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University of
Applied Sciences



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KINDknow
Kindergarten Knowledge Centre
for Systemic Research on Diversity
and Sustainable Futures



2024

Annual Report



KINDknow notes series 12, 2025

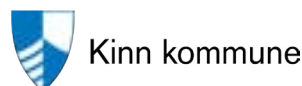
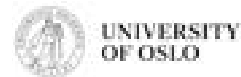


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Introduction

Olga Shangina Williams

Editor and Administrative Leader at
KINDknow



This year's annual report highlights the exceptional progress made by the KINDknow Research Centre in advancing early childhood education research and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders. It is a privilege to share a comprehensive overview of the impactful work carried out by our researchers and partners.

In 2024, KINDknow reaffirmed its commitment to research excellence, pedagogical innovation and co-creation. These values are reflected in achievements such as groundbreaking publications, keynote presentations, participation in conferences, both nationally and internationally, and the successful defence of postdoctoral theses by two of our researchers. These milestones demonstrate our dedication to bridging academic scholarship with practical applications that benefit children, educators and society at large.

Showcasing Key Achievements

This report spotlights several outreach efforts that exemplify KINDknow's commitment to co-creation and pedagogical innovation:

Educational Documentaries

- “*Ocean Portrait—Children by the North Sea*”, directed by Ferruccio Goia and produced by Sigrid Jordal Havre and Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, received two prestigious awards: first prize at the Tromsø International Educational Film Festival for “Best Pedagogical Concept” and the Award of Recognition at the EthnoKino Film Festival in Switzerland. The documentary is also nominated for an award at the Ocean City Film Festival in Maryland, USA, with results expected in March 2025.
- “*To the Moon in 1-2-3*” is an engaging documentary which addresses the vital topic of ensuring a smooth transition from home to kindergarten and explores how this can be less overwhelming for children and families.

Media Outreach

- Professor Elin Eriksen Ødegaard's article in *Spedbarnsboken* reached 57,000 families with newborns in Norway. This year, her insights on the first transition to kindergarten were also featured in *BabyverdenPodden* on YouTube.
- Podcast initiatives, such as PEDPOD by our postdoc Czarecah Tuppil Oropilla, enriched discussions on early childhood education, while BLUpodden, a platform by HVL, featured active contributions from KINDknow researchers.

Engaging Workshops and Conferences

- At the Climate Festival, KINDknow hosted the workshop *Våtere, Villere!* (Warmer, Wetter, Wilder!), inviting families to envision their hopes for a better world.

- At the Generation Festival, researchers led a session titled “*How Can Research Contribute to an Ageing-Friendly Society?*”
- The *Sansesamtaler* (Sensory Conversations) installation at VilVite brought children and families together to explore nature through sensory engagement.
- KINDknow hosted the National ECEC Research Conference on Co-creation and Research-Based Pedagogical Innovations which was attended by nearly 300 participants.

Groundbreaking Projects

- The EXPEDLAB project continues to leave a lasting impact on pedagogical practices and research approaches.
- Strengthened international partnerships through guest visits, seminars, learning tours and keynote presentations at global conferences.

Stories and Perspectives

This year, we included a special Stories section where postdoctoral and PhD candidates reflect on the question: *How do you envision your project impacting early childhood education at an international level?* Their responses provide inspiring insights into how their work contributes to global progress in the field.

Inclusion of Indigenous and Arctic Perspectives

KINDknow’s commitment to integrating Indigenous and Arctic perspectives further enriches our contributions, highlighting the interconnectedness of local and global contexts in early childhood education.

Looking Ahead

As you explore this report, you’ll discover the centre’s diverse projects, their societal relevance and our vision for the future. KINDknow is not only advancing early childhood education but also driving change aligned with the UN’s 2030 sustainability goals and Norway’s Framework Plan for kindergartens.

We invite you to delve into the stories, achievements and reflections shared within these pages.

Warm regards,
Olga Shangina Williams
Editor and Administrative Leader

Introduction from KINDknow Centre's Director

Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard

Director of KINDknow
Research Centre



Over the past year, our team at KINDknow (BARNkunne) has worked diligently to further our understanding and practice of Early Childhood Educational Research, particularly in ways that align with the Nordic model of Kindergartens, the EU missions to meet the polycrises situation and the UN's 2030 sustainability goals. We aim to comprehend children's lives, focusing on how they play, explore, grow and develop and how kindergarten pedagogy, leadership and society shape their experiences. Pedagogical innovation and fostering cultures of change are at the core of our work as a response to the mission of developing innovative leadership and tools to shape sustainable futures for our children. We highly value Open Science, sharing and translating research for public outreach. Therefore, we have taken strategic measures to increase our impact.

This year, we have published many peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters and co-edited four peer-reviewed books. We are particularly proud of two KINDknow PhD students who successfully defended their PhD theses this year – Solveig Marie Borgund (HVL) and Lea Maison (UiS) – who successfully defended their PhD theses this year.

Our research outreach has reached new heights internationally and in Norway. We were honoured to be invited to deliver keynotes at various international conferences and PhD events, including those hosted by the Committee of Early Childhood Education, the Chinese Society of Education and the Norwegian Royal Embassy in Beijing in collaboration with the Chengdu Municipality International Office and those hosted by Early Childhood Education & Family Education, in East China Normal University, Shanghai, Northeast Normal University, Changchun, June 2024. We were also invited to deliver keynotes in doctoral training programmes at institutions such as Southwest University, Shanxi Normal and University, Northeast Normal University, in China, the University of Gothenburg, the University of Limerick, the Technical University Gheorghe Asachi Iasi, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the University of Porto in Europe, contributing to talent management centres and the increased awareness of alternative career paths and transferable skills for doctoral students. With the PEDPOD cast, we explore what pedagogical innovation means for internationally well-known scholars in the ECEC field. We highlight some of these key outreach activities in this annual report.

In October, we hosted the National ECEC Research Conference on Co-creation and Research-Based Pedagogical Innovations [Samskaping og forskningsbasert pedagogisk innovasjon], which attracted nearly 300 participants. Our research insights contributed to national policy discussions and garnered international attention, including two film awards for our documentary "Ocean Portrait—Children by the North Sea".

We have also hosted PhD courses, seminars and webinars through the Research School NORCHILD [NORBARBN]. Currently, our research school has 30 PhD students, and four post-doctoral scholars enrolled from partner universities and foundations in Norway. Through the research school, we emphasise the importance of training transferable skills and the social impact of science as well as further develop research competence. We also benefit from our engagement as partners in DOCTalent4EU, where we serve as co-convenors.

We have welcomed visitors from partner institutions and international scholars worldwide, many of whom have contributed to our podcast PEDPOD by EX-PED-LAB. These visitors enrich our environment in unique ways. We were also honoured by a visit from the Minister of Education & Research, Oddmund Hoel, and the Department of kindergarten and schools at the Ministry of Education and Research. These visits boost our work on future strategy. Together with our dedicated leadership team, the KINDknow research centre offers a dynamic environment that inspires a broader community.

At the KINDknow research centre, we have expanded our knowledge and efforts in research methodology. We employ a variety of epistemologies, often combining and merging methods to achieve holistic understandings of early childhood education. Our methodologies include systematic literature reviews, ongoing Randomised Control Trial studies, continuous explorative studies, traditional surveys, text and multimodal studies, narrative enquiry, participatory action research and various experimental approaches. Our partner at the UIT – The Arctic University of Norway – provides the ECEC with valuable insights relevant to the Arctic region, Indigenous perspectives and international perspectives. Our partner at the City of Bergen and all of our project partners in local municipalities and internationally keep us aware of the research's local and global nature and value. A common feature of our research designs is the emphasis on co-creation, often incorporating workshops as part of the methodology.

Looking forward, we are excited about continuing to grow, learn, sustain and build new partnerships to positively impact society and children's lives. We are proud of our achievements, eager to continue our growth and learning journey and grateful for the opportunities we have been given. This annual report shows the diverse activities and impactful work at the KINDknow Research Centre.

Finally, I would like to remind you of a quote from Nelson Mandela:
“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

This quote emphasises the transformative power of education, aligning with our mission to make a positive impact on children's lives and society through innovative and sustainable educational practices.

*Elin Eriksen Ødegaard,
Director of KINDknow Research Centre*

Introduction from KINDknow's Chair

Christine Øye

Chair of KINDknow Research
Centre, Pro-rector for Research,
Western Norway University of
Applied Science

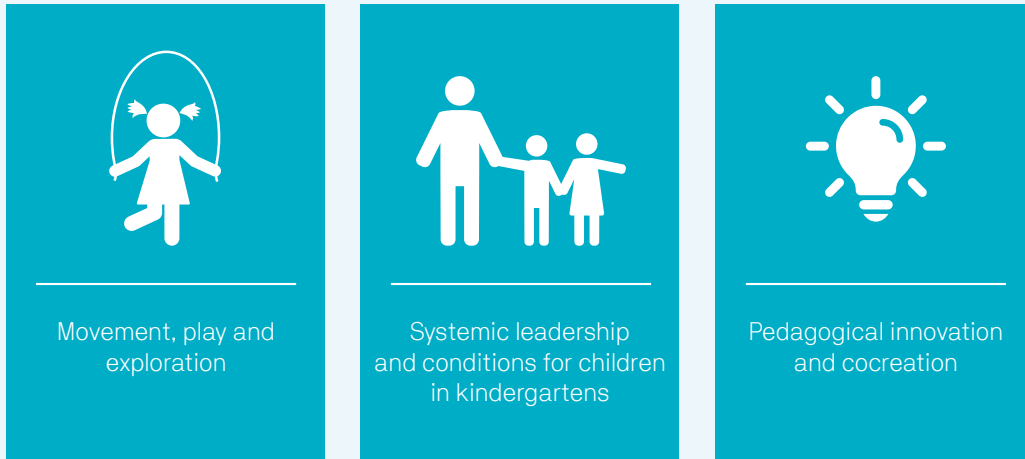


As the Chair of KINDknow, I take pride in how we bridge the gap between research excellence and practical impact in kindergartens. Our work supports HVL's strategic ambitions to integrate high-quality international research with regional development. KINDknow is at the forefront of identifying co-creation opportunities between researchers, kindergarten staff and decision-makers in the childcare sector. This form of collaboration ensures that new research is effectively implemented. By developing innovative learning methods and educational tools, we ensure that kindergartens can provide high-quality learning environments for both children and kindergarten teachers. It is precisely at the intersection of high-level international knowledge collaboration and regional partnerships with kindergarten stakeholders that KINDknow positions itself as a leading international actor in kindergarten research.

About KINDknow

Kindergarten Knowledge Center for Systemic
Research on Diversity and Sustainable Futures

Research areas



Our research meets UNESCO focus areas



Our vision and core values

Vision:

Kindergarten research for a fairer and more sustainable future for our children

Kindergarten research plays a pivotal role in shaping a fairer and more sustainable future for our children. KINDknow is at the forefront of pioneering work in the research, knowledge development and innovation aimed at promoting sustainable futures centred on the interests of children and the kindergarten.

Our community mission is to conduct outstanding research as well as promote knowledge development and innovation. We strive to be an attractive collaboration partner and a trusted source for the kindergarten sector. Through our efforts, we aim to significantly contribute to the advancement of early childhood education and care, ensuring a brighter and more equitable future for all children.

Outstanding

World-class ECEC research
Innovative and creative methodology
Building an inclusive, high-performing research community

Sustainability

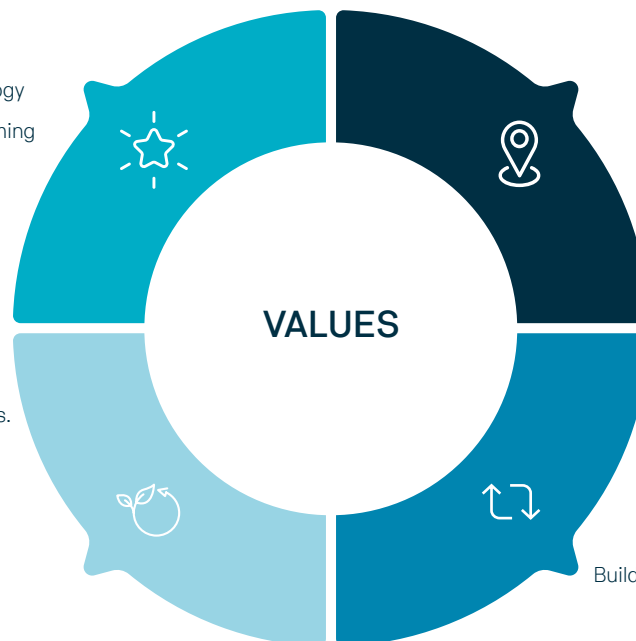
Integrating ecological, cultural, social, and economic perspectives.
Advancing sustainability in education and society.
Promoting well-being for children, families, and staff.

Glocality

Collaborating across borders and disciplines.
Championing cultural diversity.
Strengthening local, national, and international partnerships.

Co-creation and sharing

Driving innovation in co-creation and participatory research.
Elevating quality and competence in the kindergarten sector.
Building knowledge through collaboration with diverse stakeholders.

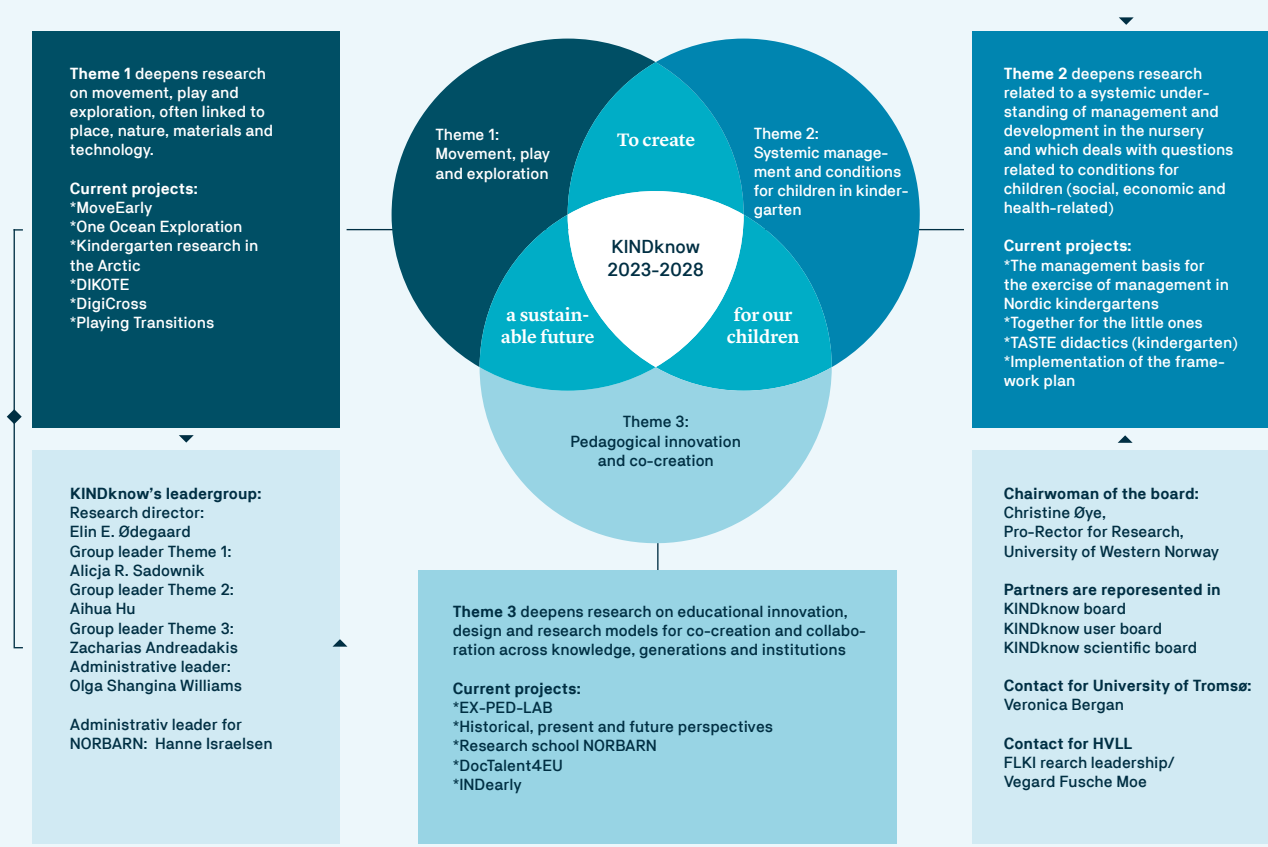


Methodological design

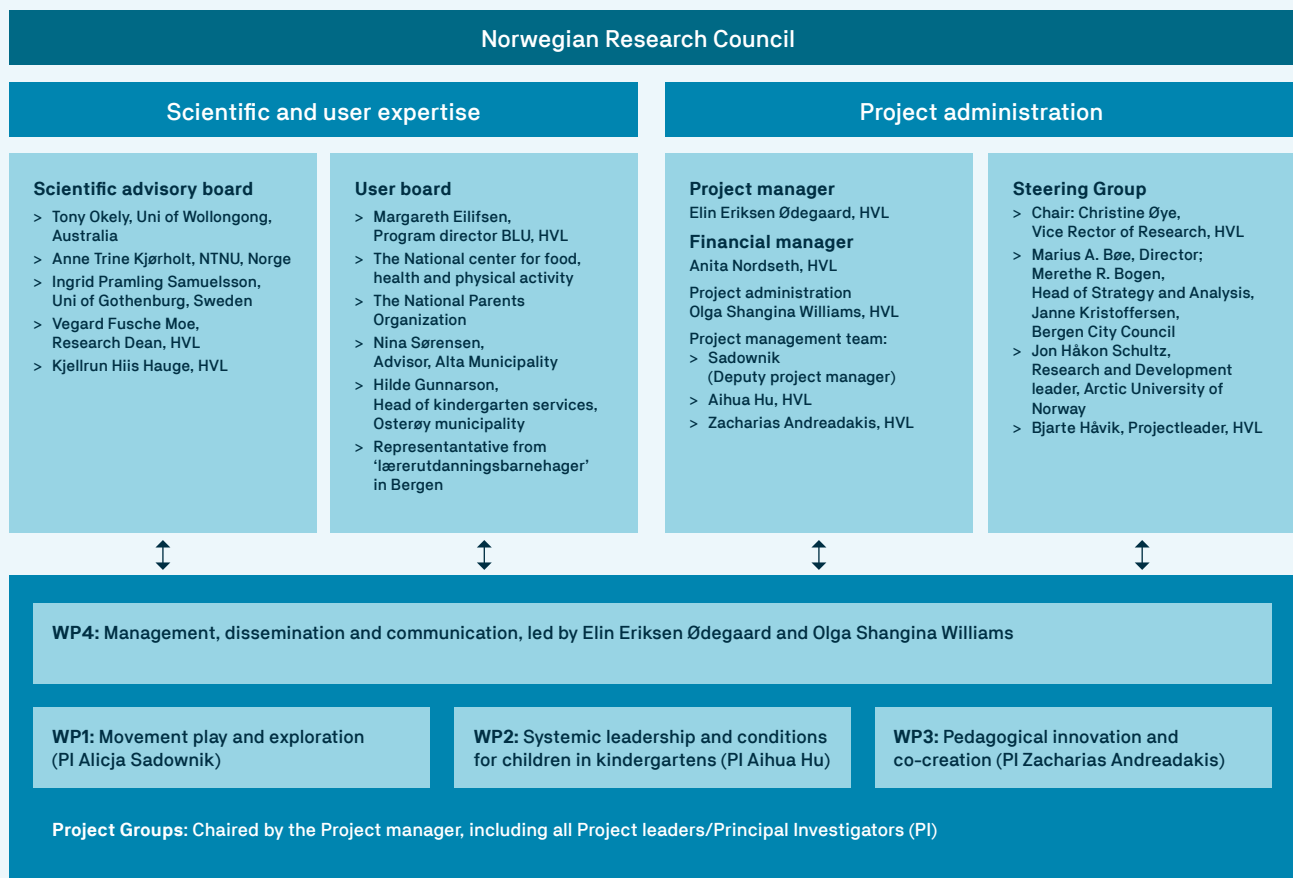
To accomplish its objectives, the centre facilitates research opportunities involving kindergartens and various partners, spanning diverse regions within Norway and internationally. Given the global emphasis on sustainability (as outlined by the UN) and its integration into Norway's new framework plan for kindergartens, it is imperative to employ new research methodologies, particularly participatory research methodologies, to inform and reshape practices effectively. At the end of 2024, we are reshaping our research areas, and we broaden our research including also economic sustainability. A new postdoc is about to join our centre to help us further develop this field of research.

