

# Working it out

help shape the future of Scotland's children's sector workforce

## Exploring the benefits of Danish pedagogy

The *Working it out* programme has hosted a study visit to Denmark to examine the role, practice and education of Danish pedagogues. The purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of pedagogy and pedagogues' skills, and to assess what pedagogy could bring to the children's sector workforce in Scotland as it aspires to deliver services in a more holistic way.

This report shares delegates' experiences of Danish pedagogy, their understanding of how it might benefit Scotland and the steps being taken as a result of this study visit to move Scotland's workforce reform agenda forward.

### Foreword



**"The Working it Out debate ... has engaged thousands throughout Scotland in considering the sector's future"**

Nearly a quarter of a million people work in our services for children, young people and their families – contributing to a sector which is fundamental to Scotland. The *Working it Out* debate, facilitated by Children in Scotland, has engaged thousands throughout Scotland in considering the sector's future and stimulated lively discussion on how we can best ensure that our services are able to respond to new challenges.

Much discussion has focused on the importance of working together – sharing a value base and common understanding of what it means to 'get it right' for every child and how different services can contribute to common outcomes in education, health and wellbeing. It has highlighted the considerable distance we still have to go in ensuring, for example, that many of those working with the youngest and/or most vulnerable of our children are given the education and support they require and has focused attention on the advantages we might gain from greater flexibility in workforce roles.

An important element in the debate has been learning more about qualifications and practice from other countries and it has benefited from the cross-European programme *Working*

*for Inclusion*, led by Scotland, which is examining how improving the qualifications and skills of those working with our youngest children can help reduce poverty and improve social inclusion. Considerable interest has focused on the role and education of pedagogues. This is a term used in many other European countries with a broader meaning than we use it in Scotland, to encompass not only children's educational needs but also their social and emotional development. The variety of roles in which pedagogues can be found and their focus on what we call 'soft' skills such as social and emotional development and communication has attracted particular interest.

The study visit to Denmark which I asked Children in Scotland to arrange, and which is described in this report, enabled a small group of experienced employers, practitioners and those involved in the planning and delivery of qualifications and training to visit services in Denmark where pedagogues constitute the main staffing group in a wide range of services working with children and adults and to meet with a number of the institutions of higher education which are delivering the qualification.

This report on the visit enables us to share their experiences. I am delighted that it has proved an informative and valuable visit, offering the potential for possible partnerships in exploring further the concept of the Scottish pedagogue model outlined in Children in Scotland's 2008 publication, *Working it out: developing the children's sector workforce*. I am grateful, too, to the Scottish Funding Council for helping us to engage with the universities and colleges that took part in the visit and look forward to further discussions taking place on how we might take forward some of the points arising from the visit.

**Adam Ingram,  
Minister for Children and Early Years**

A *Working it out* report on a study visit to Denmark to examine the role, practice and education of Danish pedagogues

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# Introduction

**In April 2010, a group of eight employers, practitioners and senior staff from Scotland's colleges and higher education institutions took part in a study visit to Denmark to examine the role, practice and education of Danish pedagogues.**

The study visit group saw pedagogues working in a range of services including integrated day care nurseries for children 0 - 6, kindergartens, schools, out-of-school care and residential care settings.

The purpose of the visit was to gain a deeper understanding of pedagogy and pedagogues' skills, and to assess what pedagogy could bring to the children's sector workforce in Scotland as it aspires to deliver services in a more holistic way. Could pedagogy fill some of the gaps in our modern workforce? Could pedagogues bring the professional knowledge and skills that are required for delivering child and family services in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? These are the kind of questions that delegates asked during the course of this visit, always bearing in mind that Denmark differs from Scotland politically, socially and culturally. However, it is also true that Denmark shares many of the same goals and challenges as we do. Professional boundaries, gender roles and the current requirement of budget constraints, for example, are a reality there too. And both countries aspire to a society that recognises children as citizens with democratic rights and want all children to lead fulfilling lives.

Delegates identified a number of possible benefits in pedagogy, most notably pedagogues' broad skill base, which gives them the flexibility to work in different settings, and their professional status.

The flexibility of pedagogy was identified as something that could help simplify what is a complicated system of qualifications and job roles in Scotland, where a plethora of different educational qualifications prepare people for a plethora of different job titles and job roles with a huge amount of skill and knowledge overlap. Pedagogy creates one very skilled, yet flexible professional.

The impact of the pedagogue's professional status was also considered striking. They were seen working in roles traditionally associated with lower levels of qualification and pay in Scotland. Their degree-level education provided a framework which they use to create a level of professionalism that is not present in many comparable

roles in Scotland. The pedagogues that delegates met were proud of their profession, valued the soft skills now recognised as so important when working with children and families and felt able to make autonomous decisions in a wide range of circumstances – they assessed risk but allowed the children freedom.

The group have also identified a number of actions which could be taken following the study visit. New partnerships have been suggested to help develop a broader qualification that will help create a more flexible professional with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver services in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And ideas for pilot programmes have been put forward to test further the benefits that pedagogues might bring to Scotland.

The purpose of this report is to share delegates' experiences of Danish pedagogy, their understanding of how it might benefit Scotland and the steps being taken as a result of this study visit to move Scotland's workforce reform agenda forward.

## The visit

### Delegates:

**Jill Bourne**, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Strathclyde

**David Bruce**, Integrated Children's Services Manager, South Lanarkshire Council

**Jennifer Davidson**, Director, Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC)

**Peter Diamond**, Assistant Director, Education and Leisure Services, Orkney Islands Council and Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)

**Dorothy Johnson**, Senior Lecturer Education, University Of The West of Scotland

**Marie MacArthur**, Associate Principal of Early Education, Stevenson College

**Phil Robinson**, Chief Executive, Quarriers

**Patricia Walls**, Learning and Development Co-ordinator, Kibble

### Children in Scotland:

**Bronwen Cohen**, Chief Executive

**Nicola Pay**, Communications Officer

The visit was arranged with the help of BUPL, the Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators. BUPL is the trade union for pedagogues who work in nurseries, kindergartens, age-integrated childcare services, out-of-school care, leisure centres and youth clubs. Delegates visited services in Aarhus, the second-largest city in Denmark, on the east side of the peninsula, and Denmark's capital city, Copenhagen.



## The road to Denmark

**The 2010 study visit to observe Danish pedagogues at work followed 15 months of debate about the future development of the children's sector workforce in Scotland. From the outset, the debate has explored pedagogy as a possible solution to some of the challenges the workforce is facing.**

In November 2008 Children in Scotland invited the children's sector workforce, with employers, planners, universities, colleges and other stakeholders to take part in an ongoing debate about future workforce development. The debate's focus is how to deliver services in a more holistic and child-centred way.

The most pressing challenges identified by contributors to the debate have been the need for:

- a common language, and core skills and values shared by everyone working with children and families regardless of their specialism
- flexible job roles across the sector
- an appropriately skilled and valued workforce that is representative of the communities it serves.

From the outset, the "Scottish pedagogue" was suggested as

a model that could potentially address these issues.

The first issue of *Working it out* (see back page), set out proposals for a Scottish pedagogue model – a new set of qualifications to create pedagogues at graduate level and assistant pedagogues at SCQF level 7. Scottish pedagogues would work in all services for children and young people – from birth to 18 – including pre-school services, out-of-school care, play and youth services, residential, foster and family support services and alongside teachers in schools. To complement this, all those working with children, including teachers, health and social workers would receive a common grounding in Scottish pedagogical theory in practice.

This model could help address the challenges outlined above by creating a new and very flexible professional who is able to work with children and families across different settings and strengthen collaboration across services. Existing



Children playing outdoors at the integrated day-care centre, Vestergård Øst, Aarhus

## The road to Denmark

professionals would also share a common ground, facilitating their understanding of each other's roles and therefore improving collaboration across professional boundaries. Pedagogues and assistant pedagogues would be found working in those critical, front-line roles, which are often undervalued in terms of their qualifications and pay. These include roles in out-of-school care, in classrooms as assistants, in nurseries and pre-schools, in family centres, in residential care and with children and young people who have additional support needs.

