

International Centre for the Study of the Mixed Economy of Childcare



ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

It is a great pleasure for ICMEC's co-directors to present the first annual report of the International Centre for the Study of the Mixed Economy of Childcare in the Cass School of Education. At the end of the first year of operation it has become clear that the activities undertaken by ICMEC represent a serious volume of work, and ICMEC is firmly established as an authoritative source on the mixed market economy of childcare in the UK and internationally.

In summary, as part of ICMEC's work programme ICMEC's co-directors:

- submitted seven research bids, of which two have been agreed and three are still awaiting funders' decisions;
- monies due to come into ICMEC in the next few months as a result of these two successful research consultancies;
- published or expecting publication of seven articles and chapters, five in academic and two in practitioner publications;
- organised five international ICMEC events in London, the ICMEC launch conference and four international seminars.

Further activities planned include a joint seminar with the prestigious Brookings Institute in the USA, and with European Universities. Building on our record of work so far, we hope to be able to bid for major grants to sustain the activities of the centre.

1. Background to ICMEC

The proposal from Dr Helen Penn, Professor of Early Childhood and Eva Lloyd, Reader in Early Childhood, for the establishment of a multi-disciplinary research centre received preliminary approval Cass School of Education Research Committee, the School Board, and the Senior Management Team in April 2007. On 10th May 2007 the UEL Academic Board's Research Committee approved the establishment of ICMEC, with an annual budget of £5000 for the first year of its operation, and an agreed amount for 2008/9, to be drawn from the Cass School of Education Research budget, and with a designated, ring-fenced budget. The proposal set out the ICMEC International Advisory Board, drawn from Business, Local Authorities, Policy Institutes, and Academia, and stressed the close links with the Business School (see below).

The proposal's rationale set out the main details of the rapid growth in the mixed market childcare economy in the UK, pointing out that UK policy and practice diverges from that in many other OECD countries, where publicly funded universal Early Childhood Education and Care programmes have been promoted as a 'public good.'

In summary, it argued that ensuring equality of access and equivalence of outcomes for all children in a mixed economy of childcare services presents considerable challenges. Such challenges confront each group of 'stakeholders': managers and practitioners in the private for-profit sector, corporate and single traders, the 'not-for-profit' and maintained early childhood care and education sector, as well as policy makers, politicians, parents and academics. In each group, individuals committed to young children's well-being and future life chances are exploring ways of optimising outcomes within a mixed economy. These developments, concluded the proposal, form a highly appropriate subject for a multi-disciplinary research initiative.

2. ICMEC staffing during 2007/08

In line with the plans outlined in the original proposal, Helen Penn and Eva Lloyd assumed the co-directorship of the newly established research programme in May 2007. They both work on ICMEC on a one/two day week basis.

In October 2007 ICMEC was able to appoint a part-time research assistant, for 4 hours per week. For a total of 30 weeks, the co-directors were joined by Karen Horsley, a contract lecturer in Early Childhood Studies at UEL and a graduate of UEL's BA in Early Childhood Studies. She made a significant difference to maintaining the ICMEC mailing list, marketing the programme of ICMEC seminars to this list and the practical organisation of ICMEC events. Her contract expired in May 2008 at the start of the summer semester and her input into ICMEC's activities will be sorely missed.

ICMEC was approached by Zena Brabazon, previously a senior executive in the London Borough of Haringey, to become a research fellow and to carry out a self-funded research project on access and take-up of provision in Children's Centres. Her application to become a research fellow is presently lodged with the Grad School.

3. ICMEC's international Advisory Board

Prior to gaining the University's approval, Helen Penn and Eva Lloyd had received support for their proposal from eight national and international experts in early childhood policy and economics, who subsequently agreed to become members of the Centre's Advisory Board. These experts are:

- [Jim Barry](#) - Professor of Gender and Organization Studies, Business School, UEL and Visiting Professor at Luleå University of Technology in Sweden.
- [Mike Brewer](#) - Director of the Direct Tax and Welfare Research Program at the Institute for Fiscal Studies; previously an Economic Assistant at HM Treasury.
- [Kazem Chaharbaghi](#) - Professor of Management at UEL Business of School and Director of University of East London's multi-disciplinary research programmes.

- [William Laing](#) - economist and Chief Executive of Laing & Buisson, a market research organization specializing in the social care sector, including childcare, which he set up in 1976.
- [Peter Moss](#) - Professor in Early Childhood Provision at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.
- [Susan Prentice](#) - Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg Manitoba, Canada.
- [Jennifer Sumsion](#) - Foundation Professor of Early Childhood Education, Charles Sturt University, Australia NSW.
- [Raymond A Whyte](#) - the Business Support Officer for London Borough of Brent Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and a member of the Strategic Planning and Information Management Team in the Children's Services Directorate

ICMEC's co-directors are grateful for advice and practical support received from these individuals throughout the whole of the Centre's first year of operation.

