction over education. It has developed its own standards concerning the application of the LOGSE within its territory, including a Decree on the general regulation and the minimum requirements to be met by all services for children from 0-6, a Decree on curriculum and the Decree setting a timetable for the implementation of the law. In parallel with this regulatory process, the Education Department of the Generalitat (the Catalan Government) has introduced groups for three year olds in the public schools.

Social awareness in Catalonia is considerable: the Teachers Movements and the Parents Associations in the public schools, and the teachers union have all put pressure on the government, demanding that the introduction of the groups for three year olds should be carried out with guaranteed quality, that the groups be of 20 children, that the premises be refurbished and the facilities assessed, and that the teachers be properly trained. These social demands have been fulfilled in the majority of cases. The inclusion of groups for 3 year olds in many schools signifies the abandonment of the old model of pre-school education, with its emphasis on preparing the child for primary education, in favour of the establishment of the new model of the infant school, with its focus on the child's present needs, rather than her future schooling, and with priority given to play and activities to develop the child's own capabilities.



The second cycle of Early Childhood Education has a plan and a timetable for its introduction. The same cannot be said with regard to the policy governing the implementation of the first cycle. Here, activity has been nil. Although the Government of Catalonia has had jurisdiction over the education of children under three ever since 1980, no centre has been built through its own initiative, and the subsidies to the town councils' and private centres have been virtually frozen. This has made the present situation very difficult, particularly for town councils. Trusting in a policy of shared economic responsibilities, the town councils created their own services. They are now finding it quite difficult, not to say impossible, to keep these centres going and this has caused major crises and, in some cases, even the closing down of services.



## **THE LOGSE IN MADRID**

Madrid is an Autonomous Community with no jurisdiction over education, which means that the Central Government is responsible for the schools in its territory. However, with the LOGSE, other ministries can be involved in the education of children below the age of six; so the Community of Madrid has developed, through its own Department of Education and Culture, a highly positive initiative for this age group. Agreements have been made with the national Ministry of Education and Science, the national Ministry of Social Affairs and the town councils in its territory to form a wide and well coordinated network of public services for children, some taking children from 0-6 and some from 0-3 according to the circumstances in each area.

There are three types of services dependent upon the public network coordinated by the Autonomous Community of Madrid: education centres offering both the first and second cycles (0-6), education centres offering the first cycle only (with children going to schools for the second cycle), and "Children's Houses", a new type of service for children aged 0-3 in the rural areas. The aim of the Autonomous Community is that by 1995 publicly funded centres should be available to 25% of children aged 0-3 and 100% of 3-6 year-olds. In parallel with this process of co-ordination and planning for early childhood education services, the Department of Education has supported policies to improve the quality of these services. Training courses for staff have been scheduled both during and outside regular working hours; teams have been formed to provide early attention to children with special needs, so that schools can integrate these children; methods of family participation in the services have been established and new strategies favouring parent-school relationships have been studied; a labour agreement has been signed, establishing the salaries of the teaching staff at one of the highest levels in Spain; and a curriculum is being developed in accordance with the national criteria established by the Ministry of Education.

---

## OTHER SITUATIONS

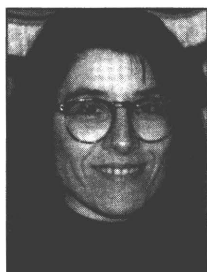
We can compare the two above examples, with other, less positive cases, such as that of the Community of Extremadura which, like Madrid, has no jurisdiction over education. There, early childhood education for children younger than 3 is under the Department of Immigration and Social Action. No innovative policy has been promoted and the future application of the LOGSE has not yet been considered. In the Autonomous Community of Andalusia, which does have full jurisdiction over education, two different bodies are currently responsible for Early Childhood Education: age 3-6 is under the Department of Education, whereas the Social Services are in charge of age 0-3, and little progress has been made in the development of the first cycle (although Departments of Education will be responsible for services for children for 0-3, LOGSE allows a transitional period before the changes are put into effect).

---

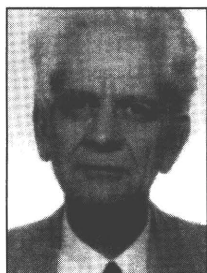
## CONCLUSION

With the passing of the LOGSE, Spain now has a unique law. We shall see how it is implemented. As described in the above examples, implementation is likely to be uneven, since it depends on the influence of the various Autonomous Communities. However, we expect that all the changes that are gradually being applied by the national Ministry and the governments of the Autonomous Communities, in accordance with the LOGSE and the accompanying guidelines, will be changes for the better.

# "CONTRATS ENFANCE": SERVICES FOR MORE YOUNG CHILDREN



Martine Felix



Bruno Ribes

## PRESENT CHILDCARE SERVICES

France has a variety of childcare services which are partly or wholly publicly funded.

Centre-based services (*crèches collectives*) are facilities with specialised staff who care for children under the age of 3, monitor the children's health and offer activities to promote learning and development. There are three types of centre-based service offering regular, all-day care:

- 'Traditional' centres or nurseries, located in facilities specially designed for childcare. In 1991, there were 93,000 places in 1,760 centres, up from 81,700 places in 1986;
- 'Mini' centres (*mini-crèches*), providing for 12 to 15 children in apartments or other premises adapted for this purpose. In 1991, there were 6,100 places in 309 mini-creches, up from 4,060 places in 1986.
- 'Parental' centres (*crèches parentales*), run by parent associations in appropriate premises, with support from qualified staff. In 1990, 5,600 places were available, up from 1,630 spaces in 1986.

In addition, there are centres offering occasional care (*haltes-garderies*). These centres take children under the age of 6 on an occasional basis, whether their mothers work or not. In 1991, there were 2,375 of these centres in purpose-built premises providing 43,000 places in 1991), with a further 3,600 places in 273 centres which were managed by parents and in adapted premises. Finally, there are centres (*établissements "multi-accueil"*) which offer both regular and occasional care (with 56,800 and 8,920 places respectively in 1991).

Centre-based services are supplemented by organised family day care schemes (*crèches familiales*).

The director of each scheme organises and supervises services for children under 3 provided by registered family day carers (*assistantes maternelles*). In 1991, 61,400 young children were in organised family daycare, up from 49,520 in 1986.

Finally, France has a very extensive system of nursery schools (*écoles maternelles*), which provide for about 90% of children aged 3 to 6, and 36% of 2 year olds. Most are open from 8.30 to 4.30 and most children have access to care before and after these school hours, either in the school itself or in nearby premises. Where no services of this kind exist, children can go to a playschool (*jardin d'enfants*) or a leisure centre (*centre de loisir sans hébergement*).

In addition to these publicly funded services, there are a large number of family day carers who are not directly subsidised. About 132,000 childminders, providing for some 240,000 children, are registered (*assistantes maternelles agréées*). Most parents using registered family day carers receive an allowance (*AFEAM - Aide à la Famille pour l'emploi d'une assistante maternelle agréée*), to cover their social security contribution as an employer.

The Table on the next page shows the operating costs for publicly funded services in 1991-92 and how they were shared between families and public authorities in 1988. These costs have been calculated by CNAF (*Caisse Nationale d'Allocations Familiales*). CNAF is the national organisation for regional funds (CAFs) which are financed by employer contributions and provide cash benefits to families with children and subsidies to childcare services. CNAF comes under the Ministry of Social Affairs, but has its own Administrative Council on which employers and trades unions are represented. The CAFs - in each *département* - have their own budgets and councils, allowing them to adapt national guidelines to local circumstances.

	Centre-based services	Centres	'Mini-' centres	'Parental' centres	Total
Families	25%	29%	37%	42%	29%
CAFs	22%	23%	22%	31%	22%
Communes	32%	40%	34%	20%	33%
Départements	15%	7%	6%	2%	12%
Other	6%	1%	1%	5%	4%
Total cost (FF per day)	260	260	200	160	

In services run by local communes, the amount parents contribute is calculated on the basis of taxable income and family circumstances. The sum can vary from 21 to 123 FF, averaging 59 FF per day and per child in *crèches collectifs/mini-crèches*, 41 FF in *crèches parentales* and 61 FF for *crèches familiales*.

Operating costs for *haltes-garderies* were estimated at 199 FF per day and per child in 1988; 57% of these costs was covered by public administrations (for example, communes), 29% by CAF funds and 14% by parents who pay according to their income and the number of hours that their children attend the service. For *centres de loisir*, costs in 1990 were 71 FF per day and per child. Communes paid 53% of these costs, families 24% and CAFs 16%.

In considering parents' contributions, it should be remembered that a tax reduction - equal to 25% of total costs up to a maximum level - can be claimed for the cost of services where both parents are employed. Moreover, attendance at *école maternelle* is free of charge.

Total expenditure by CAFs on childcare services rose (in constant prices) from 1,276,084,000 FF in 1985 to FFr. 2,219,349,000 in 1990, an average increase of 8.4% annually.

**THE CONTRATS ENFANCE PROGRAMME**

Childcare options for young children in services receiving public funds are a long way from meeting parental demands. Even so, contributions from communes and départements put a strain on their budgets. To help diversify and improve services for young children, these local authorities may turn to the *contrats enfance* programme.