Many contributors to the *Working it out debate* have felt very strongly that building a common core of knowledge and skills for the children's sector workforce should be the first priority for any future reform. In issue 1, *Working it out*, Linda Kinney, Head of Learning and Development at Stirling Council suggested a "core training/professional development framework for all professionals working with or engaged with children's care, learning and development [with tiers to enable specialisation]".

The springboard for this is offered by Scottish policies such as the Early Years Framework, Curriculum for Excellence, Getting it Right for Every Child, A Force for Improvement: Workforce Response to Better Health Better Care, Equally Well, and the National Residential Child Care Initiative for example. All are built up around the concept of the whole child and the need for services to work together, and all involve a shared approach to achieving Scotland's overarching vision for children and young people.

Getting it Right for Every Child has already published a set of values and principles for everyone working with children and young people. The Scottish Qualifications Framework, although cluttered now, does provide a sound infrastructure for building a more streamlined set of qualifications. And new courses are being introduced that recognise the need for a more highly skilled and flexible workforce. The BA in Childhood Practice for example, is based on the Standard for Childhood Practice and takes a holistic view of children's development, learning and well-being. The BA in Education and Social Services prepares students for integrated service delivery by focusing on developing the leadership qualities and skills required for this challenge.

Other contributors however have felt this alone is simply not enough to achieve the "transformational change" the Scottish Government wants and that introducing a pedagogy model in Scotland is the key to a stronger workforce. Mark Smith, a lecturer in social work at the University of Edinburgh, believes pedagogy would provide the "underpinning philosophy" and "conceptual framework" that is needed to unite workers in a common approach to working with children and families.

Pedagogy is already being explored as a means of improving residential care. The Westminster Government is testing the

effectiveness of pedagogues in this area, and Scotland's Aberlour Childcare Trust recently piloted a small pedagogy programme for some of its staff.

The Scottish Out of School Care Network has provided 6-month placements for Danish pedagogy students and has seen first-hand the benefits of having well-trained students working in services. And Maggie Simpson, of the Scottish Childminding Association, believes the pedagogue role fits well with childminding because it already crosses over the established sectors, provides for a wide age range and requires a broad skills-range.

Willie Roe, Chair of Skills Development Scotland in 2008 said the fact that pedagogues are equipped to work across all disciplines is key. He has described pedagogues as "trusted intermediaries – the oil in the engine... a really good pedagogue helps all the different parts [of the engine] to work together" (*Working it out: developing the children's sector workforce*, 2008)

A series of proposals for future reform of the children's sector workforce were put forward following a symposium in June 2009 (see back page), attended by chief officers, senior staff from different sectors and a range of services, as well as regulatory and funding bodies. "Further research into the potential of using the Scottish pedagogy models in Scotland" was one of the proposals. The study visit to Denmark is part of this research.

### Scotland's vision for children and young people

Children should be ambitious for themselves and be:

- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors
- Successful learners
- Responsible citizens

To achieve this vision children need to be safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected and included.

## Understanding the Danish pedagogue

**Delegates observed Danish pedagogues in a range of settings and were struck by their professionalism, the flexibility of their role, the high value they place on softer skills such as building relationships and their ability to work in a non risk-averse way.**

It can be difficult for those working in countries that are unfamiliar with the term 'pedagogue' as used in many other European countries to understand and fully appreciate their role.

This is partly because in anglophone countries the term pedagogy has been used by the education world to describe the science of education rather than in the wider sense used in many European countries – encompassing not only children's educational needs but also their social and emotional development, and physical wellbeing. For this reason, pedagogues cannot be compared directly to any one practitioner or professional currently working in this country. They display skills, knowledge and values found in a whole range of existing roles.

During the study visit the delegates saw qualified pedagogues form the main staffing group in kindergartens, out-of-school care, residential care, and crisis intervention and preventative curative work with families. They are also known to work in health roles, youth services, sport and leisure facilities, services for elderly people, services for children and adults with disabilities and even libraries.

This provides some insight into how flexible pedagogues are and how broad their knowledge and skills are and is one of the reasons why it was so important for delegates to observe pedagogues' day-to-day practice in a range of settings.

The "essence of a pedagogue" is easier to put down on paper. First and foremost, he or she takes a holistic approach and is concerned with the whole child/person – their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, moral and aesthetic development. They also take an inclusive approach and often work closely with children who have a range of additional support needs.

The aim of their work is to enable all children and young people (or older people in some settings) to contribute to society in an active, responsible and constructive way. Dorothy Johnson (University Of The West of Scotland), felt "the essence of the pedagogue and the role they play fits naturally with Getting it Right for Every Child, the Curriculum for Excellence and Equally Well", and if incorporated into the initial training of Scotland's workforce "could go a long way to raising standards".

Pedagogues are in the business of creating and facilitating

learning experiences. However, whilst in many learning institutions, such as schools, the focus is on selected learning, pedagogues will always take a broad and holistic approach.

Philip Robinson (Quarriers), observed a "unique range of skills" in the pedagogues he met:

*"It did seem clear to me from the visit that pedagogues can command an almost unique range of skills. It is not that the skills are unique in themselves but I had not previously encountered the mix contained within a single professional entity. Hence, it seems that pedagogues are able to assess a child's needs in any given situation on the basis of a fairly comprehensive knowledge and understanding of child development and then plan an intervention strategy which meets those needs in that given situation. This, again, requires a quite comprehensive range of skills including practical skills such as crafts and cooking etc together with quite subtle and sophisticated interpersonal strategies in which the pedagogue uses their own personality in all its aspects as the primary tool of intervention. Other skills which can be observed are more familiar from our own practice of social work education. These include reflective practice and evaluation which are clearly*



Developing children's relationships

## Understanding the Danish pedagogue

*taken very seriously and practiced in all settings.”*

The pedagogues in Denmark came across as confident professionals. Even though there are some tensions regarding relative levels of pay, pedagogues consider the status of their profession to be on a par with other comparable professions such as teachers and social workers. Patricia Walls (Kibble), said the pedagogues she met “knew there is professional trust in their abilities”, and “a professional code of conduct exuded from them”. Jennifer Davidson (SIRCC), said too that the pedagogues she spoke to believed their views were taken seriously and that their pedagogy training contributed to this.

Confidence in their own professional abilities shines through in practice. This is something that delegates were particularly struck by and their observations are perhaps the most effective way of helping people to understand how a pedagogue’s professional training informs their day-to-day work.

### Understanding the importance of strong and meaningful relationships

Pedagogues recognise the importance of focusing on the individual child, but demonstrate professional understanding that people are shaped by their relationships with others. Peter Diamond (Orkney Islands Council and ADES), described pedagogues as having “a philosophy about the human being – they observe and nurture relationships.”

*“Pedagogues are trained to focus on relationships and on valuing the time spent with children. Children’s relationships with others are at the core of their self worth, and this impacts on who they are and who they can become. One pedagogue told me: ‘Building these relationships takes time, but we have the time. Time is a tool in itself...”*

*“...The pedagogy training creates a level of professionalism which still enables pedagogues to retain their authentic personal involvement in their relationships with the children.” (Jennifer Davidson, SIRCC)*

*“Pedagogues were highly articulate in explaining their role and their focus on the social development of children. They were helping children to express their feelings, their choices, developing their self-confidence and self-esteem, and building independence. However, all this self-development was set within the context of social relationships – building a relationship with the pedagogue but also and crucially their peers, and taking part in group decision-making.” (Jill Bourne, University of Strathclyde)*

The focus on developing strong relationships extends to parents and wider family. This was particularly evident in Kilen’s Children’s Home (Page 18):

*“The practitioners have both a clear understanding of and an*

*unswerving commitment to the children and young people maintaining connections and developing relationships with their parents. This was not with the expectation of the children returning home necessarily, but rather in appreciation of the important role of parents in the lives of children, regardless of where they may eventually live. The staff members’ non-judgmental attitudes toward the parents were evident in how they spoke about the parents and described the parents’ regular visits into the heart of the home.” (Jennifer Davidson, SIRCC)*

### Knowing when to intervene... and when to stand back

Pedagogues create learning experiences through planned activities but allowing time for the “free and creative development” of those they work with is central to their practice.