4. ICMEC's Aims and work programme

ICMEC's aims and work programme were agreed at the Advisory Board's first meeting, which took place in London on Monday 10 September 2007.

IMMEC's aims are threefold:

- To generate greater knowledge about Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provision in countries which employ mixed economies of welfare and education services;
- To explore the contribution to young children's well being within mixed economies of childcare; and
- To develop an international and multi-disciplinary approach to exploring mixed economies of childcare.

The Centre's work programme will therefore focus upon:

1. developing a policy-relevant research agenda concerning comparisons between ECEC privatisation and marketisation processes in a variety of countries;
2. establishment of a virtual network of academics and stakeholders from the public, private for-profit and private not-for-profit (PVI) childcare sectors, in order to create a forum for the discussion of pertinent trends and developments in mixed economies of childcare;
3. organising a programme of events and international seminars to profile relevant scholarship and support knowledge transfer;
4. presenting ICMEC generated research and other pertinent findings to a wide range of audiences nationally and internationally, including policymakers, academics, childcare professionals and parents.

5. ICMEC's activities and achievements in 2007/08

The Centre's activities and achievements during the first year of its existence are summarised below in chronological order under headings which relate to the four domains of its work programme.

5.1. Developing a policy relevant research agenda

5.1.1. Articles

Several articles have been produced for academic and practitioner journals on ICMEC's subject matter.

- In August 2007 an article by Helen Penn appeared in Volume 8, No 3 of the international journal *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*: 'Childcare market management: how the UK Government has reshaped its role in developing early education and care.' This article has been widely circulated and cited.
- In autumn 2007 Eva Lloyd was invited to contribute an article to a themed issue of *Social Policy and Society* devoted to child poverty. Her article, 'The interface between childcare, family support and child poverty policies under New Labour: tensions and contradictions' is due to appear in Volume 7, No 4, in October 2008.
- In August 2007 Helen Penn and Eva Lloyd produced a 'special report' for volume 107 of the practitioner journal *Nursery World*: 'For-profit childcare.'
- In September 2007 Helen Penn published an article on the same topic for the magazine of *Children in Scotland*.
- In July 2008 Helen Penn has an article in the academic journal *Childhood* on the operation of the private childcare market in Namibia, based on funded research for an EU/World Bank project to undertake a cost-benefit study of childcare provision in Namibia
- August 2008. Helen Penn has written a new chapter on the *Economics of Childcare*, drawing on the ICMEC work, which will appear in the second edition of her book *Understanding Early Childhood* due out in August.
- Helen Penn has contributed a chapter on the development of the private market in the UK for an international book "*Childcare and Pre-school Development in Europe*" to be published by Palgrave MacMillan later this year
- Helen Penn is currently co-editing a special international edition of the *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, the highly rated USA journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children which has commissioned articles on corporate childcare and the processes of knowledge transfer

5.1.2 Research proposals

Over the course of the last twelve months both co-directors progressed the ICMEC research agenda by submitting a number of research proposals individually and jointly, as well as in collaboration with other agencies and/or early years consultants.

- March 2007. Helen Penn was a partner with Professor Susan Prenctice, from the University of Manitoba (and one of ICMEC's advisory board) in a bid to the Canadian Social Science Research Council to set up an international network of researchers to investigate the operation of the corporate childcare market.