The specific research projects of KINDknow research centre focus on evaluating and developing intervention studies, wherein new practices are devised and assessed collaboratively by children, families, staff and researchers. For instance, intervention projects are conducted based on values promoting sustainable futures and environmental stewardship with a focus on reimagining practices in relation to their potential for fostering equity, social justice, diversity as an asset, children's agency, cultural heritage and a sense of belonging.

Research in this vein delves into kindergarten practices to explore how to co-create educational environments that empower children to be explorative and assertive, and how children's exploration can contribute to their holistic development. Our research advances the understanding of how diversity can be leveraged as a valuable resource in kindergarten practices and in the context of kindergarten leadership.



KINDknow Organisation Design



Partners and collaborators

Our core partners

In 2023, we refined our core partnerships to focus exclusively on Bergen Municipality and The Arctic University of Norway for the new project period (2023–2028). This strategic effort aims to maximise the quality of our research by fostering close collaboration with the practice field. By concentrating on these key partners, we can strengthen our efforts in ECEC research, particularly within the unique contexts of Bergen and the Arctic.

This focused approach enables us to address region- and local-specific challenges and opportunities, advancing ECEC practices and policies tailored to these distinct geographical and cultural environments. Through this partnership model, we are dedicated to conducting impactful research that supports the growth, development and well-being of young children in these regions.

Our partner at The Arctic University of Norway (UiT) has established the affiliated centre KINDknow-UiT (https://uit.no/research/barnkunne_uit) The Arctic University of Norway which consists of 17 early childhood researchers in 2024, including one new PhD student, Karoline Jørgensen, who also has joined the research school NORBARN this spring.

The major highlight from KINDknow-UiT in 2024 is that Siri Sollied Madsen was granted the professor title. She is the first professor at the Early Childhood Teacher Education (ECTE) at UiT which is essential for the quality of the PhD- and master's programme connected to the early childhood education and care profession. She is the supervisor for two PhD candidates and is the PhD coordinator for the Department of Education at UiT. This achievement has been one of the major goals of the KINDknow partnership for UiT.



KINDknow-UiT researchers have been acknowledged for their expertise in various ways:



Maria Dardanou
Associate professor
Early Childhood Teacher
Education, UiT- The Arctic
University of Norway

Maria Dardanou has been selected as a member of the commission on systematic knowledge about digitalisation and digital competence in kindergartens and schools (2024-2030) at the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Research.



Torstein Unstad
University lecturer,
UiT- The Arctic University
of Norway

Torstein Unstad was selected as a member of the committee for the use of digital means at school [Skjermbruksutvalget] appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research. In November 2024, the committee released the report NOU-2024-20 <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/no/dokumenter/nou-2024-20/id3073644/> “The digital (in) life – Balanced upbringing in the age of screens” [Det digitale (i) livet – Balansert oppvekst i skjermenes tid»] in November 2024.



Carola Kleemann
Associate professor in
Norwegian, UiT- The Arctic
University of Norway

Carola Kleemann was invited as a guest lecturer at University of Auckland, New Zealand, and for a research stay at Caen, France, through the Norwegian University centre in Paris.



Veronica Bergan
Associate professor in
Natural science didactics,
UiT- The Arctic University
of Norway

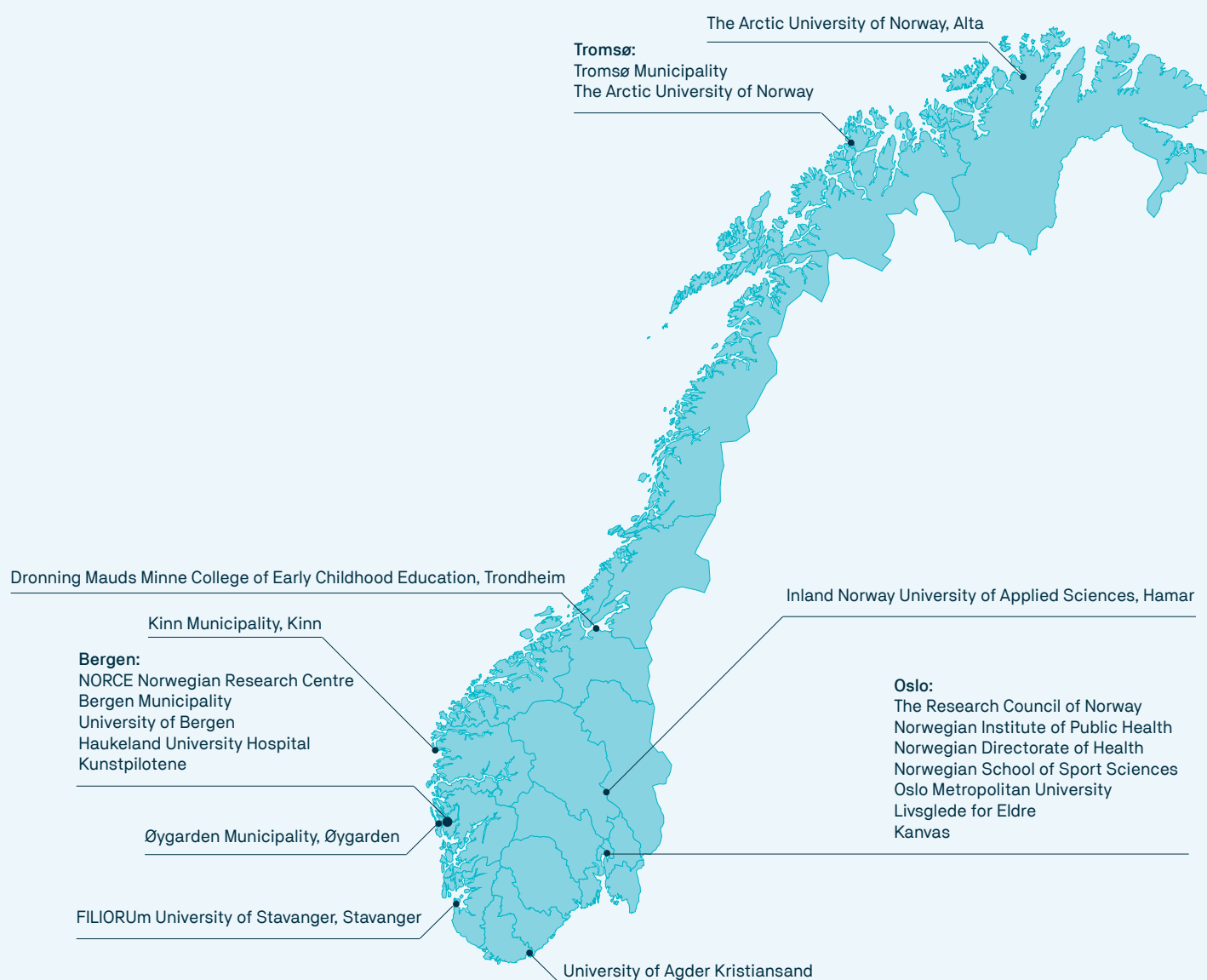
Veronica Bergan was appointed as a board member and Maria Dardanou as a deputy member at the World Organization for early Childhood Education in Norway (OMEP Norway) . This is the first time members from the northern Norway are taking part in OMEP Norway.

KINDknow UiT received funding of NOK 400,000 for a UArctic network project called “Indigenous knowledges for sustainability in early childhood education” with Veronica Bergan as the project leader. The project aims at holding two seminars during 2024-2026 in Kautokeino and Tromsø to explore indigenous and land-based knowledge for sustainability with relevance to ECEC. Other network members are from Finland, Sweden and northern USA, in addition to KINDknow researcher Marianne Presthus Heggen from the Western University of Applied Science.

Veronica Bergan and Anne Myrstad initiated a new KINDknow project in collaboration with Maritha Berger Nylund, the Western University of Applied Science campus Stord, and Ida Lervik Midtveit the Western University of Applied Science campus Bergen. The project is called “Skape sted” [Create place] and will explore what local places and spaces outdoors mean for children’s exploration, play and learning throughout the year and different weather conditions. Four kindergartens are involved in the project in Tromsø, Stord and Bergen.

In 2024, KINDknow researchers at UiT published a new webpage <https://uit.no/research/barnkunne-uit> to make the work of the centre more visible. The webpage presents the researchers, recent news and project information.

KINDknow publications from UiT in 2024 surpassed 20 publications in addition to the 2nd edition of “Bærekraft i praksis i barnehagen” [Sustainable practices in kindergarten] which added a new chapter on Sámi sustainable cultural practices in ECEC.



International Collaboration

KINDknow remains committed to international collaboration and building strong partnerships with a diverse range of renowned institutions across the globe. Our network includes leading universities in the Southern Hemisphere, such as the University of Wollongong and Monash University in Australia as well as the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. These partnerships strengthen our research and exchange opportunities in innovative early childhood practices.

In Asia, we maintain fruitful collaborations with Beijing Normal University, East China Normal University and the Beijing Institute of Education in China, working closely with some of the most prominent educational research centres in this dynamic region.

Across Europe, our collaborations span Aarhus University in Copenhagen, DK Kolding, and VIA University College in Denmark, Sapienza University of Rome in Italy, Gothenburg University in Sweden and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece. These partnerships reflect KINDknow's robust engagement with diverse European educational traditions and research methodologies.

In addition, our collaboration with OMEP, a global organisation dedicated to early childhood education, and Towson University in the United States highlights our commitment to fostering transatlantic academic exchange.

By leveraging this extensive international network, KINDknow benefits from a wide range of geographical and cultural perspectives that enhance our research and innovation in early childhood education and care. These partnerships position us to tackle global educational challenges and advance practices that promote the well-being of children and educators worldwide.

For further details on our growing international engagement, please refer to the dedicated chapter on international collaboration.



Highlights

In this issue, we would like to highlight the most exciting projects, cooperations and successful media outreach of the KINDknow Centre in the field of cocreation, pedagogical innovation and international cooperation and outreach.

Our media outreach includes educational documentaries “*Ocean Portrait—Children by the North Sea*” that have received two prestigious awards, and “*To the moon in 1-2-3*”. Creation of the PEDpod podcast and participating in the kindergarten knowledge podcast BLUpodden, produced at our University. KINDknow has also made itself visible by participating in the research and knowledge sharing events such as Climate festival (Klimafestivalen), Sensory conversation installation in VilVite Science Senter and Generation festival (Aldringsfestivalen). Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard annually participates in writing chapters for SPEDBARNBOKEN, a book that is distributed to 57,00 families with newborn babies on the topic of the first transition to kindergarten [Barnehage – barnas sted for lek og læring]. This article can also be found as a podcast in BABYVERDEN-PODDEN on YouTube.

In 2024, KINDknow hosted the National ECEC Research Conference on Co-creation and Research-Based Pedagogical Innovations [Samskaping og forskningsbasert pedagogisk innovasjon]. The conference was successfully hosted, drawing nearly 300 participants. The event showcased impactful research that has influenced national policy discussions and captured international attention. We are very proud of one of our most successful projects, EXPEDLAB, which is a groundbreaking initiative that finished its last year in 2025, leaving a lasting impact on pedagogical practices and research approaches.

This year, KINDknow had many successful engagements with overseas partners. We have been working on strengthening our partnerships with global institutions that contributed to fostering knowledge exchange and enhancing the centre’s contributions to early childhood education on a global scale.

Educational documentaries

Education documentary

“Ocean Portrait—Children by the North”.

KINDknow’s documentary “Ocean Portrait—Children by the North Sea”, directed by Ferruccio Goia and produced by Sigrid Jordal Havre, MedieLab, Elin Eriksen Ødegaard from KINDknow, in collaboration with Kunstpilotene, André Steenbuch Marandon & Annette Marandon.

Award for Best pedagogical concept where film is used.



In the picture: Kjartan Lerøy Grønhaug, Ferruccio Goia, Sigrid Jordal Havre, Elin Eriksen Ødegaard.
Photo: Result, UiT- the Arctic University of Norway

The film was screened at the following institutions:

- Western University of Applied Science, One Ocean week, April 2023;
- Western University of Applied Science 75 +5 years jubilee of Kindergarten teachers training and KINDknow research centre, 2023;
- Conference Sustaining, knowing and ‘living’ the Blue held at Britannia Hotel; NTNU, June 2023;
- The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø, TREFF Educational Film festival, March 2024;
- Cultural centre at Øygarden municipality, Øygarden, May 2024;
- East China Normal University, Shanghai, China, June 2024;
- Northeast Normal University, Changchun, China, June 2024;
- Southwest University, Chongqing, China, June 2024;
- Bern, Switzerland, EthnoKino Film Festival. September 2024;
- East China Normal University, Shanghai, China, September 2024;
- Sallis Benney Theatre, Grand Parade building, University of Brighton, Brighton, September 2024.

The film was also selected for public screenings in Mexico City, Marrakesh and several academic and cultural institutions:

- 2024 Annual Conference of Early Childhood Education & 5th Academic Forum on Quality Evaluation and Promotion of Early Childhood Education, East China Normal University, Shanghai in June 2024
- Early Childhood Education & Family Education, Northeast Normal University, Chongqing, June 2024
- Early Childhood Education & Family Education, Southwest University, Chongqing, June 2024
- Early Childhood Education & Family Education, Shanxi Normal University, Xi’an, June 2024
- European Early Childhood Educational Research Association in August. It was shown in Sallis Benney Theatre, Grand Parade building, University of Brighton, Brighton, September 2024
- Cultural Centre of Øygarden Municipality, Øygarden, May 2024

“Ocean Portrait—Children by the North” received significant recognition, earning two prestigious film awards and gained further nominations. It won first prize at the Tromsø International Educational Film Festival for “The best pedagogical concept where film is used”. The jury acknowledged that the film is an outstanding example of the pedagogical concept of ‘Collaborative Exploration’. It honours the scientific work of Professor Elin Eriksen Ødegaard and her team, which have published extensively on this concept. The film translates how ‘collaborative exploration’ is done through an Arts and Sustainability project led by Kunstpilotene. The film follows children, artists, teachers and researchers through a six-week project about giving awareness to children’s expression and voice, the local seascape as well as the global oceans we share, and it covers nature disruptions as well as offers hope for the future. The filmmaker Ferruccio Goia used the aesthetic form of visual anthropology, and original film music was made by Kjartan Lerøy Grønhaug.

The film received the Award of Recognition in the category of ‘Hope for the Future’ at the international EthnoKino Filmfestival in Bern, Switzerland. In 2024, it was nominated for a prize at the upcoming Ocean City Film Festival, Maryland, USA. Notification will be given in March 2025.



Kjartan Lerøy Grønhaug, Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, Ferruccio Goia.
Photo: Sigrid Jordal Havre

Educational documentary “To the Moon in 1-2-3”: Rethinking the Transition from Home to Kindergarten



What needs to be done to ensure a smooth transition from home to kindergarten that feels less like a “moon landing” and that supports mental well-being and respects the rights of the child? The documentarist Kine Storejorde, after her first encounter with kindergarten as a parent, sparked a deep passion for exploring the adaptation period in kindergartens and the views on children that underpin how adults meet them. She began to question why a heartbreaking farewell, followed with weeks of hysterical crying, had in some kindergartens become normalised and seen as healthy. These reflections formed the foundation for her documentary film, “To the Moon in 1-2-3”. Made together with KINDknow with the participation of our researcher Dr Alicja Renata Sadownik.

The documentary places the child’s perspective at the centre, exploring different adaptation models in Norway and Denmark during the early days of kindergarten and the daily routines that follow. It follows children’s experi-

ences, highlighting how differently the various adaptation models relate to the children’s attachment to the primary caregiver and how it shapes the practices.

Throughout the film, Professor Ole Henrik Hansen and Dr Alicja R. Sadownik together with kindergarten owners and practitioners reflect on children’s inner lives and needs offering critical insights into what needs to change to ensure a smoother transition that respects children’s rights and supports early democratic experiences.

“To the Moon in 1-2-3” raises essential questions about the values underpinning home-kindergarten transition and the long-term effects on children’s well-being. The film is a must-see for anyone invested in early childhood education, offering a powerful lens into children’s worlds and a call to action for more empathetic and thoughtful practices. The film can be watched here:

www.tilmaanen.no

National ECEC Research Conference

National ECEC Research Conference on Co-creation and Research-Based Pedagogical Innovations

In October 2024, the National ECEC Research Conference on Co-creation and Research-Based Pedagogical Innovations [Samskaping og forskningsbasert pedagogisk innovasjon] invited about 300 participants to our campus in Bergen. This sixth annual event, a collaboration between research centres KINDknow and FILIORUM (University of Stavanger), focused on “Co-creation and Research-Based Pedagogical Innovation in the Kindergarten Sector”.



Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, Director of KINDknow. Photo taken by Eline Lundervold.



Kjartan L Grønhaug from Medielab and Olga Shangina Williams, Administrative leader of KINDknow. Photo taken by Eline Lundervold.



PostDoc Czarecah Tuppil Oropilla; PostDoc hege Fimreite and PhD fellow Maria Grindhei. Photo taken by Eline Lundervold.



Concert with KaPLiNG! for the invited kindergarten children and teachers. Photo taken by Eline Lundervold.