Pedagogues in Denmark said the ethos of their work is to “celebrate the moment”. Patricia Walls (Kibble) felt this approach “offers a fluid way of giving children independence from the outset rather than working through what often seems like a rigid and prescribed set of competencies to be achieved.”

Delegates were struck by how pedagogues’ professional confidence enabled them to stand back and trust children, giving them freedom to explore their environment and independently assess risk.

*“The pedagogues’ self-belief and professionalism seemed to give them the confidence to work in a non risk-averse way with the children. They were willing and prepared to take learning outdoors for a significant proportion of the day, and they were patient, working at the child’s own pace.” (Patricia Walls, Kibble)*

*“I was very impressed by the pedagogues’ calm approach and understanding of the need for children to be aware of their own limits. They gave children the opportunity to try things out for themselves, in a way we don’t in Scotland. I saw a pedagogue supporting a child as he climbed a tree, a girl confidently swinging high on a swing without any apparent concept of fear that she might fall off and children making bread and pizza’s over an open fire.” (Marie McArthur, Stevenson College)*

*“I was struck by the lack of adult presence and adult engagement, in a positive sense. The children were largely on their own when I was observing them – making bread at a fire, climbing trees. There is a level of trust in children. We don’t put children in those situations.” (David Bruce, South Lanarkshire Council)*

*“The pedagogues’ three-and-a-half years of training showed in their approach to children. It also showed in their ability to offer explanations of their actions, explicit aims and intentions in working in the way they did, in the way they planned the use of resources, and in the activities they offered children. It was*

# Understanding the Danish pedagogue

**It did seem clear to me from the visit that pedagogues can command an almost unique range of skills**

especially seen in their ability to analyse and assess risks themselves, to establish explicitly norms and expectations of behaviour for children, and then to leave children a great deal of freedom in exploring their environment by themselves, to the benefit of their social and intellectual development. (Jill Bourne, University of Strathclyde).

Recent developments have left some pedagogues fearful that the space for “free and creative development”, which they value so highly, is being restricted. In 2004 national

guidelines were introduced, which require early childhood education and care centres to develop a curriculum with specific learning targets and objectives. And since 2009 local authorities are legally obliged, for the first time, to set out explicitly the strategic aims of out-of-school care facilities. In most cases the sponsoring school has taken responsibility for this. Pedagogues are finding themselves in a more target-driven environment, working towards predefined outcomes. The concern expressed by one pedagogue over this on page 17 reflects the concern of many pedagogues throughout Denmark. He said: “The relaxed approach of Danish pedagogues is steeped in history. We respond to the moment, but that is becoming increasingly difficult.”

## Understanding the importance of reflective practice

Some of the skills that delegates saw pedagogues display are evident in day-to-day practice the length and breadth of Scotland. In many cases however, the roles are relatively low paid, with low qualification requirements despite working with some of the most vulnerable members of society.

*“One of the biggest differences seems to be the pedagogues’ ability to reflect. Our unqualified workforce does not have the ability to put things into a coherent framework in the same way that pedagogues do. It does not have the capacity to reflect, plan, look back, consider their interaction with children and young people in the way that pedagogues do.” (David Bruce, South Lanarkshire Council)*

*“Pedagogues are trained to think about what’s happening in a reflective manner, using a “helicopter view” in helping to build up the child in a holistic way...” (Jennifer Davidson, SIRCC)*  
*“The pedagogues’ focus on developing social skills in children appeared to rely on the development of pedagogues’ own*

**Pedagogues are trained to focus on relationships and on valuing the time spent with children.**

emotional intelligence. They needed to have developed skills in understanding themselves as well as, and in order to, understand those they worked with.

*“I saw this put into practice in the forest kindergarten, where children were clearly encouraged to be independent (understanding risks, lighting fires, climbing trees, recognising themselves when they were hungry and needing to eat, or to be alone) but also of the need to work as a group in some activities, and to develop social relationships with peers free*

*from the ‘prying eyes’ or surveillance of adults in hidden places in the environment, often specially constructed in other kindergartens. (Jill Bourne, University of Strathclyde)*

## Creativity and technical skills

Pedagogues need practical skills that enable them to engage people in creative and cultural activities designed to enhance their overall development and wellbeing. Delegates saw pedagogues facilitating the following learning experiences:

- Making bread over an open fire
- Caring for animals
- Wood, art and craft work
- Dressing up
- Building dens and shelters
- Group discussion
- Ball games

## Professional values and framework

Pedagogues’ training provides them with an invaluable professional framework, which enables them to make autonomous decisions in a variety of different situations.

*“... The pedagogy training provides a clear framework to help them with their professional / personal / private boundaries. They use this framework to create a level of professionalism, which still retains their authentic personal involvement in their relationships with the children. (Jennifer Davidson, SIRCC)*

**Perhaps the most powerful testament to pedagogues’ professional skills is in delegates’ observations of the children themselves.**

## Understanding the Danish pedagogue

*“I have seen happy, healthy children. They seem relaxed, confident individuals. They seem happy to be there.”* (David Bruce, South Lanarkshire Council)

*“A strong feeling is conveyed that adults ‘want’ to be there and enjoy their role, which in turn is then reflected in the children and young people’s disposition - being happy and occupied.”* (Patricia Walls, Kibble)

*“At each and every setting I encountered confident children who were comfortable with themselves and their peers. To use the terms of Curriculum for Excellence, they were confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens and successful learners.”* (Peter Diamond, Orkney Islands Council and ADES)

**Pedagogues are qualified to work in a range of settings with people 0-100. The majority however, work in early childhood education and care, including out-of-school care. Pedagogues are the lead personnel in this area and are also used, rather than qualified teachers, to teach kindergarten classes in schools.**

### Training

#### Pedagogues:

Minimum three-and-a-half years at university and a “Professionsbachelor som pædagog” – Bachelor in Social Education.

#### Assistant pedagogues:

No minimum qualification. Local authorities provide professional development training.

#### Managers:

With the exception of family day care, all early childhood education and care centres have a manager and deputy manager. Both must be fully qualified pedagogues with experience. The local authority in Aarhus is considering introducing a mandate that would ensure all managers have an additional qualification in public administration.

### Work conditions and salary

Pedagogues and pedagogue assistants work 37 hours a week and are entitled to paid holidays, sick pay and parental and childcare leave. Almost all pedagogues are members of the National Federation of Early Childhood

Teachers and Youth Educators (BUPL). Pedagogue assistants are organised by the national trade union FOA – Trade and Labour.

### Average monthly wage before tax in December 2009

Pedagogues:	£3,437*
Social pedagogues* <sup>1</sup> :	£3,643*
Teachers:	£4,044*
Social workers:	£3,997*

\*higher levels of tax and living costs should be taken into account if making a direct comparison to UK wages.

\*<sup>1</sup> Social pedagogues is the title given to those pedagogues who work in residential care homes (like Kilen, page 18), with children and adults who have mental and physical disabilities, and who work with young people/adults age 18+. They are organised by a separate union – Socialpædagogerne.

Assistant pedagogue positions are popular because the work is relatively well-paid for unskilled workers.



# Studying to become a pedagogue

All qualified pedagogues are educated to degree-level. Here we focus on the very broad initial qualification which awards Danish pedagogues their professional title 'Professionsbachelor som pædagog'.

[This course] has certainly given me food for thought for Scotland when considering how we can develop courses

Qualified pedagogues must have completed three-and-a-half years of university education studying pedagogy courses approved by the Danish Ministry of Education. On completion they are awarded the title "Professionsbachelor som pædagog" – Bachelor in Social Education, and are qualified to work with people from 0-100 years of age in settings across education, social services and health. Nearly two-thirds of

Denmark's pedagogues work with children under 10 years of age.