In 1984, the CAFs launched the *contrats crèches* programme, which was intended to expand the network of childcare services for children under 3. To that end, the CAFs were committed to providing further funding to communes and private associations who wanted to create new services or increase the capacity of those already in existence (most publicly funded *crèches* are managed by communes, but some are managed by private associations, such as parent groups and workplace committees).

The *contrats enfance* programme launched in 1988 has a much more extensive scope. It applies not only to different types of childcare services for

children under 3, but also to other services for children up to 6 years of age. Overall, though, this programme has made little contribution to increasing the number of childcare services for children under 3. Mostly, it has been used for other services, for example *haltes-garderies*, *centres de loisir* and other services for young children before or after school hours. It can also be used to renovate and modernise existing facilities, to improve the quality of services, to train caregivers or staff for after-school programmes, and to hire specialised personnel (psychologists, psychomotor specialists, educators, etc.).

Prior to the signing of these *contrats enfance* agreements, an assessment is made of present and future needs in the commune. This evaluation focuses on the number of children under 6, the percentage of women in the workforce, and the demographic forecast for the commune; it also examines the financial commitment that the commune agrees to make to provide services. The CAFs agree to pay a supplementary contribution (*prestation de services enfance*) to underwrite expenditure on new services, in addition to the standard subsidies that they provide for all childcare services.

These funds vary from 30% to 50% of the commune's extra expenditure on new services, and virtually equal funds provided in the *contrats crèches* programme. Both programmes have contributed to the increase in CAF expenditure on childcare services. These two contracts have developed rapidly in recent years. Smaller communes (with less than 10,000 inhabitants) have made the most use of *contrats enfance* agreements, accounting for more than half of those signed.

## FOSTERING INNOVATION

It is difficult to give a general overview of initiatives carried out within the framework of the *contrats enfance* programme. These agreements are very flexible and may be adapted to the specific needs of each commune. Above all, they are available for improvements in the quality of services or for any innovative measures.

Among those innovative measures, we should mention the *maisons de l'enfance*, which group a *crèche collectif*, a *halte-garderie*, a toy library and a meeting room for parents or even grandparents (in Mélesse, Ille-et-Vilaine, a daycare centre was started in a retirement home). Many other projects integrating different services have been carried through successfully. These initiatives emphasise the development of an educational approach, for example by organising links between *crèches* and *écoles maternelles* (for example, part-time attendance at both services for two school terms, to help the child adjust to attending nursery school full-time).

To give a specific example of an innovative service, we will mention the *Maison Dagobert*, a *halte-garderie* in the 12th arrondissement in Paris. Open since February 1992, the centre welcomes about twenty children, a third of whom are physically or mentally disabled. As a general principle for their centre, staff refuse to let a disabled child be marginalised and emphasise their belief that the disabled child will make progress when in contact with other children of his or her own age. At the *Maison Dagobert* there exists a natural sharing between those who are "normal" and those who are "different", and "the children grow and progress individually and collectively".

The parents may stay with their children if they wish to do so. Those whose children are disabled

know that they are no longer alone, and can discuss their experience with other parents and with staff members. Staff members are not specially trained for working with disabled children, except for the physio-therapist. Moreover, this centre does not provide medical care, which is available in special facilities elsewhere; attendance schedules are very flexible, to respond to the needs of children who are receiving medical care and their parents.

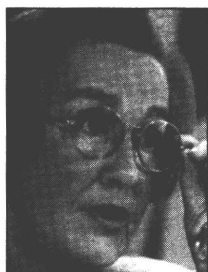


**CONCLUSION**

Childcare and other services can be developed quantitatively and qualitatively through the *contrats enfance* and *contrats crèches* programmes. Through these programmes, facilities can also be adapted to parents' needs and innovative solutions can be encouraged. One of their most important advantages is the assistance they provide to small communes, especially those in rural areas.

These agreements are generally signed for a five year period, but may be renewed under certain conditions. This means that the supplementary benefits paid by the CAFs to the first beneficiary communes will soon cease. However, new contracts will be signed with other communes, so that the number of communes stimulated by these agreements will gradually increase. Also increasing is the number of politicians who, on the national, regional or local level, are concerned about childcare services and the place for young children in our cities and towns.

# DEVELOPING AREA PARTNERSHIPS



Anne McKenna

Since the foundation of the modern Irish state, central government has assumed precedence over local and regional government. This might suggest that the contemporary trends of integrated community development may meet with some difficulties on being

introduced into Ireland. History suggests otherwise. The idea of regional or community development goes back to the end of the last century and the emergence of the cooperative movement in Ireland.

Community, or area-based, development is currently being re-defined to include concepts of partnership, participation and equality. Evidence of this in Ireland can be seen in the number of seminars and publications on this subject and in the growing body of work on the concept of partnership. Evidence of State recognition and appreciation of partnerships between the voluntary sector and the State can be seen in the forthcoming White Paper and Charter for Voluntary Organisations.

have chosen to discuss childcare services in Ireland in 1992 in the context of the growth of area partnerships for a number of reasons. At present, Ireland has a low level (2%) of publicly funded nursery provision, for less than 2% of children; no nursery education; and a heavy reliance on playgroups offering short hours of attendance and with little public funding. Many children (64% of 4 year olds and 99% of 5 year olds) begin at primary school before the compulsory school starting age of 6; yet resources in many schools do not adequately meet the needs of these young children. The present state of the economy, the high level of unemployment and a relatively large number of children in the total population makes it unlikely that the Government will embark on a major, publicly funded development of childcare services, except for the most disadvantaged children.

On the other hand, a number of new integrated area development projects have gone ahead independently to create their own indigenous childcare services, thus proving to be an alternative to or supplement for direct state provision. These new area development projects have arisen as a result of a specifically targeted need such as unemployment, poverty, underachievement in school, rural development or the training and education of women for the labour market. All of them however have the additional infrastructural objective of strengthening the ties between existing community organisations, with a view to coordination of effort and, in some instances, eventual partnership. Some projects are European Community Initiatives, others have been put in place by central government and some owe their existence to local, regional and national voluntary organisations. Many of the developments involve partnership within their own structures and some have formed links with neighbouring projects.

The geographical location of these area development projects is shown on the accompanying map. The map indicates their spread throughout the country as well as their regional clustering. The need for childcare provision - with its social, educational and economic benefits - has emerged as an important issue for many projects; developments with stated childcare interests are asterisked on the map.

### AREA-BASED RESPONSE TO LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT COMPANIES

These companies, established as part of the *Programme for Economic and Social Progress* (PESP) operate in twelve local areas throughout the country. The strategy duplicates at a local level the **partnership approach** that has already been functioning successfully at a national level between government, trade unions, employers and farmers, a mechanism unique in the European Community. The aim of the area-based partnerships is to improve the skills and confidence of the unemployed in order to increase their opportunities of getting a job and also to generate more jobs at a local level. The partnership integrates existing local initiatives, as well as including representatives from Social Welfare, Health Boards, training and work schemes and local employers. The 12 companies share an agreed objective of developing childcare services as a model to be applied to the rest of the local community, and 8 of the 12 partnerships have included a childcare service in their Area Action Plan.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

These programmes, which are managed and administered by the Department of Social Welfare and the national Combat Poverty Agency operate in 21 local areas throughout the country. They have grown out of the experience of the Second EC Poverty Programme and provide financial assistance with the staffing and equipping of local resource centres which provide a focal point for community development activities. The projects encourage local voluntary and community groups to develop partnerships with each other and with statutory agencies in their area, with a view to tackling the problems faced by the community. At least four of these programmes provide creche/nursery facilities, school-age childcare, pre-training and training programmes for women.

### POVERTY 3 PROJECTS

The two Model Actions of the EC Programme Poverty 3 (intended to foster the economic and social integration of the least privileged groups) are FORUM in Connemara and PAUL in Limerick. Both have childcare developments as part of their strategic plan. Their objectives will be attained through the development of innovative organisational models. Central to this model is the belief that community problems and community development demand local and regional solutions which can only be reached through inter-agency dialogue and the development of statutory/community relationships.



## **NOW PROJECTS**

The NOW (New Opportunities for Women) Community Initiative was set up with the express purpose of harnessing the skills and abilities of women by developing innovative action models in the areas of employment and vocational training. Recognising that inadequate provision of childcare services is a barrier to women's participation in the workforce, NOW promotes and finances three separate childcare measures complementary to the two main measures of training, education and employment of women: (a) creation of creches; (b) payment of childcare costs to mothers in training; and (c) vocational training for childcare workers. Although NOW is not specifically area based, many of the agencies involved in the projects are partners in other area-based developments.

## **LEADER INITIATIVE**

The EC LEADER (*Liaison entre action de developpment de l'economie rurale*) Initiative was launched at the same time as NOW and is dedicated to the promotion of integrated and indigenous rural development to improve and diversify the rural economy. The 16 designated LEADER groups in Ireland are administered through the Department of Agriculture, but are essentially planned, managed and financed at the level of each group or local company. One of their defining features is the amalgamation of existing local groups and a partnership of local interests.