Highlighting excellence in kindergarten research

The 2024 conference once again proved to be a premier arena for showcasing cutting-edge kindergarten research. On the second day, participants attended 15 parallel sessions covering a wide range of topics, such as staffing and quality in kindergartens, cultural and linguistic diversity, and children's play in natural environments. The conference also featured roundtable discussions and symposia, with a total of 77 paper presentations by researchers, PhD students, and kindergarten professionals.

“The conference was professionally executed with a very high academic standard. The parallel sessions allowed for meaningful discussions, fostering new connections and networks,” said HVL’s Pro-Rector for Research, Stine Øye, reflecting on the event.

Co-creation and Cross-disciplinary Collaboration

The conference aimed to foster collaboration among educators, researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders to explore innovative practices in early childhood educa

tion. A highlight of the event was the introduction of the sessions designed to encourage participants to envision ideal solutions to complex challenges in kindergartens, free from practical constraints. These sessions stimulated creative thinking and opened new avenues for addressing issues such as staffing, children's participation, leadership and sustainability.

Co-creation is already a vibrant part of the kindergarten sector, involving collaborations with children, families, kindergarten teacher students, kindergartens, owners, researchers, volunteers, non-profit organizations, and the business community. This spirit of collaboration and enthusiasm is what the conference seeks to support and amplify.

The conference served as a platform for sharing research projects where kindergartens and researchers have attempted innovative approaches, providing attendees with practical examples and inspiration to implement new pedagogical practices in their own settings.

By bringing together diverse perspectives, the Norwegian Kindergarten Research Conference continues to play a crucial role in advancing early childhood education through co-creation and research-based innovation.

Looking ahead to 2025

Next year, Filiorum at the University of Stavanger will host the Norwegian Kindergarten Research Conference, scheduled for October 23–24, 2025, in Stavanger.

Watch the highlights

A film from the 2024 conference, produced by Medielab at HVL, captures the energy and insights of this year's event. The film can be found on Youtube channel <https://youtu.be/Z4IN9lB5oRg?si=7ep3opzcKeh6TVbT>

Keynotes

Four outstanding keynotes were invited to participate in the conference.

Prof. Natalia Kucirkova, an expert in ECEC and development at the University of Stavanger, FILIORUM – Centre for ECEC Research, and a guest professor at University College London and The Open University. Prof. Kucirkova's keynote "The Role of Senses in Learning – Exploring Children's Olfactory Engagement" focused on the vital role of senses in children's learning, with a special emphasis on the often-overlooked sense of

smell. Drawing on her research into children's olfactory engagement, she highlighted the importance of teaching children to recognise scents and develop their olfactory vocabulary, especially as biodiversity loss diminishes the variety of smells in the environment. The session explored innovative strategies for incorporating smell into educational practices, such as conducting "classroom olfactory audits" or organising "smell walks" in the community. These activities not only enhance sensory awareness but also provide opportunities for integrating olfactory learning into broader educational contexts. Prof. Kucirkova emphasised that fostering olfactory skills in children is essential for their cognitive and sensory development as well as for promoting social justice by ensuring all children have access to rich, multisensory learning experiences.

Dr. Øyvind Glosvik has been a pivotal figure at KIND-know since its foundation. As the lead for the work package "The Competent Kindergarten", Dr Glosvik focused on fostering knowledge sharing, professional development and collaborative learning among the kindergarten staff.

In his recent work, Glosvik has introduced the concept of a "third space" between academic theory and kindergarten practice. This space (hereinafter referred to as the "classroom") represents a productive intersection where established knowledge and hands-on daily operations (hereinafter referred to as the "kindergarten") converge. By addressing the tensions between research and practice, Glosvik's projects, including those under the EX-PED-LAB initiative, explore how workshop methodologies can drive innovation in pedagogy and kindergarten teacher education. Through his Keynotes, Glosvik continues to challenge the traditional divide between theory and practice, fostering collaboration that benefits both educators and children in kindergartens.

Prof. Anthony Okely, an internationally renowned public health expert and co-director of the WHO's Collaborating Centre for Children's Food, Nutrition and Physical Activity, University of Wollongong, Australia presented a keynote where he explored the significant burden climate change places on children, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Highlighting their vulnerability due to developmental stages and the compounded effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, he emphasised the urgent need for child-centred actions to mitigate and respond to climate crises. The presentation provided a global perspective on how collaborative, cross-sectoral efforts can drive innovation and ensure

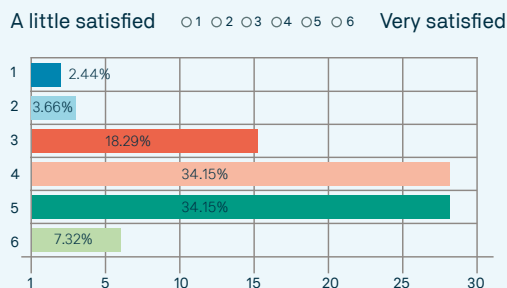
that children's rights are prioritised during climate challenges. Case studies illustrated how to measure improvements in children's lives and the importance of involving children, researchers, practitioners, families and policymakers in developing sustainable, resilient solutions. Prof. Okely underscored the need for co-creation and knowledge-driven innovations to protect children's well-being and foster a brighter, sustainable future.

Prof. Tilde Bekker, an expert in digital technologies for playfulness and motivation, Eindhoven University of Technology, Netherlands, presented a keynote where she discussed how design can be a powerful tool for creating innovative and engaging educational solutions. By combining creativity with user-centred approaches, and integrating theoretical and empirical knowledge, design can address the needs of diverse users and stakeholders.

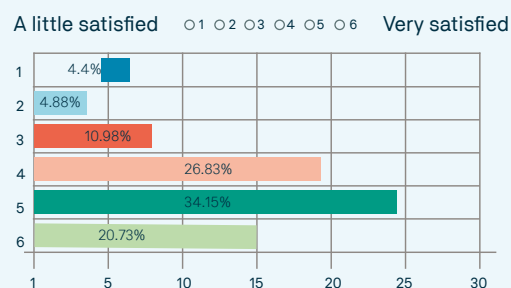
Prof. Bekker highlighted the importance of incorporating values like playfulness and rich learning environments into pedagogical practices. Through illustrative design cases, she demonstrated how concepts such as play and empowerment can inspire tools that motivate learners and support teachers in developing engaging, child-centred activities. Examples included tools from the AIMION project (2022–2024), which support reflection and project management in higher education, and other tools designed to encourage learners to take an active role in shaping their educational environments. Her work emphasises the role of design in weaving together diverse considerations to empower educators, pedagogues and children alike. This presentation showcased how theoretical insights and practical design applications can transform learning and development in education.

Results of the survey after the conference

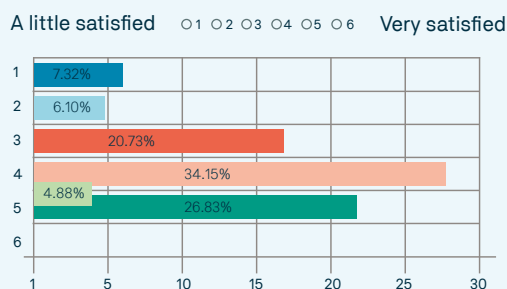
a. How satisfied you are with the academic outcome of the conference?



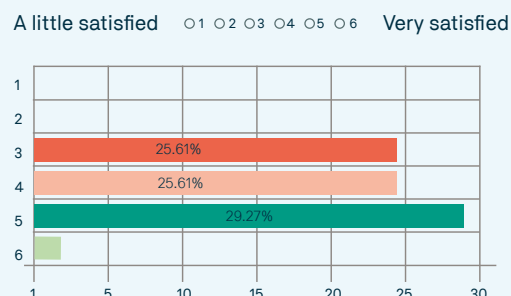
c. To what extent did the conference inspire you for co-creation between academia and the practice field?



b. To what extent did the conference inspire you for pedagogical innovation?



d. To what extent did you establish or deepen your network?

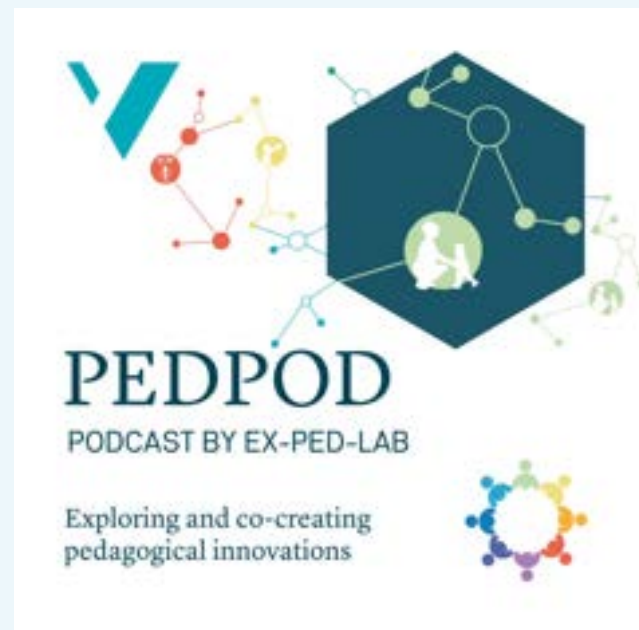


ECEC Podcasts

PedPod podcast



Czarecah Tuppil Oropilla,
Postdoctoral fellow at
Ex-Ped-Lab project



The PedPod podcast by EX-PED-LAB, co-produced by Czarecah Tuppil Oropilla and HVL Media Lab, explores pedagogical innovations in early childhood education and care (ECEC), focusing on defining and operationalising these innovations. It aims to disseminate and co-create knowledge while uncovering the conditions and characteristics of pedagogical innovations. Each 30-40 minute episode featuring global researchers addresses questions about the essence, development and implementation of pedagogical innovations. Discussions highlight methodologies like design thinking, play-based learning and collaborative and relational approaches, emphasising values, cultural contexts and challenges in advancing ECEC pedagogical innovations.

Season 1 features leading researchers in higher-income countries in the US, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. In the next season, to start in 2025, the podcast hopes to open up the space to have more interviews from different scholars from the rest of the world. In this report, we present a short overview of the episodes:

EPISODE 1: Dialogue with Arjen Wals

Arjen Wals delves into sustainable education, emphasising pedagogy's holistic role beyond instruction. He critiques modern education's focus on efficiency, advocating for values like curiosity, empathy and sustainability. Highlighting intergenerational learning, Wals calls for "unnovation" —pausing to preserve valuable traditions. He urges systemic reforms, collaborative research and joy in fostering a sustainable future.

EPISODE 2: Dialogue with Ana Marjanovic-Shane

Ana Marjanovic-Shane discusses dialogic pedagogy and democratic education that empower children as active participants. Drawing on historical shifts in education, she highlights the role of play, collaboration and dismantling hierarchies. Innovations like Reggio Emilia prioritise children's voices and community-rooted practices, steering education towards creativity, dignity and equality.

EPISODE 3: Dialogue with Helle Marie Skovbjerg

Helle Marie Skovbjerg explores play as a cornerstone of pedagogical innovation. She shares examples like Denmark's Playful Learning Research, integrating role-play and child-centred designs. Emphasising practical experimentation, she highlights play's transformative role in fostering trust, creativity and systemic change despite challenges like time constraints and rigid expectations.

EPISODE 4: Dialogue with Elin Eriksen Ødegaard

Elin Eriksen Ødegaard emphasises collaboration and co-creation in advancing ECEC. Projects like EXPED-LAB and One Ocean Exploration demonstrate iterative methodologies and historical reflection to refine practices. Using metaphors like the “time river”, Ødegaard underscores the importance of revisiting past wisdom while envisioning sustainable futures through collective engagement and experimentation.

EPISODE 5: Dialogue with Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson

Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson highlights sustainability in ECEC, sharing insights from the “Sustainable Preschool Project”. She emphasises experiential learning, play-responsive teaching and collaboration to redefine pedagogy. Overcoming barriers like rigid traditions requires tools, reflection and support for teachers, ensuring education promotes collective responsibility and sustainable practices.

EPISODE 6: Dialogue with Hege Fimreite

Hege Fimreite discusses dynamic, collaborative workshops in teacher education, fostering creativity and professional growth. Using the metaphor of a wave, she describes pedagogical innovation as fluid and adaptable. Fimreite stresses the importance of bravery, reflection and systemic flexibility, calling for collective efforts to overcome barriers and embrace transformative learning.

EPISODE 7: Dialogue with Mathias Urban

Mathias Urban critiques Western-centric ECE models, advocating for transformative innovations rooted in community, equity and global collaboration. Highlighting diverse practices in Africa, Asia and Latin America, Urban urges education systems to prioritise adaptability, solidarity and creativity to address 21st century uncertainties and complexities.

EPISODE 8: Dialogue with Marilyn Fleer

Marilyn Fleer presents the Conceptual PlayWorlds model, integrating play and learning through co-created dramatic scenarios. She emphasises collaboration and professional development to build confidence in adopting innovative methodologies. Fleer calls for continuous evolution in education, urging the rejection of static practices in favour of transformative approaches.

EPISODE 9: Dialogue with Jayne White

Jayne White discusses pedagogical innovation as a blend of creativity, critical reflection and dynamic interplay between philosophy and practice. Introducing concepts like “proto-learners” and “inter-animated pedagogies”, she emphasises fostering children's creativity and addressing their unique concerns. Through her “Dialogising Pedagogies” project, she highlights cross-cultural practices and transdisciplinary collaboration, urging educators to embrace courage, trust and dialogic approaches to enrich early childhood education.

Upcoming episodes

EPISODE 10: upcoming episode with Anthony Okely

Anthony Okely explores integrating movement behaviours — physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep — into early childhood education, focusing on culturally relevant strategies in low- and middle-income countries. Highlighting global examples like community facilities in Hong Kong and adaptive play in Bangladesh, he redefines innovation as improving existing practices. Okely advocates for collaboration, community-driven solutions and evidence-based approaches to foster child well-being and holistic learning.

Participating in other ECEC podcasts

In addition to the PedPod podcast by EX-PED-LAB, the KINDknow researchers were frequent speakers at the other podcast initiative at the Western University of Applied Studies. BluPodden is created by the ECEC education and is aimed at the students and practitioners in the kindergarten sector. The podcast is translating the research findings to the wider auditorium in an easy and accessible way.

In one of the March episodes of BluPodden, Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard engages in a conversation with Hilde Gunnarsson about work methods in kindergartens with a particular focus on exploratory practices. Gunnarsson, who works as the service leader for kindergartens in Osterøy and has extensive experience in ECEC sector, discusses findings from a national survey conducted by the KINDknow research centre. The survey explored how kindergartens across Norway implement exploratory approaches in their daily practices.



In the April episode of BluPodden, the focus is on programming, science and research, and their role in children's learning. Veronica Danielsen, a physicist and science communicator at VilVite Science Centre in Kaupanger, shares her experiences with science education through the science centres, kindergarten activities and science shows. She explains how she inspires exploration and understanding of the world in an accessible way. Participants include Dr Jostein Rønning Sanderud from the Western University of Applied Science and the physicist and science communicator Veronica Danielsen from VilVite Science Centre.

Exploration and pedagogical innovation laboratories project

Throughout 2024, Exploration and pedagogical Innovation Laboratories project (EX-PED-LAB) has actively engaged in several initiatives aimed at advancing kindergarten education through innovative practices and collaboration. These activities were pivotal in shaping the ongoing project and preparing for its culmination in the coming year. Below is a detailed account of the year's activities.

Workshops with the kindergartens: with Emilie from DSKD

The project had two workshops with the kindergartens in 2024.

The first workshop in January was led by Emilie Jespersen from the Design School of Kolding (DSKD) focused on guiding partner kindergartens to reflect on their contributions. Emilie introduced templates to facilitate structured thinking about their projects, aiding them in preparing materials for the EX-PED-LAB digital resource toolbox.

The main goal of the last workshop in November with the kindergartens is to reflect on what they have been able to achieve through the project and how the partner kindergartens plan to incorporate their insights into their own practices. In this workshop, all the participants take part in reflexive activities in order to think through the course of the project to determine learnings and insights for moving forward to next possible exploration and co-creation projects.



Andree Marandon, Artist from Kunstpilotene. Photo: Emilie Jespersen



Participants of the workshops. Photo: Emilie Jespersen

Webinars and Focus Group Discussions with Evelyn Eggum

Throughout the year, Evelyn Eggum facilitated webinars and focus group discussions, enabling participants to exchange knowledge and experiences. The purpose of the meeting was to highlight how they experienced the project so far if they needed anything further from us, and any questions they wanted answers to. A webinar has been arranged to which all EX-PED-LAB kindergartens were invited, in addition to Kunstpilotene and

researchers from HVL. The intention was to create a dialogue and conversation about the digital toolbox linked to work package 2. Four focus group interviews with different themes have been conducted during this period. The participants have been Kunstpilotene, Emilie Jespersen, kindergarten managers and project members. The topics were the mediator role, family collaboration, leadership and organisational learning.

Workshops in kindergarten teacher education (educational workshops):

Educational workshops have in addition to focus on collaboration and co-creation processes, clear goals based on the education framework plan, and subject plans aim to train skills and specific knowledge and encourage cognitive, motoric, and physical skills. Connected to the EX-PED-LAB projects, different educational workshops was carried out in Sogndal and in Bergen. These educational workshops demonstrates the value of meeting the educational needs of students through playful, interdisciplinary methods. By leveraging co-creative activities, this project highlights how innovative approaches in teaching can pave the way for an enriching and transformative educational journey for all involved.

Reflections from both students, educators and kindergarten teachers indicates that these workshops created a new inclusive arena, promoted creativity, provided greater insight into each other's perspectives, were closely linked to practice, allowed them to gain insight into each other's thoughts, and made it meaningful to develop something together. Words about the project from the participants: creativity, collaboration, dream, diversity, expanding thinking, moving the body, thought and knowledge, humour, pushing boundaries, mastery, resilience, care and safety, bridge building, out of the comfort zone, into the role of play, open mind, curious, happy, willing to put themselves at risk to learn.



Oversight of the co-creation workshop in Sogndal. Photo: Hege Fimreite.



ECEC students co-creating pedagogical innovation materials. Photo: Hege Fimreite.



Co-creation between artists, teachers and students. Kunstpilotene Andre and Annette Marandon with ECEC students. Photo: Hege Fimreite

LEIKFORSK Sogndal

LEIKFORSK Sogndal — teaching and research for sustainable education through EX-PED-LAB workshops emphasising co-creation, play and professional knowledge. The kindergarten teacher education in Sogndal has carried out a three-day workshop focusing on play, arts, and subjects was conducted to holistically support the student's learning outcomes, including co-creation among educators, students, and kindergarten teachers. The workshops included different co-creative activities in groups, both outside in the forest and inside the campus, brainstorming in a thinking workshop and connecting

knowledge to theory in a professional workshop. The artists (Kunstpilotene) moderated the creative workshops, and students at Sogndal Folkehøgskule's media line documented the project. The project has been extended to educational workshops planned and implemented by educators in various knowledge areas. LEIKFORSK Sogndal as a whole demonstrates the value of educators, kindergarten teachers and students meeting in co-creative activities, which can lead to transformative learning for all involved.