All courses must follow guidelines set by the Danish Government, which require coverage of the following:

## Educational theory

Aims to provide students with a sound understanding of their role in developing the whole person – mind, body, emotion, creativity, history and social identity. This broad module covers pedagogical theory and practice within psychology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy and health sciences. It is an integral part of all modules throughout the programme.

## Danish, culture and communication

Explores the role of culture, language and other forms of communication in personal development and the formation of relationships. Fully qualified pedagogues are expected to be able to support people's language development and other forms of communication and expression, and communicate clearly with service users, parents and the wider family, colleagues, and authorities.

*"As a pedagogue, you have to be conscious all the time of what language is, and how it is used to communicate. It is one of our tools."* (Bob White, pedagogue)

## The individual and society

Explores interaction between the individual, groups and wider society. Focuses on the institutional and societal context in which pedagogical work takes place and how to work professionally with users' families, colleagues and within the framework of local, national, and international

conventions and legislation.

One of the following, chosen by the student

## Health, body and movement

The role of physical activities such as play, movement, dance and sport in people's development and overall wellbeing. Students study biology, physiology and nutrition as well as exploring how they can inspire and motivate participation in physical activities to promote personal development, health and wellbeing. This covers motivating people on a personal, one-to-one level, in small groups, and also through the implementation of large-scale programmes and campaigns.

## Expression, music and drama

The use of music, drama and other forms of creative expression in people's development and overall wellbeing.

## Crafts, nature and technology

The use of crafts, the natural environment and technology to support people's development and overall wellbeing. This is a diverse module in which students study how to use craft materials in a creative way, natural sciences such as zoology, botany and ecology and how to promote learning experiences outdoors and the use of new technology in learning.

## Practice-based training

One unpaid placement in the first year of 47 six-hour days, and two 6-month placements in the second and third years of 32.5 hours per week with 10 study days. At least one placement must involve close cooperation with a professional from another relevant profession, such as education or social work, and at least one must be directly relevant to the student's chosen specialist subject below. Students have a series of personal goals to achieve during the course of each placement, which are assessed by the hosting centre.

*"I'm half-way through my 6-month placement. I have a series of goals that I would like to achieve and have been assigned a mentor to help me achieve them. One of my goals is to communicate more clearly with children. I'm trying a range of different things while I am here and we're monitoring how well they work."*  
(Anne Julie Holm, 24, pedagogue student on placement)

# Studying to become a pedagogue

Practice and theory in one of the following specialist subjects:

## Children and young people

Covers a range of areas including child development with a focus on the whole child; inclusion and exclusion; additional support needs; identifying children at risk; transitions; co-operation with parents, the wider family, colleagues and other professionals; prevention and intervention; and children's rights.

## People with physical and learning disabilities

As above, with a particular focus on promoting the self-development and life chances of this group, and on very specific issues such as significant legislation and compensation.

## People with social and behavioural difficulties

As above, with a particular focus very specific issues such as significant legislation, the effects of abuse, psychological illness, grief, and family crisis.

## Interprofessionalism (collaboration with other professions)

Aims to ensure a qualified pedagogue is equipped with the knowledge and skills of their own and other professions to work collaboratively. The module covers core competencies, values and responsibilities, relevant legislation including confidentiality and the obligation to inform and disseminate information, reflection and evaluation of collaborative work and how it could be developed. At least one placement must involve working closely with another professional and be followed by a written report.

A Bachelor project evaluated by an oral presentation. The project can be carried out individually or as a group.

Some university courses offer special courses to introduce ethnic minorities to pedagogy studies.

## Source: Ministerial order on study programme for Bachelor in Social Education

*"I was struck by the emphasis in this course on developing students' abilities in building strong relationships which focus on the 'good in every child' and in communicating with not only children but families and colleagues from right across the workforce. It has certainly given me food for thought for Scotland when considering how we can develop courses. For example, it can inform what we are doing here but also it would be good to have opportunities to explore this qualification ourselves - through pilots for example. (Dorothy Johnson, University Of The West of Scotland)*

## VIA University College

VIA University College (VIA – Jydsk Aarhus) is providing one of the 26 pedagogy courses in Denmark this year. It covers the initial education of pedagogues in the middle peninsula, Jutland, and takes in 400 students per year, 25 per cent of whom are male. As well as traditional class and lecture rooms, VIA has a music room, sports room, art room and photography room where students learn how to promote the aesthetic component of pedagogy effectively.



Via University College



Facilities for student pedagogues

# Case studies

## Integrated day-care

All children in Denmark have the right to attend a day-care facility from 26 weeks until formal schooling starts at the age of 6. Denmark has the highest rate in Europe of full-time nursery enrolment for children aged 0 - 3, at 66 per cent. Two-thirds are local authority run and one third are independent run in association with local authorities. Parents' contributions must not exceed 25 per cent of the cost.

### Vestergård Øst, Aarhus

In this centre there are 12 children age 0 – 3 and 40 children age 3 – 6, with 13 staff, seven of whom are fully qualified pedagogues. It is open from 6:30am until 5pm.

Some activities are planned 2 or 3 months in advance and some are initiated by the children during group discussions. Much of the day is given over to free play, outside or in the 'Pude rum', a large space bathed in natural light and unfurnished apart from a collection of soft play mats. Children play in the Pude rum in mixed age groups of three to four at a time.

At the time of the visit, all of the children were playing outside, on the swing, slide, climbing frame and in the sandpit. It was a sunny day but staff said they spend time outside with the children everyday come rain or shine. There is a strong outdoor ethic in Danish pedagogy.

The children played in groups of mixed ages. One little girl of about 4 was making sandcastles with a toddler. Staff appeared to be supervising children a way that allowed space for them to play independently and take risks. Two of the older children were exhilarated seeing how high they could swing. This caught the attention of delegates who immediately noted how staff kept their distance rather than stopping the game out of fear that the children might fall. "I looked at the girl and thought how happy and full of confidence she was playing on that swing. She was pushing to go higher and higher, apparently without any fear of falling. I just couldn't imagine seeing this particular scene in centres in Scotland", said Marie MacArthur (Stevenson College). This calm approach, and trust in children that enables them to develop an awareness of their own limits may be a product of the pedagogue's training. A module delivered by the Department of Social Education, VIA University College, Aarhus, describes how the Danish pedagogical approach to children and young people "embodies an ideal of a free and competent individual".

### Pedagogues close-up

Lars Christoffersen, assistant pedagogue

*"I have been here for three years as an assistant pedagogue and I love it. I used to be a salesman, but my eyesight started to go and I had to look for something that I was able to do. Now I only have very limited vision. Obviously there are some things that I can't manage here, but overall I am very involved with the children, playing with them, talking, making music, drama, craft work, storytelling and talking in groups. We're outside everyday. I think I will continue to do this work."*



Assistant pedagogue Lars Christoffersen plays with children in the sandpit

## Case studies

### Nature kindergarten, Aarhus

The “little house”, a small wooden hut, is set on the edge of a forest just a few metres away from a residential street in Aarhus. Children only spend an hour there each day getting changed into their outdoor clothing (the children must learn to dress themselves) before setting off on a 10-minute walk, or 5-minute bike ride, deeper into the woods to a clearing they call “the earth”. It has become their very own outdoor adventure playground.

Whatever the weather (unless it is particularly extreme), the children and staff spend the rest of the day here. In extreme weather small groups of children rotate, spending one hour at a time outside.

In the centre of the clearing is a camp fire and log seating. The only shelter is a very small brick building with wooden seating, used for storytelling during the winter months. Sculptures and dens made out of a variety of natural materials by the children are scattered around the clearing along with bikes and buckets and spades. A small group of children are playing ball games with a member of staff on an adjacent grassy area. The majority of the children are engaged

in free play – climbing a tree, digging, and in one of their dens. Two children were lying on a tree hammock with a member of staff chatting and pointing at the sky.

The aim of this nature kindergarten is not, as one pedagogue explained, to “create an army of biologists”, but to “nurture in the child a love and respect for nature as well as develop self-confidence and resilience”. She explained that, by virtue of being outside in the woods all day, most of the activities are inspired by nature. However, by observing and drawing creatures and plants, looking at the clouds and stars, building dens, climbing trees, cooking on an open fire and eating when they are hungry rather than at set meal times, the children are developing valuable skills that will stand them in good stead for the future.