## **HOME SCHOOLS COMMUNITY LIAISON**

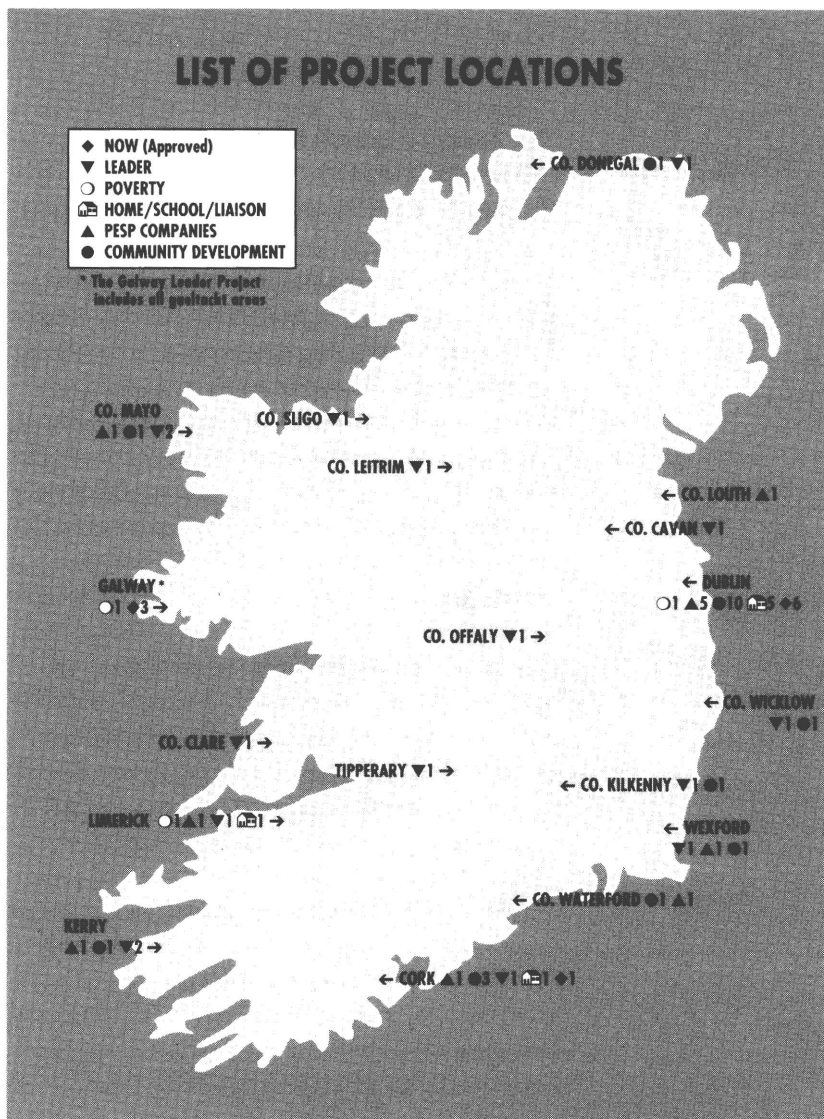
This programme, initiated by the Department of Education, is aimed at primary schools pupils in designated areas of socio-economic disadvantage. It recognises that the absence of a favourable and supportive home and community environment adversely affects educational attainment and contributes to "*underachievement, unsatisfactory retention rates and poor participation rates in higher education in particular in identifiable areas of socio-economic disadvantage*" (**Explanatory Memorandum for Schools**). Thirty teachers have been appointed as coordinators to support cooperation between home, school and the community. Part of their duties is to encourage and help parents to organise groups for children under school age and to establish links with preschool services and with voluntary and statutory groups in the area. Once again this project has a coordinating role, via a local committee of school, voluntary and statutory personnel and community representatives, which is intended to help coordinate the work of the various agencies in the area and develop community 'ownership' of the project.

The PAUL Partnership provides one example, taken from the projects outlined above, of a partnership approach, which continues to develop according to local need and funding possibilities. **PAUL** (*People Action Against Unemployment Limited*) is situated in Limerick, (population 75,000) in the Mid-West region of Ireland. It is a non-governmental community partnership created in response to long-term unemployment. It was established in 1989 with the stated aims of providing a forum for dialogue between public and community agencies and agreeing the needs of disadvantage areas. In 1992 PAUL manages and implements an EC Programme (Poverty 3) and a

national programme (PESP). PAUL is also involved in the NOW Initiative, and their experience with NOW has resulted in developing the 'employment led' aspects of their childcare policy. Their eight point strategic plan for 1991-94 includes expansion of support services for women and the provision of childcare services. This will result in the opening of two community nurseries and a training scheme for childcare workers in 1992.

The example of PAUL is only one of a number that can be cited. All of these projects will have the advantage of being rooted in the needs of parents and families in an area: the childcare services therefore are likely to be flexible and creative and to meet the criteria of accessibility and affordability. However in some communities there is no precedent for the establishment of childcare services. Under these circumstances it is important that services, as well as being 'family friendly', are also 'child friendly', offering developmentally appropriate programmes for children. This will best be assured by some level of professional input, as for example the services of a shared or visiting early years educator to ensure that children are receiving all possible benefits from the service. Given this proviso, the models which are developing can make a rich and diverse contribution to a national system of childcare services.

The urgency of the need for childcare services is expressed more insistently at local level by the people who feel the need most keenly - parents. There is no doubt that this need will increase and the next few years will witness an even greater growth in the development of childcare services created by communities. This does not mean that these services can develop and thrive without funding from Government. They may, however, be able to present the national need for childcare services and financing in a new and more politically effective manner, giving childcare services a higher place on the Government's agenda.



# EXPERIENCES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PROJECTS



Patrizia Ghedini

## 'TRADITIONAL' SERVICES FOR CHILDREN FROM 0-6 YEARS OF AGE

Italy has a network of 'more traditional' publicly funded services for children from 0 to 6 years of age. Nurseries (*asilo nido*) provide for children from 3 months to 3 years of age (in the first 3 months of the child's life all working mothers are entitled to maternity leave, paid at 80% of normal earnings with many mothers receiving full pay due to collective agreements; this period is followed by a 6 month period of Parental Leave, paid at 30% of earnings). Nursery schools (*scuola infanzia*) provide for children from 3 to the start of compulsory elementary school at age 6. Apart from these nurseries and nursery schools, children with employed parents are usually cared for by grandparents or other relatives or else by *babysitters* hired directly by parents from the private market; there is no family day care.

Nursery schools for children from 3 to 6 years of age are attended by almost 90% of children residing in our country. Most of this service (60%) is provided by public authorities - State and Municipalities, with a stronger presence of State-run provision in the South. The rest is run by private organisations, mostly religious.

By contrast, nurseries are attended by only slightly more than 5% of children under 3 years of age. There are, however, large differences between the 20 regions which comprise Italy -with far fewer services in the South than in the Centre and North - and between municipalities. In many areas of Southern Italy, less than 2% of children attend publicly funded nurseries; by comparison, in Emilia-Romagna, the region with the highest level of nursery provision, about 20% of children attend, while in some towns the proportion is over 30%, although there are still waiting lists. This high level

of attendance is certainly due to the higher number of women working (Emilia-Romagna the highest employment rate for mothers in Italy; 67% of women with a child under 10 are employed compared to 21% in Sicily). But it is also a result of the credibility and support that nurseries have gained for themselves in these areas, owing to the quality of the service they offer.

Nursery schools are recognised as the initial stage of the school and educational system by public opinion and local and national authorities. The situation for nurseries is quite different. They suffer from the effects of a cultural legacy linked to a traditional role for women and families and which regards small children as only needing physical care and affection - even though research has been stressing for a long time the early skills and capabilities of very young children.

Despite these problems, the most advanced areas have been able to develop nurseries which are widely considered to be amongst the best in Europe. Their high quality owes a lot to following certain principles, for example:

- **the recognition of children's rights as members of society** and therefore the attention placed upon their cognitive, emotional and social development;
- **major participation by parents** in the life and activity of the services;
- **the importance of the skill and professionalism of staff members** reached through continuous training courses which are held every year and are included in the working schedules of staff members.

These experiences in nurseries have been achieved by combining political awareness on the part of local administrators with the technical competence of educators, and scientific research with educational experimentation. Remarkable results have been achieved which have reconciled parents' and

children's needs and have fostered a widespread growth of a children's culture.

Organisationally, however, these nursery services have been conceived for young children with both parents working full-time. These services operate full-time. They are mostly run by Municipalities and, therefore, directly by the public system. These features, which are positive in many ways, have shown over time some limitations, for example forms of internal rigidity, very high costs for public authorities, and the presence of a single organisational model to respond to very diversified parental needs.

It is also necessary to be more responsive to the social changes which our society has gone through, especially in the last ten years. It is enough to mention here the sharp decline in birth rate (Italy has one of the lowest birth rates in Europe), the growing number of women in the labour market, the fragmentation of families, the increasing numbers of 1 child families and single-parent families, and the aging of the population which gives rise to a different role for grandparents compared with the past. These social changes have produced changes in family organisation, in relations between partners and within family networks, and in people's mentality and life styles.

Other phenomena should also be mentioned here, such as the increase in schooling which has influenced, from a qualitative point of view, the expectations of parents; the ever-growing presence of mass-media which influence behaviours, expectations and desires; the urban lay-out which makes caring for children a very difficult task and which does not provide a child-friendly environment or spaces set aside for children; and the organisation of paid work, with changes introduced by new technologies. Now we are facing more and more families with one child only, children who, when not attending a childcare provision, spend their time mostly by themselves, with an adult or in front of a T.V. set. There are more and more "planned", wanted children; the

emotional investment made by parents in their children along with their expectations is greatly increasing.

All this creates in parents feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, inadequacy, anxiety, difficulty in deciding which behaviour to adopt - not to mention the loneliness which young couples and especially young mothers often experience. In response to a growing **social complexity** and a demand for **flexibility**, which comes from women especially - since it is mostly on them that the burden of family organisation and up-bringing of children falls - new ways of providing services are being developed. The model of full-time nurseries, established years ago to meet the needs of families where both parents have full-time jobs, is still essential for many people. It is, however, a very costly model because of its opening hours and the number of educators it requires.



**THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE DIVERSE AND FLEXIBLE SERVICES TO MEET NEW PARENTAL NEEDS**

From the mid-1980s, a large-scale debate and analysis took place on these issues, especially in the most advanced areas of Italy. This debate led to a rethinking of existing services and their organisation and the organisation and management of new services, to increase choices offered to parents. This development, aimed mostly at meeting the needs of families with children under the age of 3 - given the unmet needs of parents with children of this age - has taken place mostly in certain regions of the North and Centre, especially in Emilia-Romagna (where the new

services number about 60), but also in Lombardy, mostly in Milan, Tuscany and Umbria.

Among the various elements which are at the centre of the political and cultural analysis behind the setting up of these services, I would like to underline two points in particular:

- on the one hand the crisis of the welfare state and public funding, but on the other hand, the rapid social changes which have hit our society and therefore families.
- the fact that new needs must be answered, combined with the presence of financial restraints have produced integrated intervention projects, which are different from the previous services.

Among the elements characterising these new services I would like to underline just a few:

- **they want to respond to the needs of parents who work part-time, of mothers who stay at home**, families which prefer to have their child cared for by a relative or a baby-sitter, but will think it important for their children to spend time with other children as well;
- **flexibility** in opening hours and diversity in times of attendance;
- **attendance by children** - mainly from 0 to 6 years of age - and **adults** (mothers, fathers, grandparents, baby-sitters);
- **presence of a lower number of educators** - therefore, lower costs - but these workers are characterised by their **high professional status** (usually, the most motivated and qualified nursery workers are placed in these services) and an ability to foster cooperation with adults and make best use of everyone's resources and skills.

These services provide centres to meet and socialise, with play and educational facilities. They also provide information and support to families in their educational activity, because they also offer -

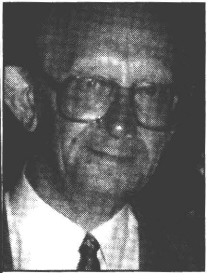
in some cases - the presence of experts to discuss issues and questions linked to the caring and upbringing of children and the role of parents. Some services are in new or renovated premises; in other cases, existing nurseries have been diversified to provide new services in addition to their existing provision of care and education for children with parents in full-time employment. In all cases, the development of services supplements the nursery provision, rather than replacing it.

Another important element is that, in setting up these new services, the municipalities have tried to **involve private non-profit organisations**, mostly cooperatives. This has meant some cost reduction. It has also offered the possibility of offering new areas of activity to organised social groups, which have been called upon to participate in the provision of services for children and families, thus assuming direct responsibilities for children.

However, this does not mean that, in these cases the municipalities have renounced their responsibilities. Even when they do not run the services directly, they are none the less responsible for making decisions about the development of services and for establishing standards, general management criteria and systems to evaluate and control quality. They also provide public funding for the services; as with more traditional nurseries parents also contribute to the costs of new services run by cooperatives and other non-profit organisations, although the fees are normally a little higher.

In other words, in these new developments which involve private organisations, the role of the municipality is no longer direct management. Instead, the role of the municipality is to plan services, define policies and measures to implement them, enhance and coordinate resources, both financial and human, monitor and evaluate how the projects proceed, and to ensure the presence of all those democratic features which public institutions ought to provide.

# NATIONAL PLAN AND ORIENTATION OF SOCIAL POLICIES



Jean Altmann

**Throughout Europe discussions are intensifying about the improvement and extension of childcare services. These discussions raise a number of topical questions about how childcare services are to function in the future, and what kind of development we**

**should aim for in individual childcare services.**

**Initiatives by private organisations are at the heart of childcare services and other social and family measures in Luxembourg. In a democratic pluralistic society, initiatives by private organisations offer the best guarantee of efficiency in the large areas of social and family services. Luxembourg has benefitted from a long tradition of private organisations working in these areas. The social importance of these social and family sectors, as well as the extent of private and public funds invested in them, demands the creation of a legal basis for the activities of organisations. Already in March 1979, the government introduced in Parliament a law concerning the social integration of young people. This project gave the state legal power to intervene in the functioning of foster care agencies for children and for handicapped people managed by private organisations.**

In November 1991, the Minister for Family and Solidarity introduced into Parliament a proposal for a new law to assure and extend maximum protection to the users of other social and family services. The law, if approved, will require the government's approval for the creation, extension or modification of a range of social and family services. This will give users of these services a guarantee of basic conditions concerning the morality, integrity and qualification of the managers and members of staff, as well as the necessary infrastructure for the running of such services.

The proposed legislation requires approval by the Ministry for Family and Solidarity for agencies providing a wide range of social work, residential care and advice services. It also covers a variety of childcare services managed by private organisations, including centres providing regular care for children under 4 (*foyers de jour*) and school-age children (most children start nursery schooling at 4: compulsory attendance is from the age of 5 and primary schooling begins at 6), as well as centres providing occasional care (*garderies*) for young children.

For each type of service which will be subject to approval, a grand-ducal decree will define the conditions to be met in relation to the number and professional qualifications of their staff etc. Organisations seeking approval have to deliver to the Ministry all necessary information and documents. Approval is given for an unlimited period, but is lost if the service does not begin within a year.

The proposed legislation is still before Parliament. However, some services are already subject to public approval and must meet conditions set by the Government. The Government is authorised to

provide financial support (both for capital and running costs) for private organisations for the provision of certain prioritised services. Every organisation wanting to benefit from this public funding has to conclude an agreement with the State, receiving funding in return for meeting conditions set by the Government.

The proposed legislation will prevent competitive distortions arising from the fact that private organisations that are subsidised and approved by the State have to observe very strict conditions about the quality of their services and the qualification of their staff. Yet at present, other organisations are only required to get a simple authorization to trade as a private company. The conditions of such an authorization, concerning education for example, are weaker than those required for the opening of a bar.

## CHILDCARE SERVICES IN LUXEMBOURG

Centre-based childcare services in Luxembourg provide for children under 4, and often also school-age childcare for children up to age 6 and sometimes older, often up to the age of 12. A few centres (10 in 1989) are provided by local communes. Most, however, are provided by private organisations.

Some of these private centres are publicly funded, having made agreements with the Government. These 'conventioned' centres, as well as other private centres provided by non-profit private organisations, have increased in number since 1985. Twelve new centres opened in 1991, while the number of 'conventioned' centres has increased from 19 in 1986 to 22 in 1989 and 32 in 1992. In

1992, in addition to these centres, there were a further 39 centres which did not have a financial agreement with the Government; and 18 *garderies*, 6 of which were 'conventioned' and received public funding.

Parents may also use family day carers. Private family day carers (*gardiennes*) do not need official approval and will not be covered by the proposed law. However, to promote and develop this type of childcare as well as short-term and long-term foster care, which are particularly adapted to the needs of rural areas, the Ministry for Family has concluded an agreement with two private organisations. Workers from these organisations have to prepare the families for doing this task and offer support when children are being cared for. By the end of December 1991, 192 children received foster care and 295 children were cared for by family day carers under this arrangement.

A network of open door services for children (*porte ouverte*) has been established in several communes. These services offer children the possibility to participate in leisure activities supervised by qualified staff. The children can also benefit from assistance with their homework.

Childcare services provided by companies are still on a rather modest scale. Nevertheless, it is expected that contacts and negotiations between the representatives of the *Confédération Générale de la Fonction Publique*, of ALEBA/OGBL and of the government will lead to positive results. Establishing a network of childcare services in the banking sector would also make a valuable contribution to the social and economic welfare of the country.

# GOVERNMENT, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS: RESPONSIBILITIES AND COSTS



Liesbeth Pot

**Recent developments in child-care policy in the Netherlands raise important questions about responsibility for funding services, about how costs should be allocated between responsible partners and about the relationship between services for children with**

**employed and non-employed parents. They also give an insight into what may happen in societies with no strong tradition of children's policies when they begin to move away from a traditional (male) breadwinner-dominated labour market to one in which both parents are gainfully employed. The core issue is if and in what way society and government are willing and able to achieve a new balance of shared responsibilities for the welfare of all children and their parents, irrespective of the labour-market position of women.**

**E**uropean comparisons show that the Netherlands has very low employment rates among women with children and very high levels of part-time work among those mothers who are employed (see page 10). Levels of publicly funded provision for children under 4 have been very low, at less than 2%; other parents needing care for their children while they go to work have to make private arrangements, for example with a family day carer. As in other welfare economies which place emphasis on private parental responsibility for raising children (for example, the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland), the Netherlands has placed a rather strong emphasis on the private market as a provider of services for children with employed parents.