LEKFORSK teaching design project, STM team, Bergen

LekForsk is a teaching design project that employs the EXPEDLAB methodology to address students' desire for a greater emphasis on play in both teaching and learning. Norwegian and Mathematics kindergarten teacher educators employed the EXPEDLAB methodology to create two consecutive interdisciplinary educational workshops centred on the concept of play. The workshops were carried out with all five first-year classes of students in the kindergarten teaching education in Bergen. The first workshop focused on game design, fostering an environment of co-creation among students and teachers-in-role. This approach particularly stimulated the creative learning of the students, encouraging them to think innovatively and collaboratively. In the subsequent workshop, students and kindergarten teacher educators engaged in co-creative activities that revolved around the design of activities and play environments in kindergartens promoting the subject area of "Language, Text and Mathematics".

Workshops generating new data for new phase of the on the "digital toolbox"

Data-generation workshops were conducted to enrich the forthcoming phase of the EX-PED-LAB digital toolbox. These workshops gathered insights to enhance the toolbox's relevance and utility for target audiences. The workshops were helpful in determining the direction of the content and what tools the field needs.

Podcast on pedagogical innovations: PedPod by EX-PED-LAB

The PedPod podcast was launched this year to understand the concept of pedagogical innovations as well as to disseminate innovative pedagogical practices. Through one-to-one discussions, the podcast episodes highlight dialogues, stories and practical applications, fostering a broader reach of the project's core ideas. Podcast guests include leading researchers in the field of early childhood education and care: Marilyn Fleer, Mathias Urban, Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson, Helle Marie Skovbjerg, Arjen Wals, Jayne Whote, Ana Marjanovic-Shane as well as our very own Hege Fimreite and Elin Eriksen Ødegaard. The next season of the podcast continues next year in 2025.

New PhD candidate

This year, EX-PED-LAB welcomed a new PhD candidate: Ingrid Skarprud. Her PhD project Pedagogical Innovation is an addition to the research on workshop in EX-PED-LAB. This project takes place in the art education in the ECEC teacher education, and it looks at workshops as a method in co-creations between students and teachers. The project seeks new pedagogical practices that can create new pedagogical innovation within ECC teacher education that will increase the students' knowledge and experience with explorational practices. Rooted in art based research, the project uses material exploration and sensuous experiences to understand how an open process based teaching can contribute new explorational practices within higher education.

Study trip to Copenhagen

The team embarked on a study trip to Denmark to engage with research partners and gain inspiration for playful approaches to co-creation and innovation. A delegation of 10 researchers spent three days visiting Copenhagen University College and the Kolding School of Design. The visit began with a project meeting and activities at PLAYLAB in Copenhagen University College, followed by a seminar at the Kolding School of Design with our partner, Helle Marie Skovbjerg, and her team. This trip provided valuable insights and strengthened international collaboration as visits and conversations were made in DSKD and PlayLab Copenhagen.



Elisabeth Perret-Gentil and a fellow researcher from PlayLab, Copenhagen, Anne Grethe Sønsthagen, Magni Lossius, Helle Marie Skovbjerg, Magni Lossius, Eya, Marion Oen, Lillian Pedersen, Elena Severina, Annette Furnes, Hege Fimreite, Ingrid Skarprud, Sigurd A. Haaland. Photo: Czarecah Tuppil Oropilla

We engaged in discussions and shared experiences regarding play-based educational workshops, student activities and inter-institutional research collaboration. At the Kolding School of Design, we gained further inspiration and explored additional opportunities for collaboration in educational design. We examined the role of play and creativity in the everyday life in kindergartens as well as in higher and continuing education. This collaboration promises to yield long-lasting benefits for all involved. The EX-PED-LAB project partially funded costs incurred on this trip.



Marion Oen, Elisabeth Perret-Gentil (PlayLab København), Elena Severina, Anne Grethe Sønsthagen and Czarecah Tuppil Oropilla. Photo: Hege Fimreite

Norwegian Kindergarten Research Conference participation

EX-PED-LAB participated actively in the Norwegian Kindergarten Research (NBFK) Conference in October 2024, showcasing its work and fostering dialogue among educators, researchers and practitioners. The conference highlighted the project's impact and explored pathways for future endeavours, and nearly 300 participated. The theme for the conference was Co-creation and research-based educational innovation in the kindergarten sector.

Outreach activities

Numerous outreach initiatives were undertaken in 2024 to share project findings with a broader audience. These activities included presentations at national and international conferences, publications and collaborations, ensuring the project's impact extended beyond its immediate participants.

The year 2024 has been pivotal for EX-PED-LAB, marked by significant progress in kindergarten education and preparation for summarising the project's outcomes. The activities undertaken this year have laid a strong foundation for future innovations and collaborations with exciting possibilities ahead.

Other media outreach activities

KINDknow at the Climate festival junior (Klimafestivalen Junior), March 2024, Bergen, Norway

KINDknow together with Czarecah Tuppil Oropilla organised a workshop called “If you had a magic wand, what would you change in the world?” at the

Climate festival junior 2024 at Varmere, Våtere, Villere! (Warmer, Wetter, Wilder!). The workshop invited children and families to unleash their creativity and imagine their hopes and dreams for the world. The participants were asked this question through a provocation poster. The participants were also provided with drawing and writing materials to express their ideas. Afterwards, their artwork was displayed on an interactive poster board, promoting community engagement and discussions around climate change and sustainability. The workshop aimed at empowering participants to share their visions for a better world and inspire collective intergenerational actions towards a more sustainable future.



Installation at the Climate festival junior.
Photo: Elin Eriksen Ødegaard



Czarecah Oropilla, postdoctoral fellow at the installation at the Climate festival junior. Photo: Elin Eriksen Ødegaard

KINDknow at the Generation festival (Aldringsfestivalen), May 2024, Bergen, Norway

At the Generation Festival, Czarecah Oropilla and a group of researchers led an engaging session on “How Can Research Contribute to an Ageing-Friendly Society?”. This entertaining communication relay featured a PhD candidate, a postdoc, two professors and one professor emerita, each offering concise and inspiring insights on aging. Representing the four stages of a research career and four distinct fields—philosophy, pedagogy,

management and psychology—these speakers provided a multifaceted discussion. Emil Perron (1990), Czarecah Oropilla (1986), Inger G. Stensaker (1966), Therese Egeland (1974) and Inger Hilde Nordhus (1952) shared their perspectives on creating an ageing-friendly society. The event was an enlightening experience for all who attended.

KINDknow at the VilVite Science Centre, June 2024, Bergen, Norway

On 9 June 2024, KINDknow researchers Czarecah Oropilla and Inga Margrethe Fagerbakke led the engaging “San-sesamtaler” (Sensory Conversations) installation at the VilVite Science Centre, an innovative workshop designed to explore the wonders of the sea through sensory experiences. The event, which was a collaboration between researchers at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) and VilVite - Bergen Science Centre, offered participants of all ages an opportunity to gain new insights into perception, nature and innovative teaching methods.

At the heart of the workshop was the hands-on exploration of coastal life. The participants discovered fascinating facts, such as the diversity of seaweed and kelp species, and how shells’ shapes serve different purposes — some are smooth for speed, while others are pointed for protection. Using tools like dice to guide their tasks, attendees engaged in sensory exploration by touching, smelling and observing various marine elements, fostering curiosity and creativity.

Czarecah Oropilla, Postdoctoral fellow



Installations at Vilvite Science Centre. Photo: Czarecah Oropilla



The Sensory Conversations programme was inspired by multiple research projects spearheaded by KINDknow:

One Ocean – Havportrett: This project explored how children and adults learn from one another through collaborative discovery, focusing on how children develop an early understanding of the sea, coastal landscapes and the aesthetics of their local environments.

Intergenerational meetings: This initiative examined how knowledge about the ocean and coastal culture can be passed between generations, particularly through collaborations between coastal associations and kindergartens.

Science talk: This project focused on fostering exploratory conversations with children about nature,

emphasising how sensory exploration can reveal children’s unique perspectives and understanding of the natural world.

The Sensory Conversations workshop was more than an educational event; it was a celebration of meaningful connections across generations and disciplines. By bridging research with hands-on experiences, the workshop sparked curiosity and highlighted innovative approaches to learning about nature and the sea.

As part of KINDknow’s ongoing efforts to connect research with public engagement, events like Sensory Conversations demonstrate the impact of collaborative, research-driven education. Stay tuned for more opportunities to engage with the innovative work of KINDknow researchers!

International cooperation

In 2024, KINDknow continued to strengthen its international presence through impactful collaborations and global outreach. Our researchers delivered keynotes at esteemed international conferences and doctoral training programmes across Europe and Asia, including events hosted by institutions such as East China Normal University, Northeast Normal University, the University of Porto and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. These engagements have expanded our influence and contributed to talent development by emphasising transferable skills and alternative career paths for doctoral candidates. The cooperation with the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki has also created the foundation for seeking European Union funding, pending submission in 2025.

Our partnerships with institutions worldwide, including our collaboration with UiT-The Arctic University of Norway, provide valuable insights into regional,

indigenous and global perspectives. Visitors from international partner institutions and scholars have enriched our academic environment and contributed to initiatives like our PEDPOD podcast.

Our network extends to several milieus in the Nordic countries, for example we have had a longstanding and dynamic research collaboration with the Kolding Designshool, the Play & Learning Lab and the group of UNESCO's Chairs in ECEC at Aarhus university in Denmark. In Sweden, we collaborate with the research Group of Play Responsive Teaching at the University of Gottenborg.

Through these efforts, KINDknow is advancing its mission to foster international knowledge exchange, promote pedagogical innovation and ensure that ECEC research has a meaningful global impact.

Representation of KINDknow in OMEP

Veronica Bergan, KINDknow researcher and coordinator at The Arctic University of Norway, has been recently granted a position of coordinator of World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP) Norway. Our researchers Czarecah Oropilla and Maria Dardanou were elected as a board member and a deputy member, respectively. Moreover, our researcher Aihua Hu continues to serve her second term as the organisation's cashier. OMEP is a global organisation founded in 1948 dedicated to securing children's rights and education through collaboration with the UN and UNESCO. OMEP's core values include sustainable development, solidarity, diversity and justice. The action plan for OMEP Norway in 2025 focuses on the plight of displaced children and water resources for children in a changing world.



KINDknow shines at EECERA conference in Brighton

In September 2024, the KINDknow team made a remarkable impact at the EECERA Conference in Brighton — one of the leading events in early childhood education research. Several of our researchers presented their innovative work, showcasing the breadth and depth of our contributions to the field. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, Hege Fimreite, Czarecah Tuppil Oropilla, Alicja Sadownik, Veronica Bergan and Annette Furnes had their presentations during the parallel sessions. Their contributions highlighted the innovative research and pedagogical practices that define KINDknow's mission.

The educational documentary “Ocean Portrait—Children by the North Sea” (Havportrett) was screened at the conference, providing a unique visual perspective on children's experiences by the North Sea. In addition to the presentations and screening of the educational film, KINDknow also had a stand providing the conference participants with the latest update on KINDknow research.

This year's EECERA participation reflects KINDknow's dedication to advancing early childhood education and engaging with an international community of scholars and practitioners. We are proud of the team's achievements and their role in driving meaningful conversations about the future of early childhood education.



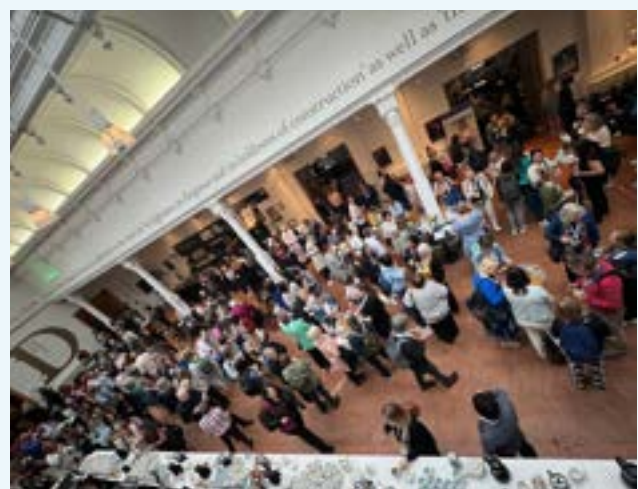
Olga Shangina Williams, Alicja Renate Sadownik, Veronica Bergan



Elin Eriksen Ødegaard presenting at EECERA 2024.
Photo: Alicja R. Sadownik



KINDknow researchers meet Erasmus collaborators at EECERA: Mehmet Mahrt, (Turkey/UK), Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, Alicja Sadownik, Czarecah Oropilla, Hanne Værum Sørensen (Denmark).



EECERA conference in Brighton, UK. Photo: Alicja R. Sadownik

Strengthening collaboration with China

Building on a strong and well-established partnership between HVL and China, the KINDknow Research Centre has been actively engaging in collaborative efforts with Chinese institutions since its inception, particularly in research and researcher mobility.

In February 2024, KINDknow's administrative leader, Olga Shangina Williams, and researchers Aihua Hu and Ruth Ingrid Skoglund, together with Bodil Kjesbo Risøy,

Margareth Eilifsen and Åshild Berg-Brekhus, were invited by Beijing Normal University for a one-week educational stay. The aim of the visit was to be inspired by each other's research work, and to find possibilities for collaboration. The delegation attended scientific presentations, a teacher education forum and also visited a primary school, a high school and the Beijing Normal University kindergarten.



Aihua Hu in the Beijing Normal University kindergarten.



Olga Shangina Williams presenting the work of KINDknow research centre.



BNU student, Director of Beijing Normal University kindergarten, Olga Shangina Williams, Margareth Eilifsen



Representatives from the Beijing Normal University kindergarten, Margareth Eilifsen, Aihua Hu, Ruth Ingrid Skoglund, Åshild Berg-Brekhus, Olga Shangina Williams.

In June, Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard and Dr. Aihua Hu were invited to deliver keynote presentations at two major conferences in China.

The first conference, “2024 Annual Conference of Early Childhood Education and the 5th Academic Forum on Quality Evaluation and Promotion of Early Childhood Education”, was hosted by the Committee of Early Childhood Education, Chinese Society of Education.

The second event was the “4th International Forum for Postgraduate Students in Early Childhood Education and Family Education”. This forum was jointly hosted by the Family Education Committee of the China Association of Higher Education, Northeast Normal University, Southwest University, Shaanxi Normal University, Henan University, and Shanghai Normal University.

Both conferences provided an opportunity to engage with early childhood researchers, teacher educators, teachers, and kindergarten leaders. The overarching theme of the events was “Future, Innovation, Quality: The Path to High-Quality Development of Early Childhood Education”.

The International Forum for Postgraduate Students in Early Childhood Education and Family Education is held annually, primarily for postgraduate students.

The main conference is for not only international postgraduate students but also researchers, teacher educators and kindergarten teachers and leaders. The theme of

2024 was “High Quality and Collaborative Education of Early Childhood Education”.

Furthermore, Prof. Ødegaard was honoured to give a keynote on early childhood education at the Royal Norwegian Embassy’s event in China, as part of the European Days promotion. The event, hosted by the Chengdu Municipality International Office, provided an excellent platform to highlight Norway’s approaches to early childhood education. In June, Elin delivered a keynote titled Improving Quality ECEC through Enhancing Play and Exploration – A Norwegian Approach in Chengdu.



Elin Eriksen Ødegaard participating in the Europe Week: Playing & Exploring – China Norway Salon. Photo: Photograph from the European Affairs Division, Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office



Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, Magnus Jorem Counsellor in Science and Education department of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beijing and representatives of the European Affairs Division, Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office visiting Chengdu kindergarten No. 3. Photo: Photograph from the European Affairs Division, Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office.



Elin Eriksen Ødegaard visiting Chengdu kindergarten No. 3. Photo: Photograph from the European Affairs Division, Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office



Aihua Hu and Elin Eriksen Ødegaard together with Magnus Jorem Counsellor in Science and Education department of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beijing and representatives of the European Affairs Division, Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office. Photo: Photograph from the European Affairs Division, Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office

These engagements exemplify KINDknow’s commitment to fostering international collaboration and knowledge exchange, strengthening ties with global partners and sharing innovative approaches to early childhood educa-

tion. A summary of the keynote presentations and seminars at the international events as well as at the national events can be found at the end of this report in the section for Publications, outreach and impact.

Strengthening collaboration with Greece

Dr Zacharias Andreadakis was invited for a short research stay at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. At his stay, Zacharias worked closely with two of the most cited and influential researchers of ECEC in Greece, Prof. Gregoriadis and Dr Fragkiadaki. Together, they drafted a paper on transferable skills based on cross-country data collection from 2024 as well as the foundation for a Marie Skłodowska Curie Application, pending in 2025 on the connection of transferable skills in ECEC with doctoral training. The collaboration is ongoing, and it will hopefully ensure a stronger pan-European KINDknow alliance against the issues of doctoral training and the skills crisis in the workforce.

Our leading researchers delivered many keynotes, presentations and seminars at various international arenas. A full overview of these is provided in the section Publications, outreach and impact.



Glykeria Gragkiadaki, Zacharias Andreadakis and Athanasios Gregoriades.

Seminars with international speakers

During 2024, we have had a number of keynotes and seminars with international researchers.

Exploring Equity, Justice and Sustainability in Early Childhood Education with Prof. Mathias Urban

In October 2024, KINDknow was honoured to host Prof. Mathias Urban, a leading global voice ECEC. As the Desmond Chair of Early Childhood Education and Director of the Early Childhood Research Centre at Dublin City University, Ireland, Urban's work focuses on integrated early childhood systems, diversity, equality, social justice and professionalism in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

A prolific author and thought leader, Urban has contributed policy briefs for the G20/T20 on early childhood development and education in Argentina (2018), Japan (2019), Saudi Arabia (2020), Italy (2021), Indonesia (2022) and Brazil (2024). He also serves on the European Commission's expert working group on ECEC and the Global Advocacy Group for the Right to Education initiative.

KINDknow held two main events with Prof. Mathias Urban in October. The first one was an informal discussion titled "From Quality to Equity, Justice and Sustainability:

Necessary Conversations about ECEC in the 21st Century" where Urban challenged participants to reimagine the field of ECEC amidst a rapidly changing, conflict-driven world. He emphasised the need for new conversations that transcend outdated paradigms and to foster interdisciplinary and geopolitical collaboration.

The second event was the open lecture "From 'Quality' to Equity, Justice and Sustainability: Becoming Political in Early Childhood Education and Care". In this lecture, Prof. Urban addressed the pressing challenges posed by the global 'polycrisis'—a confluence of climate change, biodiversity loss, forced migration, war and poverty. He argued that these crises demand a rethinking of foundational concepts in ECEC, offering opportunities for transformative allyship and learning across divides. Drawing on insights from thinkers like Rosi Braidotti and Paulo Freire, Urban highlighted the importance of grounding hope in concrete action.