Delegates noted the same calm, relaxed approach to supervision here that they observed in the first daycare centre, allowing children, for example, to climb trees and toast their own bread over the fire when they felt hungry.

There are 19 children aged 3 – 6, with a child:staff ratio of 4:1. Three of the staff are fully qualified pedagogues.

### Pedagogues close-up

#### Pia Stephensen, pedagogue

*“I have worked here as a pedagogue since it opened 16 years ago and was one of the parents involved in finding the location. My own son attended. It’s a lovely place to be with the children and our aim is for them to leave here after 3 years as independent, curious and self-confident individuals who know their own mind and body, and are creative yet able to focus on tasks in readiness for school.”*

#### Mathias Skov Rahbaek, 22, assistant pedagogue

*“I am working here on a temporary basis because I am saving up to go to drama school. I’d like to pursue an acting career on stage or television. I’m quite confident that I’ll be successful, but if not then long-term I would consider a career as a pedagogue, maybe specialising in theatre and drama with young people. This is a great fun place to work in the meantime.”*



Mathias Skov Rahbaek at work in a nature kindergarten

## Case studies

### Martha Hjemmet, Copenhagen

Martha Hjemmet (Martha's home) is an integrated nursery and daycare centre in an area of high social deprivation, with a high number of ethnic minority groups. It is open from 6am until 5pm Monday to Friday. Staff and children represent 25 different ethnic backgrounds. Many of the children who attend have complex needs as a result of difficult upbringings and been referred by the authorities.

The centre dates back to 1885, when it opened as a childcare institution. In 2007, it received government funding for complete renovation and refurbishment. The new manager, Anna Fisker, took this opportunity to "radically modernise" not only the aesthetics of the building but the centre's pedagogical approach to caring for children. One of the best examples that Anna can give of this radical modernisation is the recruitment of Michelin Star chef Nicolaj Longreen, as in-house cook, so that the children have access to high quality cooking experiences and food everyday that they attend.

#### Pedagogical approaches and practice

Martha Hjemmet has 10 pedagogues including Anna Fisker, caring for 59 children up to the age of 6. Central to the centre's pedagogical approach is an appreciation of each child's right to their own views and the nurturing and

development of their self-esteem, confidence and autonomy. The children and staff are considered equals, without hierarchy.

Many of the pedagogues are long-term staff and have undergone training under Anna Fisker to bring them up-to-date with modern pedagogical practice. Staff are constantly observing and monitoring each individual child's progress and use a 'narrative' approach to documentation. They "monitor complex experiences over time and a sequence of events over a number of days... to help develop a deeper understanding of the child". There is a strong focus on the child's relationships, with staff, their family and peers.

#### Food's central role in pedagogy

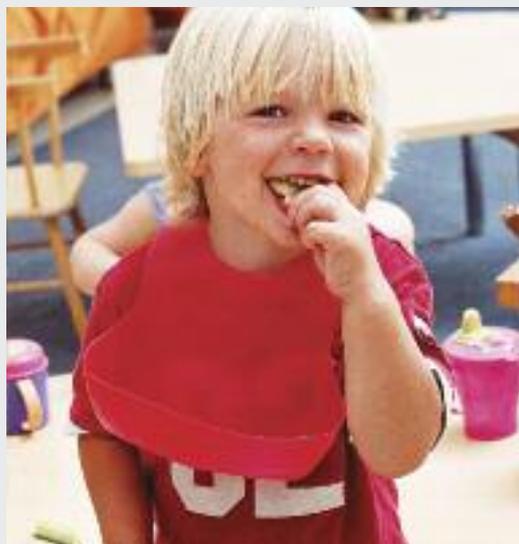
The renovation work in 2008 created a fantastic central kitchen, which produces healthy, home-cooked meals for the children every day. They have recruited a full-time, Michelin Star chef, Nicolaj Longreen, who not only cooks for the children but works with them to help increase their understanding of food and get them involved in its preparation.

The centre considers a good diet as being essential to a child's overall wellbeing. Pedagogues eat meals with the children and encourage discussion about the look, smell and taste of the food. Mealtimes are also considered to provide an important opportunity for children to develop strong



Image by Gitte Sofie Hansen

Children at Martha Hjemmet nursery and daycare centre are actively involved in preparing meals with the help of in-house Michelin Star chef Nicolaj Longreen



## Case studies

social bonds and develop their relationships. Lunchtime is referred to as a “special time of the day” when the group are spending “quality time together”.

### Work with the family

Two pedagogues have a diploma in family work and engaging the children’s families is central to Martha Hjemmet’s approach. Anna Fisker insists on getting commitment from a child’s family to work with staff by asking them to sign a contract. They meet together, pedagogues visit the child’s

home and suggest changes that a family can make to help their child if they are experiencing difficulties.

The centre also tries to ensure families feel involved using a relaxed and informal approach. For example, last year on the Queen’s birthday, a group of parents with some of the pedagogues went into the centre of Copenhagen to take part in the celebrations. When they returned they shared a mealtime with the children and the staff and talked about their adventures.

## Kindergarten classes in schools

Pedagogues are qualified to teach children in the now compulsory kindergarten class in schools, which children attend from the age of 6, and are often very involved in easing the transition from the kindergarten class in the first year of primary, working closely with their new teacher.

### Hellig Kors Skole, Copenhagen

Pedagogues are key members of staff at Hellig Kors Skole, a Copenhagen kindergarten class for children aged 5 – 7 in a school where 80–85 per cent of children are from ethnic minority groups. Each of the three kindergarten classes are led by pedagogues, with an additional pedagogue employed because of the diversity of the school.

“The strength of relationships was apparent as children played together,” commented Peter Diamond. “Their confidence was noticeable.”

Hannah Jorgensen has been in the profession for 25 years and spent 12 years working with young people and adults aged 14–25. She brings experience of working inclusively with children from a diverse range of backgrounds, reflected



Drawing pictures at Hellig Kors Skole



“The strength of relationships was apparent as children played together”

## Case studies

in her strong emphasis on developing children's relationships and making use of the arts.

The school has additional resources to allow for a more balanced ethnic mix and has worked very successfully to

assist in this through raising its profile among feeder kindergartens and the wider community through networking, and activities such as staging a theatre production, organising outings with the children and holding open days.

### Out-of-school care

In Denmark, local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that there are enough 'free time' (out-of-school care) places to meet demand. Local authorities provide a subsidy grant for each child covering 70 per cent of operating costs. Parents' contributions cover the remaining 30 per cent.

Pedagogues are the main staffing group, to support children's wellbeing, development and learning through planned activities and free play. Today, 93 per cent of out-of-school care is provided in facilities attached to, or within, schools (*Skolefritidsordinger*) and are used by 86 per cent of children age 6 – 9. Facilities separate from schools (*Fritidshjem*) have declined over recent years and now account for just 7 per cent.

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#### Tilst School free time facility (*Skolefritidsordinger*), Aarhus

Tilst School, a large school with 832 pupils, has an out-of-school care facility within the main building. Of the school's 120 staff, 32 are qualified pedagogues with four of those teaching the kindergarten classes. Each class is assigned a pedagogue who takes on a similar role to the UK's classroom assistant. They move over to their out-of-school care role

when the formal school day ends.

The pedagogues also work during school holiday periods delivering holiday clubs. They are contracted to work 37 hours per week throughout the year with holiday entitlement.

Unlike most out-of-school care facilities attached to schools in the UK, this one has its own rooms and resources. Despite



Hard at work at Skolefritidsordinger Skraenten



Children have a responsibility to look after the animals at Skolefritidsordinger Skraenten

## Case studies

this however, there are still concerns among the pedagogues here that the school, with its own distinct methods and values, is too close for comfort.