- July 2007. Helen Penn submitted a research proposal to the Baring Foundation, to examine the costing histories of childcare projects in South Africa. This application was turned down, but reworked into another application, submitted to CfBT Educational Trust, in October. CfBT deferred a decision on the costing application, but commissioned a £16,500 review of childcare in Southern Africa, which they will publish shortly. They have now asked for the costing project to be resubmitted. This application, for £68,000 will be considered in September 2008.
- February 2008. Helen Penn submitted a competitive application to the British Academy for £30,000 to run a joint project with the University of Kwa Zulu Natal documenting the work of Muslim nurseries in Durban, South Africa. The results of this bid will announced in July.
- September 2007: Eva Lloyd submitted an – invited - research proposal to the Bernard van Leer Foundation, proposing to compare the marketisation and privatisation processes in the UK and The Netherlands with special refence to children in need. Unfortunately this proposal, for £35,225, was unsuccessful as the Foundation had in the interim agreed on a new strategic direction, but an adapted version, for £17,500, is currently being considered by a different funder.
- March 2008: Eva Lloyd collaborated with Ivana La Valle at the National Centre for Social Research on a preliminary proposal to the Nuffield Foundation under its ‘open door’ stream. The proposed project, for £110,000, aims to explore the impact on Local Authorities of the ‘childcare sufficiency duty’ under the Childcare Act 2006, which obliges LAs to ensure the provision of ECEC services by private for-profit and not-for profit providers. While this proposal has got through to the second round of the funding application process, it will require some revision in the light of recent developments in this area before being resubmitted. Of the sum applied for, approximately £8000 is earmarked for ICMEC.
- April 2008: Eva Lloyd submitted a bid to the Children’s Workforce Development Council for £31,780, in response to a tender inviting proposals to evaluate the impact of the first year of the Full Pathway Training for Early Years Professionals. Unfortunately this tender was unsuccessful.
- May 2008: Eva Lloyd has been invited to contribute to a project from the Families and Children Group at the National Centre for Social Research. She will manage and take a major part in the process of writing up the DCSF’s commissioned evaluation of the piloted extension of the ‘Early Education Entitlement’ to children Under Two. Her input into this work has been costed at £11,000 approximately.

5.2 Establishing a virtual network of academics and stakeholders

5.2.1 The ICMEC website and leaflet

The creation of the ICMEC website – www.uel.ac.uk/icmec - in October 2007, has contributed significantly to the establishment of a virtual network of academics and stakeholders from the public, private for-profit and private not-for-profit sector. This website is being maintained by Eva Lloyd. Relevant publications and news from other countries with mixed economies of childcare is published alongside announcements of and presentations and reports resulting from ICMEC events. An A5 size ICMEC publicity leaflet has now been produced and 500 copies will be ready for distribution at conferences and other events from late May 2008.

5.2.2 *The ICMEC mailing list*

A great deal of work went into the construction of a mailing list of relevant individuals among politicians and policy makers at central and local government levels, relevant academics, childcare providers in all three sectors and childcare umbrella organisations. The list, which currently features some 375 names, and which is constantly being added to, is being used to publicise ICMEC events. A small number of names belong to international experts who have asked to remain informed of ICMEC events. Details of the most recent event, planned for June 2nd have been circulated to over 2000 persons.

Additionally, all individuals who attended or signed up to attend an ICMEC event have become 'associates' of the Centre.

Associates include senior Government Officials from DfCSF, DfID, and the Treasury; representatives from business include CEO's of the major national nursery chains and private nursery umbrella organisations; senior local Government officials including those from the LGA, and LDA and a number of local authorities from in and outside of London; representatives from Policy Think Tanks include Daycare Trust, NatCen, NIESR, IPPR and Policy Exchange; union representatives from NUT and UNISON; academics include professorial colleagues from a variety of academic disciplines from UEA, IoE, Open University, Bristol University, Roehampton, Warwick University, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, Charles Sturt University, NSW, Australia, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and the University of Toronto, Canada.

5.2.3 *ICMEC publicity*

The research centre and events it organised received press coverage in a number of practitioner journals, *Nursery World*, *Nursery Management Today* and *Nursery and Childcare Market News*. The latter publication also advertised ICMEC events. The Centre has been approached by a number of national print and TV journalists seeking information about the private childcare market.

5.3 *Organising a programme of events and international seminars*

5.3.1 *The ICMEC launch conference*

An international conference was held at UEL's Docklands Campus in 10th September 2007 where Stephen Timms MP, Minister of State for Competitiveness at the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, officially launched the research centre. Having been introduced by UEL's Vice Chancellor, Professor Martin Everitt, the Minister used this occasion to announce changes to the regulation of early childhood provision.

Among the other speakers were three members of the ICMEC Advisory Board, Professor Jennifer Sumsion from Australia, Dr Susan Prentice from Canada and Dr Mike Brewer from the Institute of Fiscal Studies. Their presentations were complemented by those from Purnima Tanuku, Chief Executive of the National Day Nurseries Association and Carole Edmond, Managing Director of Teddies Nurseries.

All presentations are available on the ICMEC website, by following the link in the righthand margin to 'ICMEC conference 2007'.

5.3.2 The ICMEC international seminar series

As part of the first ICMEC international seminar series four seminars were organised, on 3 December 2007, 14 March 2008, 12 May 2008 and 2 June 2008. Two of these featured renowned international and two national speakers. The seminars took the format of one or two main presentations, followed by a response and analysis from another invited speaker, prior to a discussion with the audience. Each seminar attracted an invited audience of some 30 senior policy makers, academics, for-profit and not-for-profit childcare managers and other individuals who contributed to lively debates on the topics under discussion.

A report on each seminar is available on the ICMEC website by following the link in the lefthand margin to 'seminars'. Most presentations have also been lodged there.

Seminar 1, December 2007: 'SURPLUS OR PROFIT: THE CASE OF PUBLIC FUNDING FOR PRIVATE CHILDCARE PROVISION'

- Speakers: William Laing, CEO Laing & Buisson and Denise Burke, Head of Childcare, London Development Agency.
- Response and analysis: Professor Helen Penn, UEL

Seminar 2, March 2008: 'CHILDCARE QUALITY IN THE MIXED ECONOMY OF CHILDCARE: AN ECONOMIST'S VIEW.'

- Speaker: professor Gordon Cleveland, Associate Chair, and Senior Lecturer in Economics, Department of Management, University of Toronto at Scarborough, Ontario, Canada.
- Response and analysis: Professor Peter Moss, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

Seminar 3, May 2008: "CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS PROVISION IN A DIVERSE MARKET – THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH'.

- Speaker: Graham Archer, Deputy Director Childcare, Department for Children, Schools and Families
- Response and analysis: Ivana La Valle, Co-director Families & Children group, National Centre for Social Research.

Seminar 4, June 2008: EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.'

- Speakers: Dr Hasina Ebrahim, School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa;

Dr Marito Garcia, lead human development economist at the World Bank's Human Development Department, Africa Region.

Dr Carolyn Harper, Overseas Development Institute

The fourth seminar in this series is being undertaken in collaboration with the Overseas Development Institute and used to launch a new publication by the World Bank: *"Africa's Future, Africa's Challenge: Early Childhood Care and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa"* edited by Marito Garcia, Alan Pence and Judith Evans.

5.4 Other activities

As part of the process of knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer on the mixed economy of childcare, Helen Penn and Eva Lloyd have undertaken a variety of meetings and presentations. These include

- an information-sharing meeting in November 2007 with the Deputy Director Childcare at the Department for Children, Schools and Families, Graham Archer.
- attending the launch at the House of Commons of the Capacity report on Social Enterprise and Childcare in London, funded by the London Development Agency. In May 2008 ICMEC's co-directors
- Joining the steering committee of the National Institute of Social and Economic/National Statistics Office project to provide a value for money comparison of public and third sector provision of preschool childcare and education
- A symposium at BERA (British Educational Research Association) conference
- In June 2007 Eva Lloyd gave a seminar on the mixed economy of childcare in The Netherlands at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, where she holds a Visiting Fellowship.
- In October 2007 Eva took part in a panel discussion at a conference jointly organised by Daycare Trust and the National Centre for Social Research on the occasion of the publication of their report *Childcare Nation? Eva had been peer reviewer for this report.*
- In November 2007 Eva gave a presentation on ICMEC at the UEL School of Education biannual research conference.
- In early February 2008 Eva visited New Zealand, in order to deliver a keynote presentation at a one-day policy conference organised by the NZ early childhood umbrella organisation ChildForum entitled '*Early childhood education and care under the UK's Labour Government: tensions and contradictions*'.
- Eva subsequently delivered a second version of the paper at the School of Education at Victoria University, Wellington.
- As part of her visit to New Zealand, she also attended meetings with the early childhood regulation and funding policy team at the Ministry of Education, with representatives of NZ early childhood umbrella organisations and their membership and with colleagues in the School of Education at Massey University, Palmerston East.
- In mid February 2008 Eva gave an invited presentation on ICMEC and its work programme at a workshop in Sydney, Australia, organised by the International Research Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, which is based at the University of New South Wales's Social Policy Research Centre.
- In April 2008 Eva Lloyd gave a keynote presentation at the 8th Annual national Children's Day Nurseries conference organised by Laing & Buisson, the private sector social research agency. Her title was: '*Childcare in an international context*'.
- In Nov 2007 Helen Penn gave a keynote presentation at the Daycare Trust annual conference entitled '*What is Quality Childcare Worth*'.
- In January 2008 Helen Penn was an invited professorial speaker at the University of Stellenbosch at a colloquium organized by the European Association for Research in Learning and Instruction (EARLI) and her

15,000 word paper on rationales for early education and care is published by EARLI on their website.

- In April 2008 Helen Penn was an invited discussant at a seminar organized in Pretoria by the South African Social and Economic Research Council and the South African Department of Education on new childcare initiatives in South Africa.

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