Prof. Urban's visit provided a vital platform for discussing the future of ECEC, emphasising the urgent need for equity, justice and sustainability in addressing global challenges. His thought-provoking insights continue to inspire KINDknow researchers and practitioners to engage in transformative action for children, families and communities worldwide.

Advancing ECEC Research with Professor E. Jayne White

In September-October, KINDknow and the Early Childhood Teacher Education programme hosted Prof. E. Jayne White from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Renowned for her groundbreaking work in dialogic philosophy, pedagogy and visual methodologies, Prof. White has made significant contributions to early childhood studies.

As Editor-in-Chief of the Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy (VJEP), the first video-based journal for educational research, Prof. White integrates visual approaches into pedagogical research and practice. She is also co-editor of the Springer series Policy and Pedagogy with Under Three-Year-Olds: Cross-Disciplinary Insights and Innovations, and she has authored numerous books on the youngest children in early childhood education. Her forthcoming co-authored book, Dialogic Methodologies for (Trans)Disciplinary Practice-Based Research (Oxford), further explores interdisciplinary approaches to research.

Although Professor White served as a Professor II at FLKI-BLU during the COVID-19 period, this visit marked her first opportunity to meet colleagues at KINDknow in person. During her visit, she engaged in collaborative discussions and contributed to the ongoing Waterscapes project, which explores pedagogy and children's engagement with water. During her visit, KINDknow organised several seminars and lectures:

Seminar: Walking with Children in Aotearoa NZ Waterscapes

Professor White shared insights from a pilot project at the University of Canterbury, where researchers walked with 3-4-year-olds along rivers, seas and ports in Te Wai Pounamu (the South Island). Their findings revealed children as kaitiaki (custodians) deeply concerned about water and its interconnectedness with people, places and things. The project aims to translate these concerns into actionable, sustainable practices to address climate change, incorporating indigenous and local perspectives.

Seminar: Visualising Educational Research

In a thought-provoking session, Professor White introduced the emerging “mo(ve)ment” in visual pedagogy and methodology. Drawing from her role as Editor-in-Chief of VJEP and her work with the Association for Visual Pedagogies, she explored the potential of visual methods in educational research. The seminar included discus-

sions on philosophical and conceptual shifts in the field, the role of visual methodologies in academic publishing, and opportunities for legitimising alternative avenues for dissemination beyond traditional text-based formats.

Open Lecture: Early Transitions to ECE – A New Normality?

In this lecture, Prof. E. Jayne White addressed the growing trend of infants entering early childhood education at younger ages due to evolving economic and social conditions, particularly regarding women's participation in the workforce. Despite the increasing prevalence of early transitions to ECE, limited research exists on how this impacts infants, families and educators.

To bridge this gap, an international team of researchers (ISSEET) from New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, Finland, Scotland and the US—led by Professor White—studied infants' first months in ECE. Through observations, interviews and video data, they identified key policies, practices and processes shaping these transitions.

The lecture highlighted the challenges and opportunities of granting infants' transitions the educational recognition they deserve. Professor White emphasised the need for a specialised research agenda and practical approaches to address this “new normality”, ensuring that policies and practices support the well-being of infants, families and educators during this critical phase.

Our projects

OneOcean - exploration



Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard
Project Manager



Dr. Aihua Hu
Co-Project Manager



Children exploring the sea. Photo: Elin Eriksen Ødegaard.

One Ocean Exploration is a project dedicated to understanding children's perspectives on the ocean and fostering their connection to its preservation. Being aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, this initiative responds to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. The project seeks to raise awareness of the critical importance of a clean ocean while actively engaging children and local communities in building hope for the future.

Through the project, we explore collaborative approaches to learning, emphasising a pedagogical culture that integrates arts, science, nature and intergenerational engagement. Designed as a co-creative initiative, One Ocean Exploration involves close collaboration with Øygarden Municipality and Kunstpilotene. Furthermore, the project engages in international partnerships, including twinning with UNESCO's Ocean Literacy Group in Italy, and contributes to academic discourse, such as an invitation to participate in a special issue on Emergent Ocean Literacy by the ECNU Review of Education (2025).

Key Milestones in 2024

Dissemination and Publications:

The project has been widely disseminated throughout 2024 and will continue in 2025. A notable publication from the project includes:

Ødegaard, E. E., Birkeland, Å., & Oropilla, C. T. (2024). A Pedagogy of Emergent Ocean Literacy – Narrative accounts of children’s explorations in the coastal landscapes of Western Norway. *KINDknow Notes Series*, No. 10, 2024.

Two master’s students successfully completed their theses based on data generated from the project.

Film Awards:

The film *Ocean Portrait – Children by the North Sea* received two prestigious awards:

Best Pedagogical Concept Award at Tromsø Educational Film Festival (TREFF), March 2024.

Award of Recognition at ETHNOKINO Film Festival, Bern, Switzerland, October 2024.

VitenTV launched the film and it is now open for the public.

Public Engagement

One Ocean Exploration engaged with the public through various creative and interactive events:

Hvis jeg hadde en tryllestav (If I Had a Magic Wand): A workshop for children and families at the Climate Park during the “Varmere, våtere og villere” Climate Festival, March 2024.

Bor det monstre i havet? (Are There Monsters in the Ocean?): Intergenerational storytelling and research event during One Ocean Week at Skoltegrunnskaiaen, April 2024.

Havsans (Ocean Sense): A reflective conversation hosted at Vivite, June 2024.

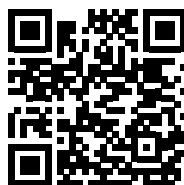
Looking Ahead

As we move into 2025, One Ocean Exploration will continue to expand its reach, deepening its impact on children’s understanding of the ocean and contributing to the broader dialogue on ocean literacy and sustainable development.

Water and waterscapes

Water and waterscapes project aims to raise awareness of the need to cherish and protect water landscapes and sources and broaden understanding of water as a concept and vital resource for children and their families across contexts, nations and cultures. Moreover, the research interest is focused on understanding children’s exploration and meaning making in local landscapes and communities in rural and urban settings worldwide. In 2024, we worked on developing the project based on the pilot and the report from 2023. In this respect, we presented our pilot at the ECERA conference in Brighton at a self-organised symposium with our partners from UiT- The Arctic University of Norway, Canterbury University, New Zealand and Tanzania Early Childhood Community and Development (TECD), Tanzania.

In Norway, we created a new pilot to document and plan for the project to continue in more countries worldwide. We established further dialogues in Norway with the National Salmon Centre and a kindergarten in the Village of Lærdal. The pilot film can be seen here:



Lærdal river – Children’s Perspective

We negotiated with OMEP Europe and OMEP Vice President Adrijana Višnjić Jevtić (also affiliated with the University of Zagreb, Croatia) for support in spreading the invitation to participate to 60 member countries worldwide.

The plan for 2025 is to send out the invitation to 60 countries on five continents and analyse the data delivered to us by the responding milieus. In collaboration with MediaCenter at HVL, we also plan to create a short film based on a Norwegian case: children exploring the waterscapes of the Lærdal river.

PRO-DIALOG

Promoting Mental Health in Young Children – A Sustainable Dialogue-Based Approach in Kindergartens



Dr. Alicja Renata Sadownik
Work package manager



Remi Kaldhussæter, Veronica Kibbe Lisæth, Maj-Britt Rocio Posserud, Amanda Louise Flygel Tufta, Alicja Renata Sadownik, Kjersti Solvang Sundal, Ingvar Bjelland, Lisbeth Farestveit, Ida Lygre Vermeer, Trine Leikanger, Synnøve Ygre Hauge, Gro Janne Henningsen Wergeland

KINDknow is a partner in a new project called PRO-DIALOG. It is a large interdisciplinary, randomised controlled trial (RCT)-based project financed by the Research Council of Norway. Led by Professor Ingvar Bjelland and owned by Helse Bergen, the project addresses the increasing mental health challenges observed among young children by introducing a screening tool with significant potential to ensure early and relevant support for kindergarten children experiencing emerging mental health issues and insecurity.

To meet the systemic need for efficient and user-friendly methods to identify children in need of early support, PRO-DIALOG tests a novel method, “Dialog-Based Early Detection (DBTO)”, as part of an RCT study. This method is specifically designed for use during parental conferences in kindergartens.

The DBTO method facilitates the preparation, structure and outcomes of parental conferences, ensuring that important issues, questions and concerns are effectively addressed within the limited timeframe of the meetings, which occur once or twice a year. Before each conference, the parents and kindergarten professionals complete a tailored form, covering various aspects of the child’s development as well as their social and emotional well-being.

These dialogues enable parents and professionals to collaboratively decide on potential further support from specialised services and identify immediate low-level measures that can be implemented by the kindergarten staff during daily activities. For those parents who are concerned about their child’s development, such structured dialogues can provide reassurance, reduce uncertainty and offer relief.

Achievements in 2024

This year, the project reached several significant milestones, including:

- Testing and refining the digital version of the DBTO method based on user feedback.
- Completing training sessions for both kindergarten staff and parents/caregivers.
- Successfully recruiting participants for both the RCT and the planned qualitative studies.

KINDknow’s Contribution

KINDknow’s role in PRO-DIALOG focuses on the planned qualitative studies. These include conversational analyses of recorded parental conferences conducted with and without the DBTO method as well as group interviews with professionals and parents who have participated in DBTO-based conferences.

Move-play-explore in ECEC (MoveEarly)



Prof. Eivind Aadland
Project Manager



Katrine N. Aadland, Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, Alicja Renata Sadownik, Kjersti Johannessen, Maria Grindheim, Eivind Aadland.

Move-play-explore in early childhood education project (MoveEarly) is a large research and development project aiming to develop and promote an early childhood education pedagogy having movement, play and exploration as its core elements. The project is financed by the Research Council of Norway (large interdisciplinary research project) and HVL and is conducted 2022-2028. Research activities include theory development and didactic design, development of new assessments, co-creation of professional development, outcome evaluation, process evaluation and knowledge transfer. The main part of the project is a large randomised controlled trial, which started in August 2024 with recruitment of children and kindergarten staff. For the outcome evaluation, the study includes close to 600 children from 49 kindergartens. In September and October, we have had a group of eight researchers and research assistants travelling all over Bergen to conduct baseline assessment of multiple measures that, all together, aims to examine children's physical, cognitive, social-emotional development and well-being.

The main part of the MoveEarly intervention is professional development for kindergarten staff, which started with a kick-off for 400 kindergarten staff early in November at Campus Kronstad, including presentations about the project and theoretical and practical workshops. The feedback from kindergartens was good and, hope-

fully, this seminar provided motivation and direction for developing kindergarten practices over the next 18 months. As part of the ongoing support, kindergartens are offered an online resource (www.moveearly.no), including an ideas bank of activities and principles for promoting quality movement, play and exploration, and short video impulses. The access to this resource is currently limited to intervention kindergartens but will be made open access for kindergartens and the public after the project. The professional development may be completed with 15 credits on a master's degree level (www.hvl.no/studier/studieprogram/bevegelse-leik-og-utforskning-i-barnehagen/), making the intervention a continuing education qualifying as a course for a master's degree. Over the coming 18 months, we look forward to working together with kindergartens to co-create pedagogical practices with quality movement, play and exploration.

DocTalent for the EU



Dr. Zacharias Andreadakis



The DocTalent4EU project, funded by the European Union, is dedicated to enhancing the employability of PhD candidates by recognising and developing transferable skills which are essential for both academic and non-academic careers. A significant contribution to this initiative has been made by our KINDknow Associate Professor, Dr Zacharias Andreadakis, who has developed and promoted a course on teamwork, networking and co-creation as well as a series of work tasks around PhD employability and talent management.

Case in point, the designed course has been conducted twice at the University of Alcalá and once at UiT The Arctic University of Norway, focusing on fostering collaborative competencies among doctoral candidates. The course materials and outcomes have been documented and are accessible through Zenodo, providing valuable resources for the consortium and the broader academic community.

In addition to course development, efforts have been directed towards establishing Local Talent Management Centres (TMCs) within higher education institutions. These centres support PhD candidates in their career development by offering services such as mentoring, networking platforms and workshops on transferable skills. A comprehensive report detailing the framework and implementation strategies for these TMCs is currently under preparation, reflecting the project's commitment to structured talent management.

Promoting awareness of transferable skills and alternative career paths has been a central theme of the project's dissemination activities. Recent presentations at institutions including the University of Porto, the Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iași, and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki have underscored the importance of such skills in enhancing PhD employability. These engagements have

facilitated discussions on integrating transferable skills training into doctoral programmes and have highlighted the project's dedication to broadening career perspectives for early-career researchers.

The consortium has also organised pitching events in collaboration with partners such as NORCHILD and the University of Limerick. These events provide PhD candidates with platforms to present their research to diverse audiences, thereby enhancing their communication skills and expanding their professional networks. Such initiatives are integral to the consortium's strategy to bridge the gap between academic research and industry applications.

Looking ahead, the consortium plans to expand its initiatives by developing additional training modules and extending the reach of the Talent Management Centres. By continuing to foster collaborations across European universities and engaging with diverse stakeholders, DocTalent4EU strives to have a sustainable impact on doctoral education and career development.

In summary, through the concerted efforts of contributors like Dr Andreadakis and the collaborative endeavours of partner institutions, DocTalent4EU is making significant strides in transforming doctoral training. The project's focus on transferable skills, innovative training courses and the establishment of Talent Management Centres collectively contribute to enhancing the career readiness of PhD candidates will hopefully serve as a benchmark for doctoral preparation both within HVL and across Europe.

Read more about DocTalent4EU at doctalent4eu.eu/ and connect with it via LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/doctalent4eu/posts/?feedView=all

Nordic early childhood educational research journal – Nordisk Barnehageforskning tidsskrift



Prof. Liv Torunn Grindheim
Chief Editor of Nordic early childhood education research journal



**nordisk
barnehageforskning**
nordic early childhood educational research

In the past year, Nordic early childhood education research journal (*Nordisk Barnehageforskning*) has continued to strengthen its position as a prominent journal within the field of early childhood education research in the Nordic region. We are pleased to announce that the journal received 89 article submissions this year. Of these, 55 articles were accepted after a thorough evaluation process, ensuring that only high-quality research is published. This represents an increase from 2023, when 36 manuscripts were accepted. In 2024, there were four issues, three of them were special issues, exploring significant and contemporary topics in early childhood education: “A Pedagogical Perspective on Translingualism in Early Childhood Education”, “Early Childhood Leadership and Tensions” and “Coherence and/or Progress in Early Childhood Teacher Education (ECTE) in the Nordic Countries”. The published articles have been downloaded in full texts around 123 000 times compared to 88 000 downloads in 2023. These figures reveal that the journal is seen as relevant to the early childhood research field regarding both publishing and reading. The latter is conditioned by the fact that this is an online, open access journal which is freely available to all interested readers.

The possibility to publish in any of the Scandinavian languages as well as English reflects the multifocal approach to languages at KINDknow and opens for a variety of scholars to publish. This is reflected in 131 received manuscripts in 2024, which again gives the editors the possibilities to forward high quality manuscripts to a subject editor with specific knowledge and network for finding reviewers. Eighty-seven manuscripts were rejected, several of these are desk rejections, followed by an invitation to resubmit, after doing some specific revisions to improve the quality, and many of

the authors do so. Fifty-six manuscripts were accepted for review and further publication. In total, we published 60 articles in 2024.

The distribution of tasks in the process towards publications, involving editors in chief from three institutions (HVL/KINDknow, UiS/FILIORUM, OsloMET), subject editors or special issues editors as well as reviewers is a way to improve quality in the published articles as well as involve and build a strong early childhood research community. To achieve the latter, several, including early career, researchers are involved in the processes towards publications. To acknowledge and surface meritorious contributions from an involved scholar, published articles include the names of the responsible editors. The single-blind approach aims at prioritising PhD candidates' progression. In addition, when applying for special issues, NBF asks for editors from more than a single institution or country. One of the special issues per year is assigned for the theme of the yearly “Norwegian early childhood education research conference”. This strengthens the quality at the conference as well as the quality and recognition of the journal. FILIORUM and KINDknow are in charge of these conferences that are very popular among early childhood researchers and practitioners. In 2024, about 300 people attended the conference.

ECEC historical project

Phenomena of early childhood and kindergarten education – Of the past, present and future



Dr. Geert Thyssen
Project manager

Picking up the thread of last year's report on KINDknow's history project, which highlighted the efforts made to reorient this very project, below we again (briefly) outline its focus and detail some of the work done to help further develop it.

As a locally anchored and globally interconnected research centre, KINDknow under its history strand explores from various perspectives key features of, and developments, in early childhood education (ECE) in Norway and the Nordics. It approaches ECE through the lens of *danning*, *bildning* and the like often translated as (and reduced to?) *Bildung*. It fleshes out dilemmas and tensions from historical policies and practices that have come to characterise what is often referred to as a “Nordic” or even “Norwegian” model of kindergarten education. In so doing, it firmly connects never-really-bygone pasts and possible futures with the lived present, thereby complicating the Western Modern idea of even, linear time. At the same time, it opens up space for research into silences and niche areas within early childhood education research that carry critical informative potential for current-day mainstream ECE policy and practice.

One of the first things to be mentioned is that KINDknow has managed to fill the PhD position in the history of education it created in 2023 and from 1 June 2024 it has seen Camila Helene Hallås Farestveit enthusiastically join

its history project team. She wasted no time elaborating ideas for a feasible project plan throughout the summer.

Also during the summer, the history project leader, Geert Thyssen, developed a new line of research together with Cat Martins, a non-binary trans colleague from the Arts Faculty of the University of Porto. This new research area concerns the history of gender non-conformity and transgenderism in (early childhood) education. The first results of the research were presented at the International Standing Conference of the History of Education (ISCHE) in Natal, Brazil and at the European Conference for Educational Research (ECER) in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Both Camilla Farestveit and Geert Thyssen further presented their respective research projects at a KINDknow history project seminar organised at HVL on 12 September 2024, where Gitte Bastiansen also outlined the public sector-based, Norges Fiskerimuseum-related PhD project which she, Alicja Sadownik and Elin Ødegaard conceived and for which they hope to receive funding in 2025. Merethe Roos and Elin Ødegaard, who also attended, offered encouraging feedback.

With assistance from her main supervisor, Geert Thyssen, and co-supervisors, Alicja Sadownik and Merethe Roos, Camila Farestveit finalised her PhD project description in October and shortly after, in November, received

the good news of her admittance to the PhD programme Danning og didaktiske praksiser. The title of her PhD project is “Utenfor porten – En historisk diskursiv analyse av barnehagelærernes didaktiske praksiser lokalisert til dannelsesarenaer utenfor barnehagens egne områder” (“Beyond the Gate: A Historical Discourse Analysis of Kindergarten Teachers’ Didactic Practices Located in Bildung-Arenas outside Kindergartens’ Own Premises”).