Jacob Christensen, a pedagogue, said: "Freetime facilities are being located in schools more and more because it is considered more efficient. One of the effects is that pedagogues and teachers are working more and more closely together, organising trips and activities. This is positive, but there is a negative side. Pedagogues often feel that school/teachers are given preference when decisions are made, and as professionals we have a very different ethos and approach in our work with children. I also believe it is better for the children, once they have finished formal schooling, to leave the building and go somewhere completely different. That was important for me as a child."

### SFO Skraenten (Skoefritidsordinger), Aarhus

SFO Skraenten is an out-of-school care facility located separately, from the schools it serves. It caters for 90 children between the ages of 6 and 12 and has a generous outdoor area where they spend most of their time. Children have use of indoor facilities whenever they choose, except for a large open-plan room upstairs, which is only opened during the winter months.

Like the nature kindergarten (page 13), the central focus is an open fire, where children are making flatbreads from

scratch and eating them spread with a tomato sauce. A small group of children are sitting at a picnic table doing craft work with a pedagogue. There is an impressive multi-level wooden climbing frame. But what sets this facility apart are the animals – some wandering free, others in enclosures and cages. Bob White, a pedagogue for almost 20 years, explains that caring for the animals is a central feature of this facility's pedagogical approach. On joining, each child is given one animal to take responsibility for. One little girl is carefully pushing her rabbit around in a wheelbarrow full of straw, another is carrying a very young kid, some are feeding the sheep and ponies and others are cleaning out hutches.

SFO Skraenten is in an area with a relatively high number of immigrants, many of whom have additional needs. Some are from volatile regions and have experienced trauma. Bob White feels the therapeutic effect of looking after the animals is particularly helpful for those children who have not experienced formal schooling before, and for those who are struggling with the Danish language. "Pedagogues who come to work here need to have a very wide range of experience. They need experience working with children and young people who have a range of behavioural problems. Of course they need to know something about caring for animals, but also knowledge of a trade is helpful. One of the assistant pedagogues for example, is 70-years-old and a carpenter by trade. Our children are learning how to chop wood and use a screw driver – we get our hands dirty here."

### Pedagogues close-up Bob White, pedagogue

*"I came to live in Denmark from Britain in 1976 looking for work as a bricklayer. In the late 1980s, when building became too difficult for me physically I looked for a career change. I worked as an assistant pedagogue with adults who had drug and alcohol problems, and then started my degree to become a fully qualified pedagogue. I was attracted by the professional autonomy that pedagogues have, and by the higher salary.*

*"I value my qualification enormously. I feel it enables me to separate my own personal views from my work. I can stand back and analyse children's behaviour with confidence, then intervene if I believe it is necessary. I can create*



*opportunities for children. For example, if two children are not getting on I will devise a strategy to help them like asking them to take the pony for a walk together, one riding and one leading.*

*"My only sadness is that I feel changes are happening that make it more difficult to be a pedagogue – more rules from authorities, a greater emphasis on planning to achieve certain outcomes and a squeeze on resources. I think the term is 'schoolification'. I have a great memory of sitting on the roof playing cards with a group of older children until*

*the early hours one summer. I just wouldn't be allowed to do that now. The relaxed approach of Danish pedagogues is steeped in history. We respond to the moment, but that is becoming more difficult."*

# Case studies

## Residential care

Pedagogy is the main discipline underpinning residential care work with children and young people in Denmark. Pedagogues help provide a unified, coherent and holistic approach to working in residential care. The aim is to achieve the integration of disadvantaged young people into the wider society in which they live. The number of Danish children in care who go on to higher education (60 per cent compared to 6 per cent in Scotland) is testament to their commitment in this area.

### Kilen Children's Home, Copenhagen

Kilen is a home that provides for seven children and young people for their lifespan through to adulthood, caring for children anywhere from the age of 2 up to 23-years-old. Its aim is to be the sole placement for the child until they leave care.

Kilen was first established 30 years ago in response to a family of eight children who needed care. The local authority's commitment to keeping siblings together was the impetus for its opening.

All staff are fully qualified pedagogues. Unusually, even the housekeeper who shops, bakes and prepares meals is pedagogy-trained. Most have worked at Kilen for a number of years. The newest member of staff joined 3 years ago and the longest serving has been there 17 years. Delegates felt the structure of the home and longevity of the staff supported an impressive level of stability and continuity that would surely have an important impact on young people's education, future prospects, self worth and future relationships. It is not unusual for young people who move out at the age of 18 or 19 to return regularly for support and advice. One young man moved out 18 months ago but still visits every day and goes on holiday with the group.

The home itself looks and feels like a real home. It is in very good condition, tastefully and carefully decorated with little

sign of wear. Staff place a high value on what they call the "essence" of a home which they reflect in the domestic atmosphere, and in the individualised bedrooms.

Their approach to the children's lives, friendships and community involvement creates a genuine 'home' for the children and young people. For example the young people regularly have friends over (even for sleepovers), they participate in the neighbourhood ball games and other activities and take annual ski trips and other holidays together.

The practitioners have a clear understanding and unwavering commitment to the children and young people maintaining connections and developing relationships with their parents. This was not with the expectation of the children returning home, but rather in appreciation of the important role of parents in children's lives.

Staff have regular supervision for 90 minutes every 6 – 8 weeks in which the supervisee brings key issues and has the opportunity to talk through personal values and practice issues.

Staff of the home have team meetings of 5 hours every 2 weeks and twice a year they meet for 2 days/ 1 overnight. The staff across the whole organisation meet once per year for one overnight/ 2 days. They also participate in professional development training days together.



Staff place high value on what they call the "essence" of home



Circus antics at Cirkus Tvaers

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### Youth service **Cirkus Tvaers, Aarhus**

Cirkus Tvaers is a free youth service facility with a difference, in an area with a high concentration of immigrant families. Children attend on a drop-in basis.

The service was founded 25 years ago by Joop Poalman, a pedagogue with a passion for the circus. At the time he was working with immigrants from Lebanon and believed in the circus as a powerful cultural and social tool for helping them overcome trauma and develop a variety of useful skills.

The doorway to Circus Tvaers looks like the entrance to a circus tent and the interior is brightly coloured, with a ground-level stage as the central focus. The walls are covered in photographs and newspaper cuttings of shows they have put on over the years. Two trapeze swings hang from the ceiling and the floor is scattered with circus equipment – a unicycle, stilts, plate spinning sets, hoops and juggling balls. One little girl takes delight in showing off her trapeze skills and another her impressive skills on the unicycle. A small number of older children are sitting chatting at the side but put on a dance show for delegates before they leave.

The centre's manager is a fully qualified pedagogue. Most other staff have had pedagogy training provided by the local authority. They are all circus enthusiasts who bring different skills to the mix and enable Cirkus Tvaers to put on two shows per month. Casper is a musician, Karen makes costumes, Maria is a trapeze artist who comes once a week and Astrid is an all-rounder who joined a circus at the age of 10. Richard Elbaz, who used to work in the theatre in France,

### Family therapy **Familieskolen i Tilst, Aarhus**

The 'Familieskolen i Tilst is one of two family therapy programmes based in two of Aarhus's largest schools, which serve 14 local schools in and around Aarhus.

*Familieskolen i Tilst* delivers intensive therapy over a 3-month period for children and their families who are presenting behavioural and emotional difficulties and are not engaging with mainstream education. Most have a very poor attendance record at school and some are at risk of being moved away from their families. The aim is to find solutions, with the help of the child's family, which will lead to improvements in their attendance, behaviour and academic attainment. Like Scotland, the focus in Denmark is on creating inclusive schools, which cater for the needs of all children. At the end of the 3-month intensive programme the children are assessed. Ongoing, though less intensive support can be provided with help from key professionals such as the child's classroom teacher and other pedagogues working in the school.

*Familieskolen i Tilst* is staffed by a team of four - two pedagogues and two teachers. The other family programme is



On the trapeze at Cirkus Tvaers

said all staff are committed to continuing Joop's legacy following his recent death. "We don't set out to create a professional circus, we set out to make it a fun place to be and bring out the best in the children who come here."

Cirkus Tvaers' leader is currently abroad in Syria helping to set up a circus school, part of a project supported by the Danish Center for Culture and Development and the Danish Government. Cirkus Tvaers hopes to set up an exchange programme for the children once the project is up and running.