There is no system of publicly-funded nursery schooling or kindergarten for children from 3 upwards though children can start at primary school at 4, one year before compulsory schooling begins. In the absence of nursery schooling, many 2 and 3 year olds attend a playgroup, but only for a short time (5-6 hours each week).

## **POLICIES FOR DAYCARE ON THE AGENDA**

Since the beginning of the 1980s, services to provide care for children with employed parents have been on the political agenda, both as an equal opportunities and as a labour force issue. An interdepartmental working group was set up, which advised the government in 1984 to expand the



existing number of services and to set up a central legal framework for childcare. The government however stated that expansion of services was the responsibility of local authorities. Instead, it introduced a system of tax relief to cover part of the childcare costs of employed parents having children under 12, with a higher relief for employed single parents. This decision stimulated the expansion of the private market in services for children and a slowly growing interest among private employers who were able to deduct part of the cost for providing services for employees from their tax payments.

Three years later, in 1987, central government involvement in welfare services, which include some public funding for childcare services, was decentralised to local authorities. Money, previously earmarked for childcare services, was now included in a general block grant to local authorities, who were free to decide how to spend it.

In 1989, plans to restructure the tax system ended tax relief on childcare costs, which was costing the government NFL 130 million. After a long period of disagreement between the major political parties about how best to use this money, a compromise was reached in the last days of the Christian Democrat/Liberal coalition and was expressed in a Government Policy Statement on Childcare.

### **A SHORT-TERM STIMULATION PROGRAMME: 1990-1993**

The money saved by removing tax relief was to be used to provide the budget for a short-term programme to run for 4 years (1990-1993) - the

**Stimulative Measure on Childcare.** The new Christian Democrat/Socialist coalition added more funds, increasing from NFL 20 million in 1990 to NFL 160 million in 1993. Together with the original budget based on tax relief savings, this represented a state budget of NFL 264 million by 1993.

This money is used to stimulate new services - in nurseries, for family day carers or for services providing school-age childcare<sup>1</sup> for children up to 12 (the original age limit of 0-4 was increased in 1991). The money goes to local authorities, who channel it to support the development of private services. Since 1991, local authorities can claim NFL 5300 per full-time place per year (plus a contribution to capital costs); this is an increase on the original sum of NFL 5000, and is intended to cover part of a pay increase to workers in childcare services. However, as a place in a nursery costs NFL 15,000 or more a year, additional funding must be raised - from employers buying a place, parents' fees and local authorities themselves paying for places for children and families not reached by employment measures and/or with social problems.

How has the programme worked so far? There has been a substantial increase in places and also in the number of municipalities taking initiatives for new services. Most of the increase has occurred in nurseries for children under 4. At the end of 1991, a total of 80,000 children from 0-12 were in centre based services (in nurseries, school-age childcare centres or centres combining nursery and school age childcare provision), occupying 39,075 full time places; this means that most children attend part-time, so that many places are shared by two or more children. Almost a quarter of these full-time places - 8,935 - were sold to employers. Centres provided for 4.3% of all children under 4 and for 0.3% of all children from 4-12 years. Most children

<sup>1</sup> 'School-age childcare' refers to services providing care for children attending nursery or primary school outside of school hours and/or in school holidays.

- 62,086 - were in centres funded through the 'Stimulative Measure'.

The extension of organised family day care up to now has been very modest. The lack of legal and professional status and poor pay and conditions deter women from becoming family day carers. In fact, new funds for family day care via the 'Stimulative Measure' go to organisations referring parents to family day carers and giving advice and support; they are not used to improve pay and conditions for family day carers themselves. By the end of 1991, organised family day care offered care to 8,938 children aged 0-12, mostly for children under 4, in only 3,822 full-time places.

The expansion of services depends heavily on individual employers agreeing to pay for places for particular workers. Generally, employers give priority to higher paid and higher skilled female employees, rather than to lower paid and more easily replaceable employees. Since 1991, an objective has been set that 70% of new places created through the 'Stimulative Measure' should be bought by employers, either public or private sector. Places in services, therefore, are increasingly tied to jobs and accessible only to parents with employers willing to provide substantial funding. This trend, of access to services becoming an employment benefit, is reinforced by an increasing number of collective agreements which include support for childcare provision. Parents who are not gainfully employed, women with jobs not covered by collective agreements or children of single parents or with ethnic minority and low-income parents tend to be neglected, not benefitting from the supplementary funding, mostly provided by employers, which forms an essential element of the strategy behind the 'Stimulative Measure'.

Overall, there is a shift in responsibilities for funding services. Previously, publicly funded services had more than 50% of their funds from public sources: before the decentralisation of

welfare funding in 1987, central government paid about 60% of costs, local authorities 20% and parents the remaining 20%. The move now is to reduce the public contribution and to share costs equally between public money, employers and parents (each paying about a third). Some local authorities which funded services before 1989 are now trying to reduce their expenditure by increasing the reliance of services on funding from central government money, employers' payments and parental contributions.

There has also been tension between social partners and local authorities concerning control over the new funds. Originally, social partners and central government agreed that a substantial share of the new money from the 'Stimulative Measure' should benefit employers and working parents. The Association of Dutch Municipalities objected that local authorities should retain control over the planning and the way in which the money was divided. In 1991 a compromise was reached, under which it was agreed that a set number of places (70%) should be made available to employers. As none of the parties involved was happy about this result, this debate dominates other unsolved issues in childcare, like the quality of services, the position and training of workers and management, the influence of parents and the development of pedagogical models for working with the children.

Other organisations have had little say in decision-making. Most have called for national regulation of standards and central funding, but without success. National standards were applied in the past to public funding, but this linkage disappeared when responsibility for welfare services was decentralised to local authorities in 1987. To get money from the new funds, local authorities must show they have set some regulations; many use minimal guidelines developed by the Association of Dutch Municipalities. However, these guidelines are not always monitored and enforced; half of the local authorities have some form of inspection, but this is usually by local health officers and only 4%

of local authorities have specialist childcare inspectors. The responsible Minister of Welfare stated at a Conference on Quality in November 1991, that services themselves should develop their own quality systems; parents should become more involved in the control and evaluation of quality.

## THE FUTURE

Uncertainty surrounds the future. The 'Stimulative Measure on Childcare' finishes at the end of 1993; following the 1987 decentralisation of responsibility for welfare, central government is only authorised to take such national initiatives for a four year period. Only a political majority could decide, for example, to prolong the Measure for another year as some organisations have proposed, or propose alternatives for future funding. The growing opposition between social partners and the Association of Dutch Municipalities blocks many ways and the Department of Welfare will have to manoeuvre carefully to find a political solution that is generally acceptable. A general growing tendency in Dutch society to leave welfare measures involving employees to employers and the private market forms another obstacle to public funding.

Post-1993 options being considered include:

- Distributing the 'Stimulative Measure' money as part of the general fund allocated by central government to local authorities, in which case it could be spent in any way local authorities chose;
- Putting the money into a special Fund for Social Renewal, intended to support local projects in disadvantaged areas and for unemployed groups;
- Resuming a form of tax relief on childcare costs; or

- Creating some type of central/regional funding for services with money from employers, local and/or central government and parents (like for example CNAF-funding in France).

In an official evaluation of the 'Stimulative Measure', expected in Spring 1993, not only the results of a large number of research projects will be published, but also the outlines for the future will be presented to the Second Chamber. An official Commission on Quality of Childcare was established in Autumn 1992, which may be used by the Department of Welfare to postpone further a final decision on the future of childcare policy. It might then become an election issue, as new elections are to be held in 1994.

## CONCLUSION

Whatever happens, one message comes clearly out of this development: childcare in the Netherlands can only reach the political agenda as an equal opportunities and labour force issue. It is not embedded into a general policy for children and/or families. New government funding has favoured some working parents, but other groups have profited less. In the 1980s, the linkage of services to gainful employment was expressed in joint-venture services which had a mixed population of children of employed parents paid for by individual employers and local children paid by public funds and parental fees. Under the 'Stimulative Measure' this linkage has developed into a more rigid system with an emphasis on getting financial backing from employers for places in new services.

Decentralisation in welfare services was introduced together with heavy cuts in welfare provisions. Although decentralisation in principle should not be

# ANNUAL REPORT

92

NETHERLANDS

rejected, it may have adverse effects on provision unless there is a longstanding tradition and acceptance in society and unless it is firmly linked to more general policies or a legal framework. Childcare services provide an example of the dangers. Dutch society in general emphasises parental responsibility for the care and upbringing of young children with parents only; it did not accompany equal opportunity policies with other new policies on children and/or modern families. So, when services for childcare were decentralised, they were not embedded in a clear vision of children in modern society nor were they regarded as part of a wider policy on the reconciliation of employment and care. Childcare policy also lacked clear co-ordination with other policies and services like leave arrangements (for example, leave to care for sick children and other relatives, Maternity Leave, Parental Leave), the division of time between partners, changes in the culture of the workplace to offer a more favourable climate for employees with caring tasks, adaptation of tax policies and social security measures to a non-traditional division of labour between partners, and a general revision of the opening hours of shops, public services and schools.

As a consequence, Dutch women with young children either had to choose traditional solutions or adapt their employment to what was and is socially expected - combining the care of young children with small part-time jobs. The very part-time use of childcare services in The Netherlands, and the high level of part-time employment among mothers, clearly illustrates this process of adaptation. Mothers try to achieve the best of both worlds: not only should they be perfect in raising their children and doing housework, but also they should participate in the labour market and take part in other social activities. Fathers' participation in household duties and childcare is slowly growing, but does not match the time spent by mothers. It is not surprising to see mothers becoming burnt out by trying to do everything - and not receiving any public or private recognition for

what they do. The ideal still is for the mother to be at home, providing full-time childcare.

A trend, seen also in other western countries, is towards a shifting of responsibilities from the state (the public domain) to the private market, which is legitimised by pointing to the condition of public finances and the requirements for sound economic growth. There is also an increasing emphasis on employers assuming direct responsibilities. But employers in general have other priorities than the welfare of children and families. They might have an interest in a efficient workforce and for that reason some might be willing to promote measures for equal opportunities and/or parents when the economy is flourishing; when times are bad they return to their prime task of making a profit. Children are the most important social investment and even the most important social "commodity"; without them, society has no future, nor any continuity of everything we care for. A childcare and reconciliation policy which is not connected to a more general conception of the position of children and parents in society and a policy framework to support that position, and which does not recognise a general responsibility for the welfare of all children, is like an empty shell.

# MAKING DECENTRALISATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORK



Maria Eduarda Ramirez

**The majority of Portugal's population of about 10 million is concentrated in the coastal areas; the population of the inland regions of the country is declining and this factor has contributed towards the progressive ageing of the population of these regions.**

**The employment rate for mothers in Portugal is the second highest in the European Community, and over 90% of employed mothers have full-time jobs. Childcare services are therefore an important issue for children and parents alike.**

There are two levels of government: central government and the local authorities. The regions have still not been created from the administrative point of view. Liaison and coordination between central and local government are neither well developed nor very efficient. Until 1974, when the dictatorial regime was overthrown, political and administrative power was highly centralised at the national level. The democratic regime has been operating a slow decentralisation process involving the creation of regional offices for Government Ministries simultaneously, there has been a strong development of local authorities. However, this division of power, between central government and local authorities, has been controversial and given rise to much discussion.

Responsibility for childcare services is divided between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment and Social Security. The former is responsible for the direct administration of public nursery schools and primary schools, as well as for licensing, monitoring and financing private and cooperative schools. The latter is responsible for the direct administration of some childcare services, including nurseries for children under 3 (*infantario*), organised family day care schemes (*creche familiar*), kindergartens (*jardim de infancia*) for children aged 3-5 and school-age childcare centres (*atividades de tempos livres*). It also monitors and finances private organisations providing publicly funded childcare services, as well as licensing and monitoring private for-profit childcare services.

For a long time, private initiative has played an important role in setting up and running services for children. In the area of education, these private initiatives come from individuals, groups or cooperatives. In the provision of other services for children, private social solidarity institutions

*Instituc o Particular de Solidariedade Social* = IPSS) are particularly important. IPSS are non-profit organisations, established through the initiative of private individuals or groups with the aim of promoting social solidarity and justice; they provide a wide range of social and welfare services, including childcare provision. They have always had strong community roots and are mainly local organisations, many also having links with the Catholic Church. Although the first IPSS was established in the 15th century, many of them are recently established; between October 1991 and October 1992, 150 new IPSS were created.

In 1990, Portugal had 28,610 places in publicly-funded services for children under the age of 3; 86% of these were provided by IPSS. For children aged 3-6, there were 184,640 publicly funded places. Nearly half (46%) were provided in public nursery schools, with a further 13% in schools run privately or by cooperatives. The remaining places were in kindergartens, with 5% provided by the Ministry of Social Security and 36% provided by IPSS.

For a relatively short period, after the 1974 revolution, the State assumed a higher share of direct responsibilities for services, for example through the establishment by the Ministry of Education of a system of public nursery schools for children aged 3 to 6); and the establishment and management by the regional offices of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security of various childcare services, especially in areas of the country with high levels of women's employment. However, in recent years, government policy has again given prominence to the role of private initiatives and organisations.

Following this change of course, regional offices of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security have not only ceased to set up further childcare services, but have transferred most of the services they used to manage to IPSS and other private organisations; for example, in 1992 the Ministry

passed the management of 36 services to IPSS. In the same way, the Ministry of Education has not significantly increased the system of public nursery schools in the last few years, but has offered incentives for the creation of private but publicly-funded schools. However, these incentives have not proved to be very successful. Some of the conditions have been hard to meet and it has been difficult to find suitable buildings in urban areas where there is the greatest need for services.

The State's decreasing role in the direct management of services is not, in itself, a problem. However, in practice there are grounds for concern about the consequences of this trend. Before opening, schools run privately or by cooperatives, as well as for-profit childcare services, have to be licensed by the public authorities. Services provided by IPSS do not need to be licensed, and are bound only by conditions included in the agreements that are made between IPSS and the regional office of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, and on the basis of which IPSS receive public funds. It is therefore left to each regional office to decide what conditions to apply when making agreements with IPSS. As the number and qualifications of staff in these regional offices vary considerably, this produces a lack of uniformity in dealings with IPSS. Without any regular and consistent system of assessment and control, IPSS are relatively free to adopt whatever criteria they choose. Furthermore, not all IPSS have staff qualified to undertake management of services. Moreover, workers in IPSS services have their own pay scales, which gives rise to disparities with workers in other services and high turnover as IPSS staff leave for better paid jobs.

This situation gives rise to large variations between childcare services in minimum standards, conditions for admission to services and working conditions for the staff, not so much concerning training levels but especially regarding salaries, career prospects and number of children per worker.

In this context, the Government has been considering a change in responsibility for cooperation with IPSS, passing this task to local authorities. However, this proposal has not been well received by the organisation that represents IPSS, the trade unions or even by the local authorities. There are major problems to be overcome if this process of decentralization is to succeed. In particular, local authorities have inadequate staff and funds. Overall, local authorities, like the regional offices of Government Ministries and IPSS themselves do not have a long tradition of partnership; in such circumstances, there is a danger of work developing in an isolated and uncoordinated manner.

If this move to giving increased responsibility to local authorities does not take place gradually and under certain conditions, it may turn out to be one more factor contributing to a deterioration in the functioning of childcare services.

We consider it of fundamental importance that the government assumes a clear responsibility towards these services, namely by:

- Defining minimum conditions for setting up and operating any type of childcare service.
- Ensuring that all services are licensed and that they comply with the necessary conditions.
- Ensuring that local authorities have adequate resources (human and financial) to undertake their new role.

If these conditions are not complied with, then there is a danger that local authorities with fewer resources might find themselves in serious difficulties in carrying out their responsibilities, with negative results for the quality of services.

Another important issue is the need to increase the awareness of local authorities regarding their role as partners in a local network in which every partner - regional services of the various Ministries,

companies, private organisations, the population in general and local authorities themselves - share responsibilities for the well-being of the local community. Local authorities are important for their knowledge and close links at local level which naturally make them more aware of the needs of the population. However, improvement in childcare services calls for proper planning, quality indicators, adequate monitoring and assessment which can best be done when local services work together and hold themselves accountable to their clients.

# EMPLOYER INITIATIVES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



Bronwen Cohen

**The United Kingdom has one of the lowest levels of publicly funded services for children in Europe. Publicly funded nurseries and family day carers account for less than 2% of children aged 0-4 (compulsory schooling begins at 5); these services are intended for**

**children and families who are in particular need of provision on grounds of welfare. A commitment made in 1972 to provide nursery schooling for all children whose parents wanted them to attend has recently been dropped. Full-time nursery education places are available for less than 20% of 3 and 4 year olds, although more children attend due to the operation of a shift system which enables two children to share each full-time place. The services that provide for the largest number of children under compulsory school age are playgroups, which are usually parent-run, offer short hours of attendance and receive no public funds; and the admission of children below compulsory school age into primary school, a setting which is often inappropriate for 4 year olds due to inadequate resources for staff and equipment.**

**T**his situation reflects a continuing Government policy that employed parents should in general be responsible for finding and paying for their own childcare arrangements. Parents make these private arrangements in a number of ways: through the organisation of their working hours (many mothers in the United Kingdom have part-time jobs), through the use of informal networks (relatives, neighbours, friends) or through the purchase of services in a rapidly expanding private market (private nurseries, family day carers, nannies and babysitters). Employers, however, have been encouraged to assist parents with their childcare responsibilities. Government policy has for some years emphasised the role which can be played by employers in helping their workers with childcare. Leave entitlements (other than the statutory Maternity Leave) have also been seen as a matter for employers rather than government legislation: consequently, the United Kingdom is one of the few countries in Europe with no statutory Parental Leave. In short, any support for employed parents is seen as the task of employers, depending on their labour force needs and market position.

For those employers providing help with childcare facilities, some limited financial assistance is available through the tax system. This includes some tax relief for the day to day costs of providing or subsidising childcare services and some assistance with capital costs. Most recently the government has introduced a pilot scheme under which Training and Enterprise Councils will provide some short-term assistance to employers, voluntary groups and schools in developing school-age childcare.

Tax concessions have always been available under normal tax business rules. They have not been the focus of any specifically targeted initiatives, although they are now more widely publicised. Following a lengthy campaign by many organisations, in 1990 the Government did remove a tax disincentive which was adversely affecting the development of workplace



childcare services (this disincentive involved the taxing of employees using workplace nursery places which were subsidised by employers). In its election manifesto in Spring 1992, the Conservative Party indicated that it would “*act where a push by government is needed to stimulate the provision of childcare*”.

In general, the Government policy towards employers has been gentle persuasion. In a booklet on flexible working arrangements prepared for employers by the Department of Employment in 1991, the Minister noted that the publication did not:

*“aim to be prescriptive. Employers themselves are the best judge of what suits their particular circumstances. But I hope it will encourage employers who have not already done so to think about the arrangements they have in place and consider whether these will enable them to make the most of all the skills and talents available in this decade of change”.* (**The Best of Both Worlds: The Benefits of a Flexible Approach to Working Arrangements**, London: Department of Employment).

An increasing number of employers have been reviewing their work and family provisions and the Department of Employment booklet gathers together some of the better known examples. These include the Midland Bank which opened its first nursery in October 1989 and since then has been involved in the development of 115 nursery schemes; and Glaxo Group Research which plans to invest in three nurseries. Some of the most significant developments in recent years have been in the Civil Service. An Equality Action Programme was launched by the Civil Service in 1984, and from February 1989 government departments and agencies have been allowed to contribute to the running costs of childcare facilities “*where value for money can be shown and cost contained within existing budgets*”. Since then, 26 Civil Service nurseries have been opened and staff have access to a further 6 nurseries developed on a partnership basis. There are over 120 holiday

playgroups in the Civil Service (official Civil Service figures for August 1992).

The development of nurseries in partnership - with other employers, voluntary organisations and local authorities - is now an increasing feature of employed childcare support. For example, 112 of the 113 schemes in which the Midland Bank is involved have been established on a partnership basis. Such partnership schemes may involve a number of employers, local authorities and, in some cases, voluntary and other organisations. For example, a nursery has been established at Abingdon College in Oxfordshire. The College supplied the premises, paid most of the capital costs and subsidises the fees of students using the nursery; the local authority contributed to the capital costs, and its workers have priority for admission and pay reduced fees; the Midland Bank has bought places for its staff, who also pay reduced fees; remaining places are available to anyone who is able to pay the full cost.

The model has provided a means through which a number of local authorities have been able to assist in the development of facilities despite financial constraints, taking advantage in some cases of European Community Structural Funding. Fife Regional Council in Scotland, for instance, has opened a nursery on an industrial estate, with the help of a contribution from the Regional Development Fund towards capital costs. A third of places are sold to employers at full price, with the remaining places available at reduced fees to local children. These developments have also been assisted in some cases by local authority Equality or Women's Units, by Trade Union negotiations or through initiatives by voluntary organisations. One voluntary organisation (*the Daycare Trust*) operates a pilot “Childcare Links” scheme facilitating partnership projects.

Such developments both reflect and contribute to the higher profile which childcare now has as an issue, a profile which may have been assisted by the government policy of gentle persuasion. However, there are still no government statistics in the United Kingdom on the number of places in childcare services that are provided

# ANNUAL REPORT

92

UNITED KINGDOM

directly by employers or supported by employers in some other way. A survey carried out in 1992 by a voluntary agency (*Working for Childcare*) identified 425 workplace or employer sponsored nurseries in the United Kingdom, providing up to 12,000 full time daycare places (equivalent to less than 0.5% of children aged 0-4). This figure does not give the full picture of employers' involvement with the provision of childcare services: for example, it does not include employers who provide direct financial assistance to subsidise employees' childcare costs with cash grants or vouchers or who assist employees to find private childcare services.

This and other survey evidence indicate that, while there has been an increase in employer provided childcare services and other assistance with childcare, such measures still benefit only a small proportion of the workforce. This is reflected in the findings of a major survey carried out in 1989 by the Policy Studies Institute for the Department of Employment, the Department of Social Security and the Equal Opportunities Commission. The survey examined the experience of women and employers with respect to maternity rights, and includes women's accounts of facilities available to them from their employers to help them continue working after having a child. The results were similar to those found in a similar survey carried out by the same organisation ten years earlier (S.McRae (1991), *Maternity Rights in Britain*, London: PSI).

Only 4% of women in the 1991 survey reported any help from their employers with childcare arrangements - ranging from the provision of a workplace nursery to help during school holidays and keeping a list of family day carers. This was only 1% more than in 1979. Managers' accounts of the arrangements they offered paint a somewhat rosier picture; 11% said they provided some form of help with childcare arrangements. However, only just over 2% of babies in the survey were using a nursery and only 1% used a workplace nursery. As in the earlier 1979 survey, the most common childcare arrangement continues to be care by the baby's father; this arrangement is particularly common where mothers have part-time jobs and the United

Kingdom has a high rate of part-time employment among women with young children. The next most common arrangement was care by a relative (mostly grandmothers). Again, as in 1979, the single most important change wanted by women to make it easier to return to work was access to improved childcare facilities followed by improved maternity rights.

The survey shows that help from employers is not equally available to women with children. Far more help is available to women in the public sector than women employed in the private sector. Women working in local or national government were four times as likely as women in the private sector to have help with childcare arrangements and were far more likely to have access to improved maternity leave provision. Over a third (36%) of civil servants compared with 2% of private sector employees reported access to job sharing.

The survey confirms the fears of agencies, such as the Equal Opportunities Commission, that employers are unlikely to be able to meet the very considerable demands which exist for childcare services and will only be able to contribute in a piecemeal way. In a discussion paper published in 1990, the Equal Opportunities Commission noted that

*"to date, the number of employers who are willing and able to provide childcare remains small. Many employers understandably consider themselves to be engaged more in running their business than in setting up childcare facilities"*. (**The Key to Real Choice - An Action Plan for Childcare**, London: Equal Opportunities Commission).

Recent initiatives in the United Kingdom have helped to increase awareness in general of work and family issues and in some cases to highlight the range of needs which childcare services can meet. There is now increasing recognition of the role of childcare services in relation to economic as well as social development. However, interesting as some of these initiatives are, they cannot be expected to satisfy the country's very considerable childcare needs or substitute for a coordinated childcare strategy backed by adequate public resourcing.

# ANNEX:

## TEXT OF THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON CHILD CARE

### COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

of 31 March 1992

on child care

(92/241/EEC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 235 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission <sup>(1)</sup>,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament <sup>(2)</sup>,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee <sup>(3)</sup>,

Whereas the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, adopted in the Strasbourg European Council on 9 December 1989 by the Heads of State or Government of eleven Member States, lays down, in the third paragraph of point 16 in particular, that:

'Measures should also be developed to enable men and women to reconcile their occupational and family obligations';

Whereas the Commission action programme implementing the Community Charter provides for this Recommendation;

Whereas in its Third Medium-Term Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1991-1995), the Commission identified the need for further action in this area;

Whereas in its communication on family policies, sent to the Council on 24 August 1989, the Commission empha-

sized the importance of intensifying work relating to child care;

Whereas child-care methods, parental leave and maternity leave form part of a whole which enables people to combine their family responsibilities and occupational ambitions;

Whereas the Member States should take and/or encourage initiatives, taking into account the responsibilities of national, regional and local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organizations and private individuals, and/or in cooperation with the various parties concerned;

Whereas the reconciliation of occupational, family and upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children has to be viewed in a wide perspective which also takes into account the particular interests and needs of children at different age levels, where it is important, in order to achieve this, to encourage an overall policy aimed at enabling such reconciliation to occur;

Whereas it is essential to promote the well-being of children and families, ensuring that their various needs are met and taking into account the fact that responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children continue up to and throughout the period of children's schooling, and especially when they are younger;

Whereas in all Member States the demand for child-care services at prices affordable to parents exceeds the existing supply;

Whereas inadequate provision of child-care services at prices affordable to parents and other initiatives to reconcile responsibility for the family and the upbringing of children with the employment, or with the education and training of parents in order to obtain employment constitutes a major barrier to women's access to and more eff

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ No C 242, 17. 9. 1991, p. 3.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ No C 326, 16. 12. 1991, p. 279.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ No C 40, 17. 2. 1992, p. 88.

... participation in the labour market, on equal terms with men, the effective participation of women in all areas of society and the effective use of their talents, skills and abilities in the current demographic situation ;

... hereas, moreover, in this area, disparities exist between Member States and between regions within Member States ;

... hereas, furthermore, better child-care services could facilitate freedom of movement of workers and mobility in the European labour market ;

... hereas child-care services may be public or private, individual or collective in form ;

... hereas child care is a broad concept which may involve the provision of child-care services which answer the needs of children, the grant of special leave to parents and the development of a working environment structure and organization which is adapted to the sharing between women and men of occupational, family and upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children ;

... hereas in certain Member States, owing to the low level of national income and the need to impose strict limits on growth in public expenditure, the role of the public authorities may be subject to particular constraints ;

... hereas the standard clause included in the Community support frameworks for structural policy stipulates that the actions and measures taken within such a framework must conform with and, where appropriate, contribute to the implementation of Community policy and legislation relating to equality of opportunity between women and men, and that in particular, consideration must be given to training and infrastructure requirements which facilitate labour force participation by women with children ;

... hereas, furthermore, in the NOW Community initiative (1991-1993), financed by the Structural Funds, for the promotion of equal opportunities for women in the fields of employment and vocational training, additional child-care measures are provided for to assist women with children to have access to the labour market and to vocational training courses,

HEREBY RECOMMENDS AS FOLLOWS :

*Article 1*

**Objective**

It is recommended that Member States should take and/or progressively encourage initiatives to enable women and men to reconcile their occupational, family and upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children.

*Article 2*

**Areas of initiatives**

For the purposes of Article 1, it is recommended that the Member States, taking into account the respective responsibilities of national, regional and local authorization, management and labour, other relevant organizations and private individuals, and/or in cooperation with national, regional or local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organizations and private individuals, should take and/or encourage initiatives in the following four areas :

1. The provision of children-care services while parents :
  - are working,
  - are following a course of education or training in order to obtain employment
  - or
  - are seeking a job or a course of education or training in order to obtain employment.

For the purposes of this Recommendation, 'child-care services' means any type of child care, whether public or private, individual or collective.
2. Special leave for employed parents with responsibility for the care and upbringing of children.
3. The environment, structure and organization of work, to make them responsive to the needs of workers with children.
4. The sharing of occupational, family and upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children between women and men.

*Article 3*

**Child-care services**

As regards child-care services, it is recommended that the Member States, taking into account the respective responsibilities of national, regional and local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organizations and private individuals, and/or in cooperation with national, regional or local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organizations and private individuals, should take and/or encourage initiatives to :

1. enable parents who are working, following a course of education or training in order to obtain employment or are seeking employment or a course of education or training in order to obtain employment to have as much access as possible to local child-care services.
- In this context, endeavours should in particular be made to ensure that :
- the services are offered at prices affordable to parents ;
  - they combine reliable care from the point of view of health and safety with a general upbringing and a pedagogical approach ;

- the needs of parents and children are taken into account when access to services is determined ;
  - the services are available in all areas and regions of Member States, both in urban areas and in rural areas ;
  - the services are accessible to children with special needs, for example linguistic needs, and to children in single-parent families, and meet the needs of such children ;
2. encourage flexibility and diversity of child-care services as part of a strategy to increase choice and meet the different preferences, needs and circumstances of children and their parents, while preserving coherence between different services ;
  3. endeavour that the training, both initial and continuous, of workers in child-care services is appropriate to the importance and the social and educative value of their work ;
  4. encourage child-care services to work closely with local communities through regular contact and exchanges of information, so as to be responsive to parental needs and particular local circumstances ;
  5. encourage national, regional or local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organizations and private individuals, in accordance with their respective responsibilities, to make a financial contribution to the creation and/or operation of coherent child-care services which can be afforded by parents and which offer them a choice.

#### Article 4

##### Special leave

As regards special leave for employed parents with responsibility for the care and upbringing of children, it is recommended that Member States, taking into account the respective responsibilities of national, regional and local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organizations and private individuals, and/or in cooperation with national, regional or local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organizations and private individuals, should take and/or encourage initiatives, to take realistic account of women's increased participation in the labour force.

These initiatives should concern, for example, special leave enabling employed parents both men and women, who so desire properly to discharge their occupational, family and upbringing responsibilities, with, *inter alia*, some flexibility as to how leave may be taken.

#### Article 5

##### Environment, structure and organization of work

As regards the environment, structure and organization of work, it is recommended that Member States, taking into account the respective responsibilities of national, regional and local authorities, management and labour, other relevant organizations and private individuals, and/or in cooperation with national, regional or local authorities, management and labour, other relevant authorities and private individuals, should take and/or encourage initiatives to :

1. support action, in particular within the framework of collective agreements, to create an environment, structure and organization of work which take into account the needs of all working parents with responsibility for the care and upbringing of children ;
2. ensure that due recognition is given to persons engaged in child-care services as regards the way in which they work and the social value of their work ;
3. promote action, especially in the public sector, which can serve as an example in developing initiatives in this area.

#### Article 6

##### Sharing of responsibilities

As regards responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children, it is recommended that Member States should promote and encourage, with due respect for freedom of the individual, increased participation by men, in order to achieve a more equal sharing of parental responsibilities between men and women and enable women to have a more effective role in the labour market.

#### Article 7

##### Commission report

The Member States shall inform the Commission, within three years of the date of the adoption of this Recommendation, of the measures taken to give effect to it, in order to enable the Commission to draw up a report on its implementation.

Done at Brussels, 31 March 1992.

For the Council

The President

Vitor MARTINS

# EUROPEAN COMMISSION NETWORK ON CHILDCARE AND OTHER MEASURES TO RECONCILE EMPLOYMENT AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

## NETWORK COORDINATOR

**Peter Moss** Thomas Coram Research Unit, 27/28 Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AA

## NATIONAL EXPERTS

<b>BEL</b>	<b>Fred Deven</b>	CBGS, Markiesstraat 1, B-1000 Brussel
	<b>Perrine Humblet</b>	ESP-CP 590/5. 808 route de Lennik, B-1070 Bruxelles
<b>DA</b>	<b>Jytte Juul Jensen</b>	Jydsk Paedagog-seminarium, Skejbyvej 29, DK-8240 Risskov
<b>DE</b>	<b>Monika Jaeckel</b>	Deutsches Jugendinstitut, Freibadstrasse 30, D-8000 Munchen 90
<b>EL</b>	<b>Vivie Papadimitriou</b>	Skoufa 75, GR-10680 Athens
<b>ES</b>	<b>Irene Balaguer</b>	Arguitecto August Font 35-3, E-08023 Barcelona
<b>FR</b>	<b>Martine Felix</b>	Institut de l'Enfance et de la Famille, 3 rue Coq-Héron, F-75001 Paris
<b>IRL</b>	<b>Anne McKenna</b>	Glenstal, Westminster Road, Dublin 18
<b>IT</b>	<b>Patrizia Ghedini</b>	Regione Emilia-Romagna, Viale Aldo Moro 38, I-40127 Bologna
<b>LUX</b>	<b>Jean Altmann</b>	5 Avenue de la Libération, L-3850 Schiffange
<b>NL</b>	<b>Liesbeth Pot</b>	Schoutenbosch 71, NL-1901 PB Castricum
<b>PT</b>	<b>Maria Eduarda Ramirez</b>	CRSS de Lisboa, Rua Julia Diniz No. 16/18, P-2780 Oeiras
<b>UK</b>	<b>Bronwen Cohen</b>	SCAFA, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RG

92

ANNUAL REPORT

### ABBREVIATIONS FOR MEMBER STATES

BEL = Belgium  
DE = Germany  
DA = Denmark  
EL = Greece  
ES = Spain  
FR = France  
IRL = Ireland  
IT = Italy  
LUX = Luxembourg  
NL = Netherlands  
PT = Portugal  
UK = United Kingdom



**COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTES EUROPEENNES** - DIRECTION GENERALE *Emploi, relations industrielles et affaires sociales* - **Unité pour l'égalité des chances** • **COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES** - DIRECTORATE-GENERAL *Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs* - **Equal Opportunities Unit** • **KOMMISSION DER EUROPÄISCHEN GEMEINSCHAFTEN** - GENERALDIREKTION *Beschäftigung, Arbeitsbeziehungen und soziale Angelegenheiten* - **Referat für Chancengleichheit** • **COMMISSIONE DELLE COMUNITÀ EUROPEE** - DIREZIONE GENERALE *Occupazione, relazioni industriali e affari sociali* - **Unità per la parità delle opportunità** • **KOMMISSIONEN FOR DE EUROPÆISKE FÆLLESKABER** - GENERAL DIREKTORATET *Beskæftigelse, Arbejdsmarkedsrelationer og Sociale Anliggender* - **Kontoret for lige muligheder** • **COMMISSIE VAN DE EUROPESE GEMEENSCHAPPEN** - DIRECTORAAT-GENERAAL *Werkgelegenheid, industriële betrekkingen en sociale zaken* - **Dienst gelijke kansen** • **COMISIÓN DE LAS COMUNIDADES EUROPEAS** - DIRECCIÓN GENERAL *Empleo, Relaciones industriales y Asuntos sociales* - **Unidad para la igualdad de oportunidades** • **COMISSÃO DAS COMUNIDADES EUROPEIAS** - DIRECÇÃO-GERAL *Emprego, Relações Industriais e Assuntos Sociais* - **Unidade para a igualdade de Oportunidades** • **ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ ΤΩΝ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΩΝ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΩΝ** - Γενική Διεύθυνση V *Απασχόληση, Εργασιακές σχέσεις και Κοινωνικές Υποθέσεις* - **Τμήμα Ίσων Ευκαιριών**



Rue de la Loi 200 — B - 1049 Bruxelles  
Tél. (+32.2) 295.11.11/20.93 — Fax. (+32.2) 295.01.29/65.07