For 2025, the project leaders, with assistance from Merethe Roos and other project members, hope to produce a paper on the state of the art of Norwegian (Nordic) early childhood education history. This work is intended to feed into the next Utdanningshistorisk konferanse which is expected to be organised at HVL in 2025 or 2026, in cooperation with Utdanningshistorisk nettverk i Norge and Norges Fiskerimuseum, and with assistance from history project member Gitte Bastiansen and KINDknow’s administrative coordinator Olga Shangina. Geert Thyssen and Elin Ødegaard will also contribute to a special issue of the Spanish journal *Historia y Memoria de la Educación*, centring on the question: “Can the arts change the ways of thinking about the history of education?”.

Their article will attempt to address this question from the perspectives of urban and coastal art, respectively, based on the case studies “StreetWise” and “One Ocean – Ocean Portrait”. Both are arts-based activist projects involving, as co-researchers and storytellers, the artists concerned: street musicians, on the one hand, and four-year-olds and adult ‘relational artists’, on the other hand. The research conducted here is also to be presented in a panel on “Politics, Arts and Historiography of Education” at the 9th Nordic Educational History Conference taking place in Stockholm, Sweden on 14-16 May 2025.

A joint proposal by Merethe Roos, Geert Thyssen and Elin Ødegaard was submitted at the start of November to this end. All these initiatives should help raise awareness among historians of education (and others) of the potential of research in early childhood and kindergarten education for historical and educational research more generally. The history team will conduct further relevant research to be presented at seminars, conferences and doctoral summer schools, which will be reported next year.



Prof. Siri Sollied Madsen
Project Manager

The DigiCross project continues to analyse data collected across its diverse contexts. In 2024, the project achieved a significant milestone with the publication of an article based on data from teacher educators in Slovenia, Portugal and Norway:

Publication Highlight

Madsen, S. S., Saure, H. I., Lie, M. H., Janeš, A., Klančar, A., Brito, R., & Thorvaldsen, S. (2024). Pathway Analysis of the Dynamics of Teacher Educators' Professional Digital Competence. In *New Media Pedagogy: Research Trends, Methodological Challenges, and Successful Implementations*. Communications in Computer and Information Science, Springer.

Ongoing Studies

Led by DigiCross member Heidi Iren Saure from NLA, the research team is currently working on two new studies using Norwegian DigiCross datasets:

- **Contextual Factors:** This study explores contextual factors influencing teacher educators' ability to enhance their professional digital competence.
- **Organisational Learning:** This research examines how higher education institutions are structured to support the development of professional digital competence among teacher educators.

Preliminary findings suggest that organisational frameworks, such as institutional size and structure, significantly impact employees' perceptions of their opportunities for professional development in digital competence.

Methodological Contributions

In extension to the project, the team contributed to the book *Metodetilnærminger og prosessuelle design* with a chapter on research methodologies:

Madsen, S. S., & Bjørner, T. (2024). 3. Mixed methods: det dynamiske og komplekse møtet mellom kvalitative og kvantitative perspektiver. In *Metodetilnærminger og prosessuelle design i barnehageforskning* (pp. 40-58). Universitetsforlaget. <https://doi.org/doi:10.18261/9788215064697-24-03>

Additional Studies

Parallel to these efforts, several related studies have been conducted:

Digital Competence in Early Childhood Teacher Education: Tveiterås, N. C., Madsen, S. S., Unstad, T., Dardanou, M., & Habbestad, H. (2024). Profesjonsfaglig digital kompetanse i barnehagelærerutdanningene – oversettelser fra nasjonale styringsdokumenter til lokale studieplaner. *Uniped*, 47(4), 283-298. <https://doi.org/10.18261/uniped.47.4.5>

Leadership Development in Early Childhood Education: Madsen, S. S., Kleiven, H. M. H., Mørreaunet, S., Antonsen, Y., & Steinsvik, B. (2024). Nasjonal lederutdanning for styre i barnehagen – en arena for kvalifisering, sosialisering og subjektivering. *Nordisk barnehageforskning*, 21(2), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.23865/nbf.v21.468>

Looking Forward

The project is making strides in developing its new website (<https://uit.no/research/teknologioglaering>), which is still under construction but beginning to take shape.

The DigiCross project remains at the forefront of research into professional digital competence, contributing valuable insights into teacher education and institutional frameworks that support ongoing development.

INDearly - Promoting indigenous-based pedagogy across the circumpolar north



Veronica Bergan
Project Manager, UiT

The INDearly project aims to explore, share and develop knowledge across the circumpolar north, rooted in indigenous values, knowledge, practices and ways of being in the world. This initiative focuses on enriching the field of early childhood education and care (ECEC) and early childhood teacher education (ECTE) through Indigenous-based pedagogy for sustainability.

The primary goal of INDearly is to establish a collaborative network of scholars dedicated to developing and strengthening Indigenous-based pedagogy and courses for sustainability within ECE and ECTE. By serving as a think tank, this network aspires to advance explorative education and research that prioritises reciprocity, care and indigenous knowledge systems.

Key objectives include:

Deepening insights into indigenous values and knowledge systems and integrating them into ECE and ECTE practices.

Facilitating the exchange of teaching approaches, including online guest lectures on Indigenous-based pedagogy for sustainability.

Influencing policymakers to incorporate the voices of children, ECTE students and Indigenous ancestors into educational strategies for a sustainable future.

Project deliverables include:

Workshops: two in-person workshops, including practical Indigenous land-based activities. January 2025 in Kautokeino and May 2026 in Tromsø, Norway.

Knowledge Exchange in ECTE: development of teaching content and course exchanges for ECTE students, combined

with mobility programmes such as “north2north” or “Erasmus+.”

Student Exchange: exploration of an international or deepening semester for ECTE students, supported by mobility programmes.

Collaborative Research: development of research projects aimed at indigenising or transforming Indigenous knowledge for sustainability in ECE and ECTE.

Online Learning: creation of online lectures for master’s programmes, focusing on indigenous knowledge, particularly for indigenous students.

Co-authored Outputs: joint research publications and teaching literature.

Funding Applications: developing proposals for larger projects related to research or teaching content.

The project brings together experts from leading institutions across the circumpolar north. In Norway, the team includes Veronica Bergan and Anne Myrstad both, from KINDknow-UiT, Marianne Presthus Heggen, KINDknow-HVL, Karl Viktor Magne Johansson, Nord University, Marikaissa Laiti, Sámi University of Applied Sciences. The other participants are Jaana Juutinen, University of Oulu, Finland, Angela Lunda, University of Alaska Southeast, USA and Carie Green, South Dakota State University, USA.

The project is funded by UArctic with NOK 400,000 and is closely connected to the research activities at KINDknow and UiT The Arctic University of Norway.

Research school NORBARN



Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard
Project Manager



In 2024, the NORCHILD research school is in progress. NORCHILD has conducted two PhD days, started up two of the main courses, held five subject-relevant webinars and held council meetings and board meetings where further progress has been discussed. The research school is still under development, and a lot of pioneering work is under way, including getting internships started.

In 2024, the research school admitted 11 PhD candidates. In addition, one postdoc was offered membership. The research school now has 29 active PhD students and four postdoc members.

In the spring of 2024, OsloMet, in collaboration with UiS and NORCHILD, launched course 1 “Recent kindergarten research in a Nordic perspective”. Thirteen NORCHILD members participated in this course, which had one digital start-up meeting and one physical two-day gathering. Course 2 “Responsible management of knowledge development - establishing change agents”, started in the fall of 2024. The course had five participants. Both courses are newly established PhD courses of five ECTS in ECEC research at OsloMet and Western Norway University College, respectively.

Following feedback from PhD students at the research school, the NORBARN research school decided to offer two physical PhD seminars for research school students

in 2024. These were given at six-month intervals and help to build relationships between research school students, while giving them access to a broad scientific spectrum. This spring’s PhD seminar was held at partner institution University of Inland Norway (INN) and had the theme “Towards more liveable futures”. The main focus was sustainability and included international researchers such as Nanna Jordt Jørgensen at Københavns professions Højskole, Jayne Osgood at Middlesex University, Fikile Nxumalo, University of Toronto and Agnes Westgaard Bjelkerud from INN.

In order to increase participation among the research school students, those affiliated with both NORCHILD and the institution are invited to help organise the seminar. This helps to give the PhD students transferable skills in both leadership and professional understanding. In the fall of 2024, Western Norway University College (HVL) held a PhD seminar for the research school. This time, the theme was “Why is my research important?”. The PhD seminar at HVL was held ahead of the Norwegian Kindergarten Research Conference. This allows the research school to gain access to expertise from academically strong kindergarten researchers who are also key holders at the conference. External contributors this time included Helle Marie Skovbjerg (Design School Kolding), Anthony Okely (University of Wollongong), Tilde Bekker (Eindhoven University of Technology).



NORBARN members gathered at the PhD seminar “Towards More Livable Futures” at Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Hamar campus.



At the autumn meeting at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen campus, students received feedback and responses from, among others, Professor Anthony Okely from the University of Wollongong, Australia, and Professor Tilde Bekker from Eindhoven University, the Netherlands.

The research school is working to establish contact with working life for externship where one of the goals is to provide leadership experience for early childhood researchers. The year 2024 started with a presentation where project manager Elin Eriksen Ødegaard presented NORBARN to managers in KS in January. Throughout the year, the research school has worked to actualise itself for working life. Now, at the end of the year, the research school has completed a course involving job shadowing as an externship in working life. This will be launched in 2025.

The research school has communicated its activities to the Ministry during the year. First, in January when NORCHILD gave a presentation to a delegation from the Ministry of Education, together with BLU at HVL. In June, NORBARN was represented by Administrative Coordinator Hanne Israelsen and Deputy Director Zacharias Andreadakis in conversation with Minister of Research and Higher Education Oddmund Hoel.

In the spring of 2024, the foundation for the follow-up research was laid, and in September, Mikhail Gradovski and Zacharias Andreadakis started the follow-up research at the research school. A merged methodological design of oral interviews and follow-up surveys have been conducted with several students (currently 12 and counting), and iterations of this research exercise are expected to continue from 2025 and onwards.

Plans for 2025

- In 2025, the research school plans to start course 3 “Introduction to Systematic Review (SR) in ECEC Education”. This course is also five ECTS and will be offered at UiS in collaboration with HVL and NORBARN.
- In January, the course “Open Science” will be given.
- In August 2025, the research school will offer an international summer course entitled “International Summer School of Narrative Enquiry”, and we have been working this fall to prepare for this. Websites, speakers, location and registration form are now in place and will be announced before the end of 2024.
- In the fall of 2025, course 1 “Recent early childhood research in a Nordic perspective”, OsloMet/UiS, will be offered for the second time.
- The webinars will continue. More information will be found in NORCHILD (NORBARN) webpages and newsletters.
- In March 2025, University of Agder (UiA), in collaboration with NORCHILD, will organise the research school’s next PhD day.
- In October, University of Stavanger (UiS) will organise a PhD day for the research school ahead of the Norwegian Kindergarten Research Conference 2025.
- The research school will offer an externship for candidates admitted as members.

TASTE



Warm lunch in kindergarten during TASTE data collection.



Participants in TASTE-project. From left: Chloë Carpi, Amalie Thoresen, Merete Helland Hagen, Hege Wergedahl and Eli Kristin Aadland (project leader).

The TASTE project aims to empower children to make informed and reflective food choices based on critical thinking. Creating space for children to reflect on their food experiences is essential. Taste is a complex and deeply integrated experience, involving physiological, psychological, and social dimensions, all of which hold equal importance.

In the TASTE project, the school subject Food and Health plays a central role in both Norway and Denmark. The project critically examines teaching practices both indoors, in specialized classrooms, and outdoors in various landscapes. Additionally, the project includes a work package focused on an exploratory approach to meals and food-related activities in Norwegian kindergartens. A key goal is to involve children in a more critically reflective process within the pedagogical work in schools and kindergartens.

Organizational Development

The TASTE project encompasses work packages for both kindergarten and school research. The kindergarten research team includes PhD student Chloë Carpi from Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), Elly Herikstad Tuset from OsloMet, and Hege Wergedahl from HVL. Throughout 2024, the project has conducted several meetings and workshops, including organizational sessions with work package leaders and collaborative workshops involving all TASTE participants. These meetings have focused on data collection, analysis, and the results from both kindergarten and school settings. Recently, discussions have emphasized the development of taste didactics, with plans underway for a meeting in Copenhagen in June 2025, gathering all TASTE participants.

Collaboration with kindergartens has also been a key focus in 2024. Initial meetings aimed to plan data collection, while recent discussions have shifted towards organizing the development of taste didactics.

Data Collection and Development of Taste Didactics

In 2024, data were collected from four kindergartens using a combination of methods: video observations of lunch meals, group interviews with staff, and interactive interview and drawing activities with children. Insights from this data collection, combined with kindergarten staff's own observations and reflection exercises, will serve as the foundation for developing taste didactics.

The development phase, set for spring 2025, will be led by the kindergartens in collaboration with researchers. This process will include kick-off meetings at each kindergarten, followed by monthly follow-ups. The goal is to create several pedagogical tools by June 2025. During the autumn of 2025, each kindergarten will select a subset of these tools and integrate them into regular practice, aiming to foster children's awareness and reflection on taste. Data from both the development and implementation phases will be collected throughout 2025.

Research Dissemination

PhD student Chloë Carpi has authored a manuscript based on the data collected in 2024. The manuscript is scheduled for submission to a peer-reviewed journal in early 2025, contributing to the broader academic dissemination of the project's findings.

Erasmus+ mobility grant



Dr. Aihua Hu
Co-Project Manager

This year, Dr. Aihua Hu got an Erasmus Plus Mobility grant. The two major aims of this project are to further strengthen existing educational and research collaboration and to enhance the quality development of Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), Beijing Institute of Education (BjIE), Beijing Normal University (BNU), and Northwest Normal University (NWNNU) within early childhood education and care (ECEC).

The focus is on integrating the four dimensions of sustainability into and expanding subtopics for ECEC teacher education, research and practices. The KINDknow Centre at HVL is a leading research centre in research on Early Childhood Education and Care for Sustainability (ECECfS) and the project participants of this application and participants from the partner institutions have all been involved in a UTFORSK project (2017-2022), one of which was focused around ECECfS.

The planned student and staff mobilities (studies and traineeship) will enhance and ground what the partners have done previously to further development. This project will contribute to new cooperation in education in the way that HVL helps NWNNU develop courses on ECECfS and all the involved partners will develop a joint course open to ECEC student teachers across institutions and later beyond. When it comes to research, we will develop a participatory research design to include researchers and professionals in kindergartens, which will be used to apply for a research project financed by the Norwegian Research Council.

Erasmus+ project: Anti-bias competences for teachers

Anti-bias education for ECEC teachers: Learning through video-coaching



Monica Hauge Skaten



Thor Erik Sortland



The project “Anti-bias education for early childhood teachers: learning through video-coaching” started in October 2024 and will run for three years. It aims to promote social justice in early childhood education by promoting anti-bias competencies among early childhood educators in Europe. To achieve this, we will develop and pilot an innovative professional development programme that utilises video-coaching as the primary training methodology. In addition, we will create a toolkit to support wider dissemination and impact assessment.

By co-constructing these tools with 30 teachers from three different countries, we aim to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. We will follow an Educational Design Research (EDR) framework to inform our development process and prioritise dissemination and research output.

As European societies become increasingly diverse, it is imperative to create inclusive classrooms where all children feel valued and have equal opportunities. Unconscious bias among educators can negatively impact inclusion and perpetuate harmful stereotypes. By promoting anti-bias education, we can foster democratic values, respect human rights and create more equitable learning environments.

Ultimately, our project aims to enhance the quality of early childhood education by strengthening teachers’ anti-bias competencies. This will lead to increased inclusion, social justice and improved learning outcomes for all children.

Partners in the project are:

- AP University of Applied Sciences and Arts Antwerp (Belgium) – Coordinator
- DSW University of Lower Silesia Wroclaw (Poland)
- The Spanish Confederation of Schools (Spain)
- University of Vienna (Austria)
- Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (Norway)

From the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences’ side, the project is led by Thor Erik Sortland and Monica Skaten. In collaboration with our partner kindergarten, Espira Salamonskogen in Bømlo municipality, we will develop an anti-bias professional development programme (PDP) that incorporates video-coaching. In November, representatives from both HVL and the kindergarten convened with our European partners in Wroclaw, Poland.

We engaged in critical discussions concerning early childhood education in our respective countries, the concepts of social justice and democracy, and the ethical considerations associated with video research in our settings.

In early December, the project will host its inaugural workshop on anti-bias education and video-coaching. Approximately 50 participants are expected to gather at the Hagesund campus. During this event, we will hear from seasoned experts in the field of diversity as well as emerging researchers. The Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (SIKT) will also present and join our discussion around ethical challenges in the field. This workshop will serve as a platform for important conversations about the needs and challenges within the sector as well as discussions on how to address these challenges, including within the context of this project. Participants include researchers, early childhood educators, students and representatives from kindergartens.

In early 2025, we will initiate the Educational Design Research (EDR) process with the kindergarten. During the initial months of 2025, teachers from the participating countries will convene online to discuss progress and challenges. The entire team will reconvene in Austria in autumn 2025 to discuss the progress made thus far.



Kindergarten teacher and board member in Espira Salomonskogen Heine Larsen and the project coordinator Kato Luyckx from AP university of Applied Sciences and Arts Antwerp.
Photo: Monica Hauge Skaten.

Phd thesis defence



Prof. Kari Ludvigsen, Prof. Tom Are Trippestad, Vegard Fusche Moe, Solveig Marie Borgund, Prof. Linda Rönnberg, Prof. Sølvi Mausethagen, Dr. Kjetil Fosshagen

This year, **Solveig Marie Borgund** successfully defended her doctoral thesis: *Reforming Kindergarten Teacher Education – Between National Standards and Institutional Freedom*. The thesis examines Norway's 2012 reform of kindergarten teacher education, shedding light on its governance, implementation, and reception. The study provides valuable insights into the reform process, from policy formulation to its practical implication for students and institutions.

Background of the Thesis

The 2012 reform aimed to improve the quality and content of kindergarten teacher education, including renaming the profession from “preschool teacher” to “kindergarten teacher.” Borgund’s research explores the characteristics of the reform, its local adaptations, and students’ experiences. Through this case study, the thesis highlights the complexities of governing and reforming higher education.

Methodology

Borgund employed a qualitative case study approach, combining document analysis and in-depth interviews with staff, leaders, and students involved in kindergarten teacher education. The study consists of three sub-studies addressing policy formulation, implementation, and the reception of the reform.

Policy Formulation: Tensions in Governance

The first sub-study analyzed the policy formulation phase, revealing a structured yet contested process. While the authorities engaged various stakeholders in an open process, real influence was limited. Key decisions

were made before consultation rounds, leading to dissatisfaction among some actors.

The reform process concluded without consensus on the new structure, complicating implementation within existing institutional frameworks.

Implementation and Execution: Balancing Governance and Freedom

The second sub-study examined the implementation phase. Despite detailed governance documents, institutions adapted the reform locally based on resources and staff competence. National guidelines served as leadership tools, but funding constraints frequently challenged implementation efforts.

Borgund found that institutions demonstrated strong willingness and ability to implement the reform. However, balancing national directives with institutional freedom remained a central tension.

Reception of the Reform: Student Perspectives

The third sub-study highlighted student perspectives, focusing on their experiences of quality in education. Students identified quality as a combination of structural conditions, motivation, and teacher-student interaction. While institutions managed structural responsibilities, fostering meaningful interaction was seen as a shared responsibility between educators and students.

Key Tensions Highlighted by the Thesis

Borgund’s findings reveal several tensions reinforced by the reform:

1. National Governance vs. Institutional Freedom: The detailed framework limited institutions’ ability to adapt education locally.
2. Academicization vs. Practice Orientation: Strengthening academic content created challenges in balancing theory and practical training.
3. Interdisciplinary vs. Disciplinary Focus: The introduction of interdisciplinary knowledge areas sparked debates about content and form.
4. Quality vs. Economic Efficiency: Funding constraints hindered institutions’ ability to deliver high-quality education in line with reform goals.
5. Professionalization from above vs Professionalization from within: A top-down professionalization met the need for control over the profession from within.

Conclusion: A contested reform and an education in a field of tensions

Borgund's thesis demonstrates that while the reform set ambitious goals, significant challenges remain. The reform added new layers to existing structures, intensifying tensions in governance, practice, and quality. Achieving the desired outcomes requires improved coordination and cooperation across the sector.

Despite these challenges, the reform has highlighted the importance of professionalization and innovation in kindergarten teacher education. Borgund's research serves as a valuable contribution to understanding the complexities of educational reform and its implications for the future of early childhood education.



Fahrana Borg, Ingerid Straume, Jens Fikser, Léa Marie Maison, Anita Berge, Barbara Sageidet, Marianne Heggen og Elin Ødegaard

Phd candidate **Léa Marie Maison** from the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Humanities successfully defend her dissertation for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor at the University of Stavanger in November 2024.

Maison's dissertation, titled "Sustainability Education and the Political Role of Educators - Encounters between Zapatista and Norwegian Perspectives", explores the intersection of sustainability education and the political engagement of educators, drawing on insights from both Zapatista and Norwegian educational contexts. The defense was chaired by Anita Berge, Head of the Department of ECEC at the University of Stavanger.

Prior to the defense, Léa Marie Maison presented a trial lecture on the topic:

"How can critical utopian action research be designed and conducted within the field of education for sustainability, and how can it contribute to advancing the field?"

Evaluation Committee

The dissertation was assessed by the following committee members:

- **Professor Ingerid Solrundsatter Straume**, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences
- **Docent Farhana Borg**, Dalarna University, Sweden
- **Associate Professor Jens Kaae Fisker**, University of Stavanger

Supervisors

Léa Marie Maison has been supervised by:

- **Professor Barbara Maria Sageidet**, University of Stavanger
- **Professor Elin Eriksen Ødegaard**, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences
- **Professor Marianne Presthus Heggen**, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences

Stories

This year, we ask our PhD and postdoc candidates a question
“How do you envision your project impacting early childhood education
at an international level?”

Hege Fimreite

Postdoctoral fellow at
Ex-Ped-Lab project, HVL
April 2023–December 2025



As a postdoctoral fellow in the EX-PED-LAB project (Exploration and Pedagogical Innovation Laboratory), I am responsible for Work Package 5, the replication study investigating the workshop methodology in kindergarten teacher education. To achieve the goals of exploration and pedagogical innovations in teacher education, I have presented preliminary data internationally at the European Early Childhood Research Conference in Brighton, UK. Moreover, I led the delegation from our project group on an excursion and exchange with the Play & Learning Lab at University College Copenhagen and to our active partners at Kolding School of Design (DSK). This international collaboration is productive, and I am currently working to host our Danish partners to revisit our kindergarten teacher education and research milieu in Sogndal before they also visit our KINDknow Research Centre in Bergen in 2025.

In terms of academic achievements, I have published three academic articles in 2024 about children’s play and changing teachers’ roles in higher education and one academic book based on my recent PhD. I have also actively disseminated my recent research on collegial supervision and its benefits for quality development and on play topics.

Furthermore, I have co-created and studied data through workshops with students, educators, in-service teachers, researchers and artists. My research explores the significance of playful educational workshops for educators’ experience of their teaching role and how and if this change of context can enable transformative learning for the students.

I envision my work impacting the social dimension of learning, which is essential for quality education both on a kindergarten level and in higher education, not only in the local settings where I work but also in that of our local experiences are found to be relevant in international settings. More experimental teaching and educational workshops facilitate learning that activates students to take responsibility for their knowledge and be prepared for the profession. I find strengthening education especially important in times of change and uncertainty.

Czarecah Tuppil Oropilla

Postdoctoral fellow at
Ex-Ped-Lab project, HVL
May 2023–April 2026



My work and research have had a significant international impact on early childhood education and care, primarily through co-leadership roles in projects such as EX-PED-LAB, the Norwegian Kindergarten Research Conference (NBFK) and the One Ocean project. These initiatives have fostered new research and pedagogical practices that challenge traditional approaches to early childhood education (ECE), extending their influence beyond Norway to a global audience.

In terms of academic contributions, I had four main publications in 2024, with six more forthcoming in the upcoming year. These works, including journal articles, book chapters and reports, are all open-access, ensuring broad accessibility to educators, researchers and policymakers worldwide.

Outreach activities have also played a central role in my work. I have participated in events such as Ageing Festivals, One Ocean Day and VilVite Research Day, where I have helped translate research into practical insights for children, families and communities. Moreover, I have produced, and continue to produce, the “PedPod by EX-PED-LAB” podcast, which explores pedagogical innovations in early childhood education and care, available on all podcast platforms.

As co-editor of a book for Springer Nature, along with my presentations at conferences, seminars and workshops, I continue to contribute to the broader discourse in early childhood education, particularly focusing on giving arenas and platforms for Global South, indigenous and intergenerational voices to be heard and visibilised. Ongoing research and collaborations with colleagues in the field, combined with mentoring and supervising early career researchers and master’s degree students, further enhance the global impact of my work.

“How do you envision your project impacting early childhood education at an international level?”

Maria Grindheim

PhD fellow, HVL

January 2023–December 2026



My PhD research, embedded within MoveEarly (Move-play-explore in early childhood education) and KINDknow, focuses on conceptualising and theorising the move-play-explore nexus using a multi-methodological approach. This includes a narrative literature review, participatory methods such as guided tours with children and staff, drawing of maps, focus group conversations, and microanalysis of videorecorded moments of move-play-explore activities.

The MoveEarly project aims at counterbalancing the challenges of schoolification and sedentary lifestyles in ECEC. My hope is that the research we do with conceptualisation and theorisation of the move-play-explore nexus can counterbalance these trends by providing arguments for more child-sensitive and sustainable education, which accounts for the whole child and all children, both nationally and internationally.

In 2023, my PhD colleague Tracey Joyce and I, along with illustrator Karoline Ådnanes, published the book “Alex og det store treet” (Alex and the Big Tree), supported by KINDknow and MoveEarly. This book is designed to support dialogical reading between children and staff, making our research findings accessible and engaging for both children and practitioners. In 2024, we worked on an application for having the book peer-reviewed in HVL’s system for peer-reviewing of arts-based research forms. We are happy to share that the application was approved, and we received III points for it, which is equivalent to II publishing points in HVL’s system. We are hoping that the idea behind the book can be inspiration for thinking about new ways to disseminate research.

Ultimately, I hope my project can be seen as a contribution to a global movement towards sustainable, holistic and engaging early childhood education practices that benefit all children.

Karoline Jangård Selliseth

PhD fellow, HVL

September 2019–May 2025



My project enquires about the implications of Commercial Communication Apps (CCAs; Purchased apps for digital parent-teacher communication) for parents and kindergarten staff in the Norwegian kindergarten sector; however, it is transferable to an international context. My research contributes to early childhood education and practices nationally as well as internationally because empirical research on the utility of such apps is sparse in both contexts. As a result, there is little research to highlight the impact of communication apps on the work of kindergarten teachers and parent-staff relationships,

The study is a qualitative case study of two kindergartens with different communication practices towards parents. One of the kindergartens utilised a CCA called MyKid as their central communication channel, while the other did not use such an app. The respondents were parents, staff (pedagogical leaders and supporting staff like assistants and skilled workers) and owners. My findings suggest that CCA-use centralises information from the kindergarten, makes it more available for parents and frees up time for more substantial face-to-face interactions, thereby benefitting parent-teacher communication. No-CCA communication causes some parents to miss crucial information because of communication obstructions. However, the no-app approach generates more frequent face-to-face interactions which offer the actors access to relational situations of information exchange, potentially benefitting the communication.

Furthermore, the respondents' arguments on rejecting or introducing CCAs revealed conflicting discourses on digitalisation and the concept of 'professional kindergarten quality'. The respondents in the 'no-CCA kindergarten' conceptualise 'kindergarten quality' as closeness and care and see CCAs as a hindrance to this. The 'CCA kindergarten' respondents present digitalisation as future-oriented and self-evidently positive. In addition, CCA-practices are interpreted as a Foucauldian 'technology of the self' that alters the thoughts and actions of parents and staff as well as creates roles and affects the professional identities of the kindergarten teachers.

My research is practice-oriented and innovative and, therefore, it offers an essential contribution to early childhood education and practice at the local, national and international levels.

“How do you envision your project impacting early childhood education at an international level?”

Nils Christian Tveiterås

PhD fellow,
Arctic University of Norway
August 2021–July 2025



In my doctoral project, I focus on digital technology and competence in early childhood education teacher training in the Norwegian context. However, the findings have international relevance due to the growing interest in this topic. My research aims to enhance awareness and foster discussions about the challenges and opportunities presented by digitalisation in education. Digitalisation is a global phenomenon impacting childhood worldwide, making it crucial to exchange experiences and research findings to learn from one another. Although my research review and curriculum analysis are rooted in the Norwegian context, they can inspire similar studies in other settings. A key component of my PhD project explores the use of immersive virtual reality (IVR) in group discussions during online classes. This has the potential to revolutionise professional collaboration across kindergartens, especially in rural areas with small staff groups and significant distances. While various digital solutions already facilitate online collaboration, participants in my study reported that IVR offers a greater sense of community. This can significantly reduce feelings of isolation in the workplace and enhance professional development for in-service early childhood teachers.

Tracey Joyce

PhD fellow at MoveEarly
project, HVL
December 2022–November 2026



At an international level, the details of the development and the results of my analysis of the measurement instruments will influence how people consider the ‘testing’ of children. Currently, the majority of the testing of children focuses on the results, not the child’s participation or how they achieve their results. This has been shown to cause stress and anxiety with children, and staff, in kindergartens and the testing of children is, therefore, seen negatively and is often considered unnecessary. By developing a playful challenge in which the children are encouraged, but not forced, to participate through storytelling, the emphasis is moved from the child achieving a ‘correct’ solution. Instead the children can use their creative imaginations to achieve the challenges and it is that adaptability that is being measured. The results show that some children are more creative and adaptable than others, and they also show that the vast majority of the children enjoyed the challenges and did not feel under pressure. By developing these new and unique challenges, we can get a good picture of movement, play and exploration in kindergarten aged children and use this information to help develop practices.

Pernille Buschmann Eriksen

PhD fellow

November 2023 – October 2027



The process evaluation component of this doctoral project, grounded in Realist Evaluation (RE), aims to uncover whether the MoveEarly intervention works and how and why it develops in various contexts. This understanding is essential for international applicability, as it enables the adaptation of interventions to different cultural, resource and policy environments. The project provides insights into the contextual factors influencing implementation and will suggest a scalable framework adaptable to the distinct needs of various communities and nations.

A significant aspect of the project is its focus on professional development for educators. The project will examine how kindergarten staff integrate MoveEarly practices into their daily routines, thereby contributing valuable insights to global discussions on kindergarten teacher training and professional development. This information can then inform education programmes, ensuring that educators around the world are equipped with the skills and knowledge to incorporate movement, play and exploration into their teaching strategies.

Furthermore, the MoveEarly project fosters an environment of international collaboration and knowledge sharing. The insights gathered can be disseminated through academic publications, international conferences and collaborative networks, thereby contributing to a global community of practice focused on improving early childhood education. This project aims to share the voices of kindergarten staff, ensuring that their significant contributions to the MoveEarly project are acknowledged by others.

“How do you envision your project impacting early childhood education at an international level?”

Inga Margrethe Fagerbakke

PhD fellow, HVL

August 2019–February 2024



My PhD project, which I am finishing up this winter, is linked to the Erasmus+ initiative SciTalk. It addresses the need for pedagogical strategies to foster exploratory science conversations in early childhood education. The research indicates that adult-child interactions are often brief, and educators feel hesitant when engaging with science topics. My study equips educators with tools to engage in meaningful conversations, bridging this gap and promoting scientific literacy.

At an international level, this project offers a model for integrating science conversations into everyday educational settings. It emphasises child agency, encouraging children to take initiative and actively engage with their environment. By combining dialogic principles inspired by Michael Bakhtin with practical methods like video-based reflections, the project equips educators to reflect on and improve their practices.

The inclusion of outdoor learning contexts and focus on multiparty conversations ensures that the findings resonate across diverse educational settings. By highlighting the role of non-verbal communication, the research provides insights relevant to international contexts where holistic communication is essential.

Through SciTalk’s international collaborations, the project’s findings can inform curricula and professional development programmes globally. The video-stimulated reflection methodology provides teacher educators worldwide with a practical tool to support reflective practices among students, encouraging enquiry-driven, child-centred pedagogy.

Ultimately, this project contributes to a global understanding of how early science education can support curiosity, critical thinking and environmental awareness. By addressing universal challenges in early childhood education, it inspires adaptable approaches that enrich practices worldwide, fostering a new generation of educators equipped to meet children’s scientific interests with confidence and creativity.

Marion Oen

Public PhD fellow, Bergen City Council/HVL

January 2020–May 2024



My research project aims to contribute internationally to the field of early childhood education and care (ECEC) by identifying and exploring key navigational spaces involved in supporting children's play. It also seeks to develop and theorise a method for co-creating new navigational spaces to facilitate play.

By analysing existing research, the project identifies 23 potential doings for facilitating children's play and highlights four navigational spaces to guide these doings: motive, power, imagination and time. Building on this work, the project introduces the 'possibility-workshop', which is a method grounded in social constructionism and a praxiological framework. This approach is designed to empower children, educators, researchers, policymakers, parents and other stakeholders to collaboratively create more inclusive play opportunities.

In the possibility-workshop, participants analyse a chosen element through cycles of abductive, deductive and inductive reasoning. In these cycles, play functions as both a method of exploration and a goal in itself. When tested in this project, participants co-created four new navigational spaces: framing, conditioning, timing and knowing. These spaces emerged during the workshops and progressively reshaped the educators' play practices.

The possibility-workshop is envisioned as an accessible and adaptable way to create diverse and innovative new navigational spaces in early childhood education. By fostering playful collaborative engagement, this research aims to support quality improvement efforts that are inclusive and responsive to the diverse and evolving needs within the field of ECEC.

Overall, this research aims to advance our understanding of educators' roles in facilitating children's play, and to also offer a practical and empowering approach to enhancing practices and driving quality improvements within the ECEC sector.

“How do you envision your project impacting early childhood education at an international level?”

Ingrid Skarprud

PhD fellow,

February 2024–January 2027



In my research in ECC teacher education, I look at the potential for more exploratory pedagogical practices in the various forms of teaching at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. In the exploration of new pedagogical practices, the project seeks to strengthen the students' ability to be exploratory in encounters with children and to facilitate when they enter the field of practice. In order for exploratory practice to be part of the kindergarten day, it requires staff who have expertise in how this can be done.

Experience with exploratory practice is fundamental to be able to have an understanding of how this is made possible, and that the experience can create an understanding of why it is important. In my research, I look at the potential of exploratory practices in a workshop that use Art based research, and how this can facilitate for new pedagogical practices in education across disciplines. In an international perspective, exploratory perspectives on ECC teacher education can contribute to practices that can help broaden the view of the curriculum to a greater extent as a bodily experience, and that it helps to influence the knowledge one is left with after graduation. The research on pedagogical innovation will help to increase the understanding of the importance of exploratory practices, and how this can create new insight to teaching methods in higher education.

Thilde Kleppe Vårnes

PhD fellow at MoveEarly
project, HVL

January 2024–December 2027



My PhD project aims to measure the effects of a movement-play-exploration-based pedagogical intervention within the MoveEarly-project on young children's physical development. Furthermore, by examining the associations between children's movement competence, motor creativity, physical activity and physical fitness, this research seeks to generate valuable insights into physical development in early childhood education contexts.

Internationally, this project could impact early childhood education (ECE) by providing evidence-based approaches that can be adapted and implemented in various countries. By identifying best practices and effective interventions, kindergartens and Early Childhood Teacher Education programmes globally can enhance their practices to support children's physical development more effectively.

Furthermore, understanding how socio-economic status (SES) are associated to the outcome measures in the intervention and whether the interventions reach children across different SES backgrounds can help in designing inclusive programmes. This research will give valuable knowledge for future initiatives in order to reach children and families with different SES. Early intervention to prevent health inequalities by giving every child the best start in life is one of the essential areas highlighted in the Marmot review. An updated report concludes that health inequalities have increased in the past 10 years with higher rates of child poverty, for example (Marmot et al., 2020).

In summary, by contributing with knowledge on young children's physical development and offering strategies to impact SES-related inequalities, this project has the potential to impact ECE practices internationally, promoting healthier, more equitable outcomes for young children.

“How do you envision your project impacting early childhood education at an international level?”

Kine Melfald Tveten

Postdoctoral fellow at
MoveEarly project, HVL
February 2024–January 2028



During 2024, I gained new insight, knowledge, experience and expanded my professional network. As I started my postdoc period in February this year, I have spent some time getting to know the field and the researchers in early childhood education. In the autumn, I gained experience in the new measure developed in the MoveEarly study. In November, I gave my first presentation of the project at an international conference, namely the Bright Start Conference (picture below). I had a one-hour session where I presented the MoveEarly study, the principles of context-specific interventions and the River Challenge, which is the new measure for movement competence and creativity. There were attendees from all continents, and I had many nice discussions after my session as well as after the conference. In this way, I contributed to the discussion on how to conduct context-specific intervention, and how outcomes can be measured in a standardised, yet child-friendly way.

Later this year, in December, I will go on a research stay to Wollongong, Australia. This is made possible due to a scholarship from the KINDknow “såkornsmidler” and financial support from the research group. During my stay, I will present the MoveEarly project in general as well as my postdoc studies to researchers at the University of Wollongong. I have already made arrangements to meet other researchers for insights on intervention, outcome measures and implication during my stay. In that way, my work contributes to the knowledge of early childhood education at an international level.

Chloe Anne Marie Capri

PhD fellow,

November 2023 – October 2026



Across the world, many countries have integrated food and sensory education into their school curricula as a promising means to address unhealthy eating habits early and to prevent obesity and other food-related conditions. With decades of experience, mostly in primary school settings, food and sensory education has expanded into Early Childhood Education (ECE), as early childhood is a crucial period for developing eating habits and food preferences that are often carried throughout life. Sensory education in kindergartens is particularly effective for young children, who are in the process of forming their tastes, as it aligns with their cognitive development and offers a child-friendly approach that actively engages them in learning about food. Establishing healthy and sustainable eating habits during these formative years has a profound impact, with the potential for long-lasting benefits in preventing health issues.

Food and eating habits are deeply rooted in cultural traditions and food systems unique to each country. Over the years, several nations have developed educational initiatives to enhance young children's food knowledge, broaden their taste horizons and cultivate their cooking and practical skills. These programmes employ different strategies and approaches to food education. For example, in France, Les Classes du Goût (The Classroom of Taste) aims to promote national and local gastronomy and food traditions. In the United Kingdom, the Flavours School fosters self-confidence and curiosity by encouraging children to explore food, especially fruits and vegetables. In Norway and Denmark, the focus is on outdoor learning, where children engage with food in natural and local environments. These initiatives inspire and influence one another, creating a flourishing and dynamic international network in the field of food and sensory education within ECE settings.

My PhD project is embedded in this vibrant and evolving research field. Focusing especially on taste education in Norwegian kindergartens, my project aims to foster young children's taste competencies and critical thinking through taste didactics, developed collaboratively between researchers and kindergartens. This innovative approach seeks to guide young children towards better and more informed food choices. On an international level, my research project contributes to the growing body of literature and innovations in food and sensory education in ECE settings.

More stories



Maria Grindheim, PhD fellow, Dr. Bradford B Wiles during a MoveEarly seminar.

From August 2024 and until summer 2025 we are delighted to host Dr. Bradford Wiles in our campus in Bergen. Dr. Bradford Wiles is an Associate Professor and Extension Specialist at Kansas State University, with a Ph.D. in Human Development from Virginia Tech. His research focuses on fostering health and resilience in vulnerable families, particularly rural, low-income, ethnically, and racially diverse families with young children.

A key aspect of his work involves enhancing community access to quality, affordable childcare. By conducting needs assessments and collaborating with local coalitions, Dr. Wiles develops tailored strategies to address early care and education needs across Kansas. His efforts also extend to providing community-based training in early childhood brain development, emergent literacy, and physical health, helping families apply research-based practices in their daily lives.

Originally from Noblesville, Indiana, Dr. Wiles combines his professional expertise with a deep commitment to mentoring students and collaborating across disciplines. Beyond his academic work, he is an avid outdoorsman, musician, and devoted family man.

We would like to share with you Bradford's insights about his stay and work at KINDknow research centre and other organizations in Norway:

"I have truly enjoyed my time at HVL thus far, having arrived in early August of 2024. I will be at KINDknow until June 30, 2025. My primary objective in coming to HVL has been to support and understand approaches to outdoor physical activity and educational pedagogy in the Norwegian kindergarten system. To date I have participated in the MoveEarly early childhood educator trainings (see the picture of me serving as the King of Norway with Maria Grindheim running the show), and conducted a mixed-methods analysis of the Active Learning Norwegian Preschool(er)s (ACTNOW) study, a precursor to the MoveEarly project. Through this effort I have come to understand the kindergarten system and even more importantly, the epistemology (i.e., our beliefs about how we come to know what we know) of project leaders regarding young children's development.

I have also been working with Livsglede for Eldre (Joy of Life for the Elderly) to provide an evaluation of their inter-generational meetings and the processes surrounding them. It has been a true pleasure, and I see so many opportunities for work with them and the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. In fact, my colleague Alicja Sandownik and I are crafting a research proposal with the Norge Fiskermuseet (Fishing Museum of Norway), Livsglede for Eldre, and the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences to investigate how intergenerational meetings may serve as a protective factor for older adults and children alike. Finally, I am also working with Elin Ødegaard, Aihua Hu, and Zacharias Andreadakis on developing a survey of sustainability practices in Norway's kindergartens. I could not ask for better partners and mentors than these.

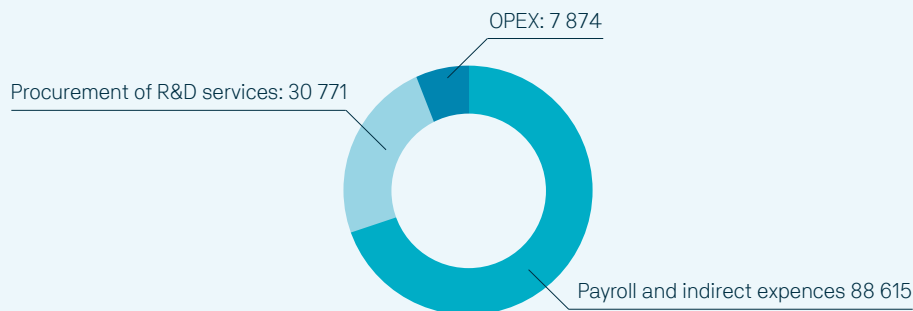
I was asked to include my impressions of my time here. This would seem easy, yet words will only fail to convey how truly honored and privileged I feel at being part of the MoveEarly project, KINDknow, and the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. I feared that I would take more than give because of my professional needs for my time here; to finish my thesis and complete my applied practice experience for my Master of Public Health degree. That my colleagues here at the University provided me with multiple opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways brings me considerable joy, as collaboration drives everything in my work.

My family's and my time here exceed any reasonable expectations of spending this time away from the US. My children continue to thrive in the Norwegian school model, we spend more time outdoors here in a week than we did in weeks in Kansas, and our appreciation for how life works here continues to grow. I tell any Norwegian who will listen, "Please never take your country for granted. Your societal and cultural beauty exceeds even the indescribably natural beauty all around you. In Norway, people take care of each other's basic needs, which my homeland fails to prioritize".

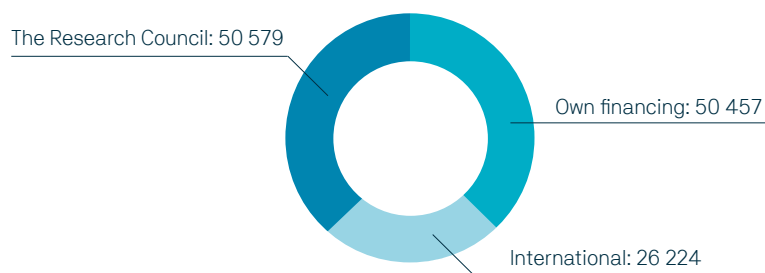
Finally, I wish to acknowledge the kind, supportive, and welcoming nature of the entire KINDknowresearch team, especially Dr. Alicja Sadownik, Dr. Zacharias Andreadakis, and Dr. Aihua Hu. Additionally, Dr. Eivind Aadland (PI of MoveEarly), Dr. Katrine Aadland, and Dr. Kjersti Johannessen welcomed me to the MoveEarly project with open arms. Maria Grindheim's support during the MoveEarly training still makes me smile. I further extend acknowledgements to G.K. Resaland and Mathias Mandelid for making my time here so incredibly thought-provoking and exciting. Dr. Hege Tjomsland's support, encouragement, expertise, and spirit have made the work with the ACTNOW data happen. Without her I would not meet my goals for my time here. Thank you, Hege. Finally, Dr. Elin Ødegaard, I will forever be in your debt for everything you have done for my family and me. You represent all that is good for BARNkunne, the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen, and Norway."

KINDknow Annual accounts

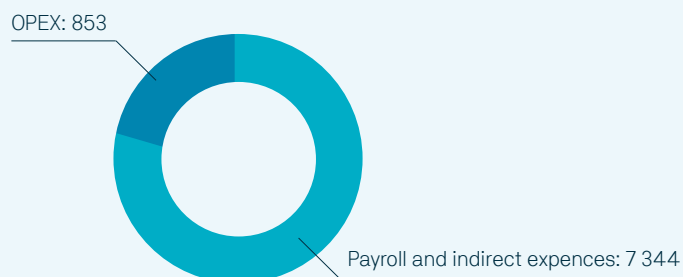
Total costs 2018-2028, in 1000 NOK



Funding plan 2018-2028, in 1000 NOK



Costs in 2024, in 1000 NOK



Awards, publications, outreach and impact

Awards

Ferruccio G. (Director) (2024), Havre, S. J. (Producer, MedieLab), Ødegaard, E. E. (Producer, KINDknow), Marandon, A. S., Marandon A. (Artistic collaborators). Havporett, Barna ved Sjøen. (Ocean Portrait—Children by the North Sea) (Educational documentary). Medielab, Western University of Applied Sciences. <https://www.vitentv.no/media/Havportrett%2C+Barna+ved+Nordsj%C3%B8en/0-suotkdn5>

Award for best pedagogical concept where film is used, Tromsø International Educational Film Festival, Treff, Tromsø, March 2023.

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Presented keynotes

Keynotes and guest lectures at national events

Keynotes at the network meeting for the Norwegian Municipalities Organisation

[Kommunenens samarbeidsorganisasjon – KS], January 2024

Held by Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard by invitation by KS with the title “Forskingskolen NORBARN 2023-2031 - relevant for norsk barnehagesektor”. The focus of the keynotes was on informing directors and leaders of kindergartens and schools in the Norwegian municipalities about the new research school NORCHILD [NORBARN].

Keynotes at the Norwegian Association of Landscape Architects network meeting

(Norske Landsskapsarkitekters Forening), February 2024

Held by Prof. Ødegaard, titled “Play in the natural Playground – A research perspective”

Keynotes at Stordseminaret 2024, March 2024

Held by Dr. Veronica Bergan, titled “Stedsbasert pedagogikk. Hva stedet vi bor på betyr for våre verdier, tilhørighet og praksiser».

Guest lecturer at the Nord University for REKOMP

(Regional Competence Development Programme), March 2024

Held by Prof. Ødegaard, aim of the lecturer was to create knowledge and values in collaboration across academia and the ECEC sector – Success and barriers for co-creation and knowledgeing.

Guest lecture at Dronning Mauds Minne Barnehagelærerutdanning, May 2024

Held by Dosent Anne Myrstad, titled “Å lære i og med verden – teoretiske og metodologiske innganger i utforskning av bærekraftige praksiser i barnehagen» for the master course in ‘Barnehagekunnskap’.

Guest lecture to the Norwegian Business school NHH, September 2024

Held by Prof. Ødegaard, titled “Success and barriers when changing and innovating practices - theorising and experiences” for the master course in leadership in kindergartens and schools.

Keynotes at the National Kindergarten Research Conference, October 2024

Held by Dr. Øyvind Glosvik, titled “Co-creation between research and practice fields – experiences and challenges”. This keynote brought a theory on the co-creation and experiences of success and barriers from the EX-PED-LAB project and co-creative activities with the municipality of Bergen.

Keynotes at the National Research Network for Sustainability and Education

(Nasjonalt forskernettverk for bærekraft og utdanning – NABU), November 2024

Held by Dr. Alicja R. Sadownik, titled “Entangling posthuman and indigenous wisdom in Early Childhood Education and Care”.

Keynotes and guest lectures at international events**Keynotes at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, February 2024**

Held by Dr. Andreiadakis, titled “Transferable Skills in AI”. The presentation explored the critical role of transferable skills in the AI landscape, offering valuable insights for researchers and professionals navigating this rapidly evolving field. The presentation can be found here: [Zenodo DOI Link](#).

Online seminar at University of Auckland, New Zealand, May 2024

Held by Dr. Carola Kleemann, entitled “Play in two languages: Bilingual roleplay in a Sámi kindergarten in Norway. Link to the seminar can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCyPvu_wcPY

Keynotes at East Normal University, Shanghai, China, June 2024

Held by Prof. Ødegaard and Dr Hu, titled “Improving quality ECEC through collaborative exploration: A Norwegian approach”. The presentation theorised and showcased ‘Collaborative exploration’ and showed how ‘Cultures of exploration’ connected with high quality practices. The conference was hosted by the Committee of Early Childhood Education, Chinese Society of Education.

Keynotes at Northeast Normal University, Changchun, China, June 2024

Held by Dr. Hu and Prof. Ødegaard, titled “Kindergarten as an agent for a sustainable community for sustainable societies” at the 4th International Forum for Postgraduate Students in Early Childhood Education and Family Education jointly hosted by Northeast Normal University, Shanghai Normal University, Northwest University and Shanxi Normal University.

In addition to keynotes presentations, a number of seminars to the students and researchers were given in China during 2024.

Keynotes and a panel discussion at Chengdu City – European Affairs event – China – Norway Salon, June 2024

Held by Prof. Ødegaard, titled “Improving quality ECEC through enhancing Play and Exploration A Norwegian approach”. The keynotes were by invitation from the Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office and the Norwegian Embassy in Beijing, China. The keynotes presented Norwegian policy documents and showed new research from Norway to exemplify connections between quality and play and exploration. This event also included a panel, where Ødegaard discussed with Chinese researchers and policymakers from Chengdu City.

Guest lecture at the 4th International Forum for Postgraduate Students in Early Childhood Education & Family Education, June 2024

Held by Prof. Ødegaard and Dr Hu, titled “Explorability as a transferable skill for high-quality research”.

Keynotes and guest lectures at the 4th International Forum for Postgraduate Students in Early Childhood Education & Family Education, June 2024

Keynotes held by Prof. Ødegaard at the Shanxin Normal University in Xi'an, titled “Emergent Ocean Literacy - A pedagogy for the early years.”

Keynotes held by Dr Hu, titled “A story of two cultures: Children’s perspectives on transition from kindergarten to primary school in Norway and China” based on the project Aihua Hu and Kjerstin Sjursen lead together.

Two guest lectures for PhD students in ECEC held by Prof. Ødegaard at the Northeast China Normal University, two guest lecturer for PhD students in ECEC titled “The Norwegian system of doctoral training for ECEC PhD students” and “A short introduction to ‘Narrative Enquiry’”.

Keynotes at Malmö University, Sweden, September 2024

Held by Prof. Ødegaard, the topic of keynotes “Social and Cultural sustainability in dynamic times, places and relationships”. The event was a two day network for the Research School PRECEC.

UNESCO International Congress, Paris, France, September 2024

Dr Zacharias Andreadakis participated in a three-day congress at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The sessions were in brain sciences and ECEC, with speakers focusing on transferable skills, inequality, methodology and executive function—closely aligning with the goals of KINDknow.

Keynotes at Södertörn University, Sweden, November 2024

Held by Dr. Carola Kleemann and Kristin Nicolaysen, entitled: “Kven Language Between Generations”.

Link to the conference is here: <https://www.isof.se/nationella-minoritetssprak/pa-gang/kalender/arkiv-evenemang-nationella-minoritetssprak/2024-03-20-perspectives-on-the-revitalization-of-minority-languages>

Keynotes at the Bright Start Futures conference, November 2024

Held by Tveten, K.M., titled ”Presentation of a context-driven intervention targeting movement, play and exploration in early childhood education”.

Keynotes webinar for DocTalentEU at the University of Porto, Portugal, November 2024

Held by Dr Andreadakis with a focus on sharing his expertise on transferable skills, emphasising their relevance within the TOP104EU framework and the science behind them. The session provided valuable insights for researchers and PhD professionals, and it can be found at: <https://youtu.be/yfDCbH8Y8Os?si=8nd0ksGC7wcSmQF3>

Keynotes with ULimerick for European University Association, Brussels, December 2024

Dr Andreadakis co-hosted a keynote webinar with the European University Association as part of the DocTalent4EU project. The session focused on establishing Talent Management Centres to support PhD career development, emphasising the importance of details, attitude and daily actions in achieving success. The webinar can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1T7mSmn7CA>

Keynotes at the Technical University Iasi, Romania, December 2024

Held by Dr Andreadakis, titled “Personal Branding: Teamwork and Networking Skills” as part of the TUIASI Training 2024. The session focused on what is relevant in personal branding, how to build a personal brand and the skills needed to excel in advanced doctoral research. The webinar can be found here: Google Meet <https://meet.google.com/kii-qbrx-nyu>.

Policy impact

Ministry of Education & Research, January 2024

In January, a group from KINDknow: Prof. Ødegaard, Dr Sadownik, Dr Zacharias, Dr Glosvik, Dr Sønsthagen, Postdoc Fimreite, Prof. Aadland, held a half day seminar together with the Section for Kindergarten and School from the Ministry of Education & Research with the main topic “How do we envision that the KINDknow projects and initiatives can contribute to the policymaking and strengthening of the ECEC sector in Norway?”

Expert notes to the South Korean Embassy, in Oslo, May 2024

Prof. Ødegaard was invited as a Norwegian Early Childhood expert by the South Korean Embassy in Oslo, to inform on the Norwegian history of political debate in the Early Childhood Educational field from 1975 to 2006.

Meeting the Minister of Research, Norwegian government, June 2024

The KINDknow’s leader group (Zacharias Andreadakis, Alicja Sadownik, Hanne Israelsen) met the Minister of Research Oddmund Hoel at a seminar where they presented the research centre and had a dialogue about the importance of ECEC research.

Expert validation feedback report for ISSA Kinderrechtenhuis / Child Rights Home, The Netherlands.

Elin Eriksen Ødegaard was invited as an international expert for the report “Expert validation feedback report on International Child Development Initiative. Round one and two” for ISSA Kinderrechtenhuis / Child Rights Home, The Netherlands, initiative by Professor Margaret Kernan

International expert for Scientific response to Playful Learning, University College Copenhagen.

Elin Eriksen Ødegaard (2024) was invited as an international expert for the Scientific response to Playful Learning, University College Copenhagen, initiative by Head of Program Tobias Heiberg and Professor Helle Marie Skovbjerg.

Committee of Kindergarten, school and sports at Bergen City Parliament, March 2024

On the initiative from the politician in the City of Bergen, Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, Hege Wergedahl and Alicja Sadownik made a presentation on What KINDknow is and what we do.

Twinning with UNESCO Group on Ocean Literacy

KINDknow researchers, postdoc Oropilla, emerita Birkeland and Prof. Ødegaard were twinning with UNESCO Group on OL about young children’s participation in Ocean events.

Twinning with UNESCO Chair of ECEC

Postdoc Oropilla, Prof. Grindheim, Dr Sadownik and Prof. Ødegaard were twinning about the theoretical perspectives relevant for ECEC and sustainability with UNESCO Chair Ditte Winther Lindquist and her team at the Aarhus university.



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