The local authority provides Cirkus Tvaers with the building and funding to cover the equivalent of 3.5 pedagogues. Any additional cost has to be covered through fundraising.

staffed by social workers working alongside pedagogues. All have additional specialist training in family therapy techniques.

Although based in a school, *Familieskolen i Tilst* is funded by Aarhus' social care division. Family attendance tends to be quite high because carers are paid a basic attendance allowance or to cover loss of earnings for its duration.

#### **Pedagogues up close**

**Jan Fog, pedagogue and family therapist**

My background is in pedagogy but I have taken additional training to specialise in family therapy. My training and experience as a pedagogue is important though because of the value it places on developing meaningful relationships. To keep children at school I have to engage their parents, and also in some cases the wider family."

# Conclusion

## Part 1: the benefits of pedagogy

Observing Danish pedagogy in action first-hand has left delegates with a deeper understanding and appreciation of its underpinning principles and values, and of the flexibility that these provide enabling them to work in a range of roles across early years, education, health and social care.

Whilst cross-cultural factors must be taken into account in any translation of international practice, it was apparent that there are many shared goals and delegates discovered within the “essence” of the pedagogue, certain benefits that could improve the children’s sector workforce and children and families’ experience of services in Scotland.

This section brings together delegates’ thoughts on some of the possible benefits of the pedagogue model for the children’s sector workforce in Scotland.

### The pedagogue’s professional status

The impact of a degree-level professional education in a wide range of roles where Scottish delegates are used to seeing a lower qualification level is profound. Delegates observed the following effects:

#### A strong professional identity

Delegates were struck by pedagogues’ strong sense of professional identity, wherever they worked. It was described by David Bruce (South Lanarkshire Council) as “a sense of belonging to something – a sense of family – largely due to pride in their education and union membership”. He felt that many of the less professional roles in Scotland are missing this, to their detriment.

There was broad agreement that a strong professional identity among the traditionally undervalued and marginalised areas of Scotland’s workforce could help to raise standards. Levels of skill and knowledge would be raised with a professional education, as would levels of esteem and confidence, which come with being considered ‘a professional’ (as long as this is reflected in working conditions and pay). Pedagogy could give a profession to areas of the workforce that are traditionally associated with unskilled work, but which are now recognised as crucial for delivering child and family services for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### Skills for a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce

Many of the skills that define a pedagogue are described in Scotland as “soft skills”. They have a responsibility to help ensure children can contribute to society in an active, responsible and constructive way. This fits with Scotland’s aspirations for a workforce which operates in a truly child-centred way, treating children as active participants in

services and recognising parents, carers and community as partners. Dorothy Johnson (University Of The West of

Scotland) was particularly struck by the value that was placed on these soft skills and felt courses in Scotland could benefit from greater emphasis on those.

As Jill Bourne (University of Strathclyde) said: “The pedagogues I met were highly articulate in explaining their focus on the social development of children – helping children to express their feelings and choices, developing self-confidence and self-esteem and building their independence. This was always set within the context of social relationships – with the pedagogue and with their peers. To do this successfully requires the pedagogue to have a degree of emotional intelligence as well as an understanding of themselves and those they work with.”

The pedagogue’s focus on meeting children’s physical and emotional needs is combined with an inclusive approach to supporting the learning of children who have a range of additional support needs. This combination was seen as particularly relevant to the realisation of aspirations set out in Scotland’s legislation for children with additional support needs.

The importance of these kind of skills is now recognised in Scotland. They are required in many jobs and this includes many with low qualification requirements and pay. David Bruce (South Lanarkshire Council) did not believe this part of the Scottish workforce would be able to articulate the importance of what they do as clearly and confidently as Danish pedagogues.

The big difference is that Danish pedagogues’ training gives them a clear framework to help decipher professional and personal boundaries. With this framework they create a level of professionalism whilst still retaining authentic personal involvement in their relationships with children.

The value that pedagogues place on these softer skills and harder-to-measure outcomes may also be reflected in their noticeably more relaxed approach and appreciation of the fact that developing meaningful relationships is not something that can be hurried.

Jennifer Davidson (SIRCC) observed how pedagogues “value the time spent with children”. She recalled how one pedagogue told her: “Building these relationships takes time, but we have the time. Time is a tool in itself.”

#### Confidence to assess risk yet allow freedom

Coming from a culture which is often described as “risk-averse”, delegates were particularly struck by the

# Conclusion

pedagogues' ability to know when to stand back and give children freedom to explore their environment by themselves, and when to intervene. Patricia Walls described how their "self-belief and professionalism" gave pedagogues the confidence "to work in a non risk-averse way with children." And Jill Bourne felt pedagogues' degree level training came through especially in their "ability to assess risks themselves... then leave children a great deal of freedom in exploring their environment themselves, to the benefit of their social and intellectual development".

## Stable services

Jennifer Davidson (SIRCC) described pedagogues' commitment to stability and continuity as "striking". During the visit to Kilen Children's Home (page 18) she met pedagogues who had worked there for between 11 and 17 years, and was told this was not unusual. She and Phil Robinson (Quarriers) believe the pedagogues' professional status, education and ongoing professional development, is an important reason for their long service, and it enables them to provide, in a very real sense, "a substitute family for children".

Phil Robinson believes that pedagogy could potentially give a very powerful new direction to residential care in Scotland. He added: "I believe that only if we give [residential care] staff their own independent, professional status backed up by a qualification specific to work with children but not social work, which has a different range of foci, will we achieve this [long-term stable care]. This seems to be the most pressing and obvious area where the adoption of a Scottish pedagogy qualification and its accreditation for residential child care could make a real difference."

## A coherent framework

The skills practiced by pedagogues are in many cases practiced in Scotland, but not within any one role. Delegates felt that a pedagogue's professional training provided them with "a coherent framework", which they use to create a level of professionalism that is not present in many comparable roles in Scotland. They are able to take a "helicopter view" – "to reflect, plan, look back, consider their interaction with children and young people".

## The flexibility of the pedagogue

During the study visit the delegates saw qualified pedagogues form the main staffing group in kindergartens, out-of-school care, residential care, and crisis intervention and preventative curative work with families. They are also known to work in a variety of health roles, youth services, sport and leisure facilities, services for elderly people, services for children and adults with disabilities and even libraries.

However, they share a common knowledge and value base

centred on the whole child – their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, moral and aesthetic development. Pedagogues pride themselves on being able to facilitate and create experiences which develop each component by having a "helicopter" view of children's lives. Delegates noted consistency and clarity in the pedagogues' articulation of this common core. This extended even to those pedagogues who considered themselves to have become "specialists" in a particular area (page 19). The common training meant that all of the professionals working in, for example, Kilen's Children's Home, were speaking the same 'language', which created a consistency of understanding and helped to set and reach goals. Pedagogues could help to fill the gaps in what is currently a fragmented workforce in Scotland, by ensuring that a large section has shared a common training, improving collaboration across services. Peter Diamond (Orkney Islands Council and ADES) described their potential as "children's services equivalent to the 'missing link'".

All delegates were struck by the flexibility of pedagogy and how it could help simplify what is a complicated system of qualifications and job roles in Scotland.

In Scotland a plethora of different educational qualifications prepare people for a plethora of different job titles and job roles where there is a huge amount of skill and knowledge overlap. One delegate listed job roles – from parenting support worker to participation officer – which could potentially be covered by a broader role similar to that of the pedagogue seen in Denmark. And Dorothy Johnson (University Of The West of Scotland) expressed concern over the strong divide between many health and social care roles and early years and play work roles "when in fact a lot of the skills are the same". She added: "The skills are contained in lots of different types of qualifications but no one qualification has them all. We need to get away from the 'bit of this and that' approach, stand back and explore how it all fits together."

Delegates from a residential care background saw the advantage of having a qualification which not only encompassed the skills required but could extend beyond residential care into other key areas such as community services for young people.

Others saw pedagogue skills as relevant to a wide range of staffing roles from pre-school and out-of-school care to working alongside teachers in schools. The use of pedagogues within schools was seen as particularly relevant to the rethinking of roles within schools and relationships with families and community required by Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child.

Creating a flexible professional could also be of huge value at a time when resources are limited and open up career development opportunities for people in the workforce that are not currently available.

# Conclusion

## Part II: Challenges and questions

Although delegates were inspired by what they had seen they also raised a number of challenging questions about how the benefits of Danish pedagogy might contribute to the future development of the children's sector workforce in Scotland.

Tension between regulation and the central values and ethos of pedagogy

Delegates felt that some of the most striking benefits of pedagogy – the pedagogue's value of strong and meaningful relationships, "free time" for free and creative development and trust in children to assess risk independently – might not sit comfortably with the UK system which is more focused on measurable outcomes and is notably more risk averse.

A warning of possible tensions in this area is in Danish pedagogues' wariness of recent developments in their own system (page 17). Phil Robinson (Quarriers) observed how the concept of "free time" is quite alien to the UK education system in that it allows school pupils a substantial element of supervised but undirected time within their weekly timetable. He described the effect of these new developments as "pressures towards something more akin to the UK system, whereby defined outcomes and competencies are becoming the focus of priority-setting in a way that perhaps has not been the case in the past". He noted that some pedagogues are "less than totally happy with the direction of travel in this regard".

Patricia Walls (Kibble) said Scotland is "in need of adopting an attitudinal shift to regain confidence and encouragement of creativity and appropriate risks whilst respecting basic health and safety". She believes the skill base and creativity is there but "may have been restricted due to working within the high regulatory conditions".

### Would a degree-level pedagogy qualification set the bar too high?

The benefits of a highly qualified workforce are undisputable. However, the roles for which pedagogy potentially holds most benefit do not currently require a degree level

education. There is some concern that suitable candidates would be excluded if the bar is set too high. Marie MacArthur (Stevenson College) said: "There is a place for people who are excellent practitioners but for whom a degree is not an option." For her the answer may lie in the assistant pedagogue role, with opportunities for education and professional development.

Jill Bourne (University of Strathclyde) believes that a focus on introducing any new qualification would have to be at further education level first, and move up from there.

### Would the additional cost of pedagogues be outweighed by the benefits they bring to the workforce?

Fully qualified pedagogues are professionally educated to degree level and would expect working conditions and pay which respects their status. Peter Diamond (Orkney Islands Council and ADES) asked: "Can local authorities and other employers 'afford' pedagogues? There would be a significant increase in the annual starting salary of a classroom assistant working in a school or a childcare worker on minimum wage, although for some other qualified staff there would be little or no difference." But he noted that pedagogues have the professional skills, knowledge and values to deliver services in a way that a lower qualified workforce could not.

### 'We are not working from scratch'

Pedagogy could not be introduced to Scotland without taking into account the vast experience, knowledge and skills of those who already work in the sector. "We are not creating pedagogues from scratch, there is a whole workforce out there", said David Bruce (South Lanarkshire Council). He believes passionately that prior experience and learning would have to be considered when qualifying people as pedagogues.

He also pointed out that in a time of restricted resources, introducing something new would mean taking away from something that exists now. He warned of "hard decisions".

## Part III: The way forward

The benefits of pedagogy that delegates have identified fit well with workforce reform agenda in Scotland in the sense that they complement policy drivers for change such as Getting it Right for Every Child, Curriculum for Excellence, the Early Years Framework, A Force for Improvement: Workforce Response to Better Health Better Care, Equally

Well, and the National Residential Child Care Initiative, as well as the inclusive approach fostered by the additional support for learning legislation.

Delegates are unequivocal in believing that we need to learn more about the pedagogue model in Denmark and

# Conclusion

## Part III: The way forward (Continued)

elsewhere, and explore how the model might fit in a Scottish context.

### Simplifying roles and qualifications

Part I set out the potential for pedagogy to simplify what is currently a very complicated landscape of qualifications and job roles (page ?). Delegates from colleges and universities have made suggestions on how broader qualifications, which help create more flexible practitioners and professionals, might be developed:

- Build partnerships with employers to develop a pedagogue qualification and provide placements and initial employment for graduates
- Seize opportunities to explore new qualifications offered by the new minimum entry requirements, from 2014, for those working in residential child care
- Ensure any qualifications developed are part of a continuum, which encompasses access, professional development, degree and post-graduate courses
- Ensure prior learning and experience can be accredited
- Consider a review of the national occupational standards – which may need to be looked at in light of the University of Strathclyde’s report *Policy Based Functional Analysis of the Children’s Workforce*.

### International student placements

Employers on the study visit were interested and enthusiastic about accepting student pedagogue placements from Denmark, both as a means of raising awareness of the pedagogue model in Scotland and encouraging reflection on skills and roles. One delegate has had a previous, and positive, experience of this but it was also noted that Scottish pedagogy student placements would be welcome – and in some cases preferred. Vice versa, Danish institutions are keen to provide placements for Scottish students. The benefits of two-way links with international institutions can go beyond student placements. For example, a number of Nordic countries are currently exploring how to strengthen students’ understanding of other services. Their experiences could be used to help develop a ‘common core’ of understanding shared by different professionals here.

### Pilot programmes

The possibility of pilot programmes to support some of these developments was enthusiastically supported.

Interest was expressed in:

- Partnerships between employers, universities and colleges to develop and deliver a pedagogue qualification in the context of important policy frameworks such as Getting it Right for Every Child, Curriculum for Excellence and the Better Health, Better Care Action Plan framework for children and young people’s health in Scotland. The Association of Directors of Education, in discussing the report from their representative suggested the possibility of a pilot between a group of local authorities and a university or college
- Supporting cross-learning with Denmark between colleges, universities and employers in delivering a pedagogue qualification, exploring innovative uses of student placements in both developing a common core of understanding and shared values across children’s services and in making the use of placements more effective
- Using the development of the pedagogue qualification to improve the articulation between different levels of qualification providers enabling students to progress seamlessly through from schools, to colleges, to universities.

In *Working it out: developing the children’s sector workforce* (Children in Scotland, 2008), the Chair of the Scottish Funding Council, Janet Lowe, described the Scottish pedagogy model as offering “an exciting opportunity to design a suite of qualifications that will contribute to modernising the children’s sector workforce”. Creating space for the Scottish pedagogy model would, she concluded require leadership from the Scottish Government and a commitment from employers in the children’s sector that they will review their workforce and be prepared to create new job descriptions and working relationships. She noted that: “Qualifications follow jobs rather than vice versa.” The principle of qualifications following jobs was instrumental in the Scottish Funding Council’s support for the development of the healthcare support worker and assistant practitioner (HCSW&AP) with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. It was NHS Glasgow that set the type of roles they were expecting to develop as part of their workforce planning. They are also the key stakeholder in the development of an appropriate qualification with the college partners. An important area of this work is ensuring that those with the HCSW&AP qualification can, if they choose to, articulate into degree or post-graduate level training in healthcare professions.

The proposed pedagogy pilot programmes above offer an important means by which Scotland can explore whether new jobs and qualifications might be developed together.

# Working it out

help shape the future of Scotland's children's sector workforce  
Exploring the benefits of Danish pedagogy



Baking flat bread over an open fire at the out-of-school care facility Skraenten (p17)

## Additional reading

The study visit and this report are part of *Working it out* programme.

All publications relating to the programme can be ordered or downloaded from [www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce)

*Working it out: help shape the future of Scotland's children's sector workforce* newsletter

Issue 1, November 2008

Issue 2, March 2009

Issue 3, July 2009

Issue 4, November 2009

Issue 5, March 2010

*Symposium report: proposals for workforce reform, 2009*

*Working it out: developing the children's sector workforce, Children in Scotland, 2008*

*Aiming high: a professional workforce for the early years, Children in Europe, issue 15, 2008.*  
[www.childrenineurope.org/english.php](http://www.childrenineurope.org/english.php)

A Working it out report on a study visit to Denmark to examine the role, practice and education of Danish pedagogues.

visit [www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce)