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Introduction

Olga Shangina Williams

Editor and Administrative
Leader at KINDknow



Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the annual report of Kindergarten Knowledge Centre for Systemic Research on Diversity and Sustainable Futures KINDknow. As the editor and administrative leader of our centre, I am excited to present this year's report, which takes on a new and innovative format.

At KINDknow, we are dedicated to advancing research in early childhood education and providing valuable insights into the field. This annual report serves as a reflection of our commitment to excellence in research. In this report, we showcase the diverse range of research projects that our centre is currently engaged in, spanning across our key research fields: (a) Movement, play and exploration; (b) Systemic leadership and conditions for children in kindergartens; (c) Pedagogical innovation and co-creation. Our projects delve deep into these areas, exploring new horizons and pioneering groundbreaking solutions that address the complex challenges facing the early childhood field today.

We are proud of our close collaboration with our main partners, the Arctic University of Norway and Bergen Municipality, whose support and collaboration have been invaluable in advancing our research agenda and driving positive change in the early childhood sector. In addition, I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all our collaborators, researchers, PhD candidates and postdoctoral scholars for their invaluable input, dedication and collaboration. Their commitment and expertise have enriched our research projects and significantly contributed to our centre's success. Together, we are making meaningful strides towards contributing to a sustainable future for our children.

As we navigate the dynamic landscape of the early childhood sector, we remain committed to pushing the boundaries of knowledge and driving positive change in this field. We invite you to explore this report and learn more about the exciting developments happening at KINDknow.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in our work!

Warm regards,
Olga Shangina Williams
Editor and Administrative Leader

Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard

Research Director
of Kindknow Research
Center at KINDknow



This year marked a period of consolidating and strengthening the centre's future pathways while commemorating a significant milestone of reaching five years of existence and the exciting prospect of extending our expansion with funding for another five years. In celebration of this milestone, we bolstered our profile in sustainability research by producing a five-year Jubilee book, which included republishing 33 open-access journal articles on the topic. Furthermore, we delved into the realm of research translations by creating films and children's books tailored for intergenerational enjoyment on the theme of Move-Play-Explore.

We welcomed a new member of staff and initiated several new projects. A new organisational model was established with three prioritised themes, each led by key researchers: 1) Move Play Explore, headed by Alicja Sadownik; 2) Systemic leadership and conditions for all children, led by Aihua Hu; and 3) Pedagogical innovation and co-creation, led by our newly recruited member, Zacharias Andreasakis. Olga Shangina Williams, the Centre's administrative leader, was appointed to oversee the growing project portfolio and bolster the centre's further development. Hanne Israelsen was also brought on board to coordinate our New Research School, NORBARN (NOR-CHILD). Throughout the year, our new staff immersed themselves in their roles and projects, and we witnessed the benefits of collaborating within a new leadership team and across disciplines, environments and sectors.

We continued to deepen the relationships between the researchers at KINDknow, partners and key international guest researchers, such as UNESCO Chair Professor Arjen Wals, UNESCO Chair Ditte Winther-Lindquist and Laureate Professor Marilyn Fleer. We forged new relationships and networks with partners through our new projects, learning from inspiring and challenging interactions across the centre, partners, stakeholders and environments. The new research projects were interdisciplinary, involving co-creation with partners and new ways of collaborating within often unfamiliar teams, both locally and internationally. To strengthen our national partnerships, Veronica Bergan was appointed. Her role at the Arctic University of Norway is to coordinate researchers at her institution and BARN-kunne at HVL.

At KINDknow, we continue to bring together national and international collaborators and guests with a focus on advancing knowledge and making a real-world impact. This year, we hosted long-term researchers from China: Lin Huo from Beijing Institute of Education and He Min from East China Normal University as well as Global Ful-bright Scholar Ana Marjanovich-Shine from the US. We continued twinning with the Conceptual Play World at Monash University and initiated twinning with UNESCO, Ocean Literacy Group and the UNESCO Chair group at Aarhus University. Moreover, we welcomed several Erasmus+ Mobility visits.

As we look ahead, we will maintain our focus on a sustainable future in early childhood education, which entails promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, engaging with stakeholders and advocating for diversity and inclusivity in all aspects of our work. We remain committed to building upon our past successes, and in the years to come, we will intensify our international collaboration and prioritise our outreach and impact.

We take pride in our work at KINDknow. We are immensely grateful for the support we receive from the Research Council Norway, our funding partners and our host, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. We are confident that we can enhance the early childhood sector and make a meaningful contribution to addressing topics and issues relevant to early childhood education and teacher training.

Here, we present some highlights from 2023.
I hope you enjoy it!

Dr. Zacharias Andreadakis

Leader of Pedagogical Innovation
and Co-Creation at KINDknow



As the leader of Pedagogical Innovation and Co-Creation at KINDknow, I'm thrilled to highlight the significant progress across our four primary projects: DocTalent4EU, NORBARN, ExPed Lab and The History of the Kindergarten. These initiatives underscore our commitment to blending rigorous research in early childhood education with practical, transferable skills for the emergent knowledge economy.

In the DocTalent4EU project, our analysis highlights the increasing demand for teamwork and networking abilities. To address this, we are actively developing a new MOOC to deliver updated knowledge and practical exercises. In addition, we are implementing Hackathons to enhance these essential transferable skills.

Moving on to NORBARN, we have introduced a series of interactive webinars and practical courses. These sessions facilitate dialogue between academia and industry leaders while delving into the core transferable skills required for future ECEC scholars. We are also equipping PhD students with deep research capabilities and applicable skills for today's dynamic labour market.

At ExPed Lab, our focus centres on refining collaboration skills and transforming ECEC teachers into co-researchers. Guided by our "15 Golden Rules", the participants show noticeable progress in engagement and impact within their professional settings. Our workshop methodology remains a strength, and we are continually enhancing it.

Lastly, our exploration into the History of the Kindergarten allows us to delve into the field's legacy, examining topics such as the historical roots of exploration in the age of AI as well as the roles of sensory experiences and artistic interventions in learning. These enquiries touch on enduring pedagogical questions in ECEC.

KINDknow embraces a growth mindset, exemplified by our "Food and Paper" series and forthcoming working papers. These initiatives aim to continually unveil and share our latest research findings, enriching our understanding of educational history and its implications for current practices.

Together, these efforts represent the essence of our mission at KINDknow: bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. We strive to create an environment where early childhood education fosters impactful change in the real world by going beyond mere knowledge acquisition.

Dr. Alicja Renata Sadownik

Leader of Movement,
Play and Exploration
at KINDknow



The research domain of Movement-play-exploration encompasses a diverse array of projects conducted within various social, institutional, digital and biological contexts. Despite their differences, all these projects are united by their focus on the core concepts of movement, play and exploration. Theoretical development and co-creative implementation have progressed in 2023 through close partnerships with the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector as well as intensive transdisciplinary collaboration.

As illustrated in Figure 1 below, the research area of Movement-play-exploration consists of projects where KINDknow acts as a leader or a central partner. The projects are identified by the following terms: MoveEarly, DigiCross, DiKoTe, OneOcean, Water and WaterScapes, Playing Transitions.

In 2023, the MoveEarly project established a collaborative framework with ECE settings through a CRT-study, while also developing digital resources to facilitate movement-play-exploration-based pedagogy within participating ECE settings. The DigiCross project further explored the impact of societal digitalisation on ECE settings and the development of digital professional competence among (pre-service) ECE teachers. Similarly, the DiKoTe project (led by the Centre of Kindergarten Research Filiorum) focused on enhancing the digital professional competence of pre-service ECE teachers using data from ECE environments enriched with coding toys.

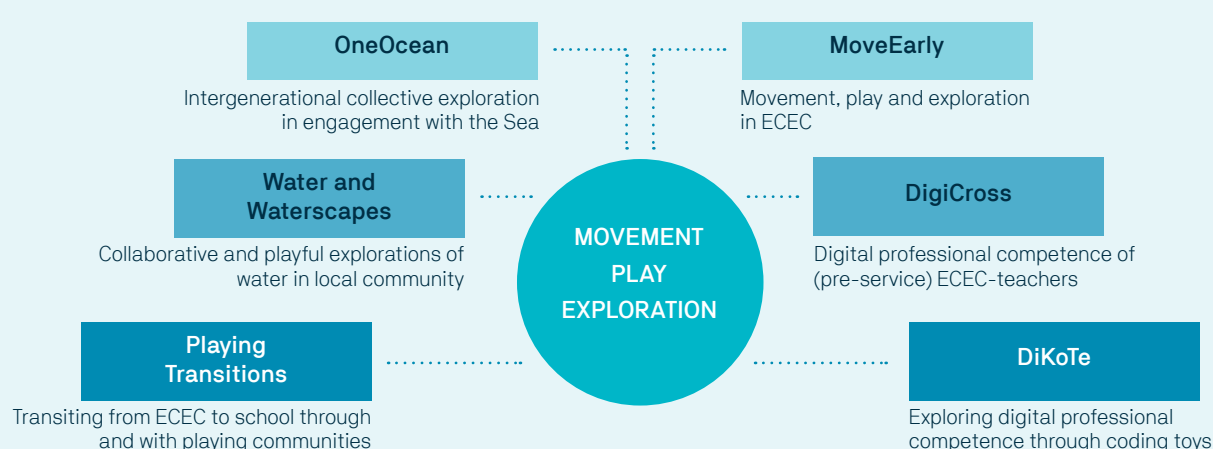


Figure 1: Projects included in the research area: Movement - Play - Exploration.

The OneOcean project utilised digital platforms to facilitate co-creative explorations occurring through intergenerational interactions with the North Sea ecosystem (in collaboration with Øygarden municipality, the art company Kunstpilotene and HVL's MediaLAB). Moreover, this project involved three master students in research activities, providing them with valuable data for their theses and hands-on research experience. The Water and WaterScapes project also explored children's curiosity about water, sparking playful explorations in local communities in Norway, New Zealand and Tanzania by asking simple questions about the origins of local water sources.

What binds these projects together is the role of children's play in navigating and exploring diverse digital, biological and social environments. Recognising the significance of play in transitions, KINDknow researchers became central partners (alongside Design School Kolding) in the Playful Transition project, which was established in 2023. This project aims to investigate the role and impact of children's playful communities in ECE settings and schools during the transition from ECE to school. Leveraging the design expertise of the project leader, children's playful communities will gain access to a range of uniquely designed toys that facilitate playful interactions across ECE and school contexts.

The impact of the knowledge, practices and expertise generated through this research area on ECE settings and policymaking will be explored in an impact study planned by the KINDknow team.

Dr. Aihua Hu

Leader of Systemic Leadership and Conditions for Children in Kindergartens at KINDknow



The research area Systemic Leadership and Conditions for Children in Kindergartens comprises four primary projects: Governmental literature for management and leadership, Together for the Youngest, TASTE and Evaluation of the implementation of the framework plan for the kindergarten. Central to all these projects is the investigation of the connections between systemic leadership understanding, kindergarten development and conditions for kindergarten children.

As a network among Nordic countries, the project “The governance base for leadership in Nordic kindergartens (NORDISK Förskola)” has been actively sharing knowledge with the public. They have organised seminars and debates on various topics related to scientific knowledge about leadership roles for the best interest of children through digital platforms and social media. On 26-27 April, NORDISK Förskola hosted its annual conference titled “Sustainable leadership for the children of the future” in Halden, Norway. Notably, in 2023, the project secured funding for the second time from Nordplus Junior (2023-2026).

In 2023, the main task of the Together for the Youngest project (Sammen for de minste) was to conduct a survey based on the interview data collected in 2022. The survey was sent out to project participants in the autumn, and the analysis of the collected quantitative data began towards the end of 2023. The project also submitted a research proposal titled “Every CHILD matters: UPgrading inter-professional competence flow in/between services for young children (CHILD-UP)” to NFR in November 2023.

TASTE was officially launched with a kick-off seminar on 20 September 2023. Two doctoral students were recruited in 2023, one focusing on taste in kindergartens and the other on food and health in schools. Pilot testing of the methodology commenced after the kick-off, with some data collected. Further data collection is scheduled for spring 2024.

The Evaluation of the Implementation of the Framework Plan for Kindergarten project (Evaluering av implementering av rammeplan for barnehagen) concluded in 2023. A book titled “Fra ’bør’ til ’skal’: Rammeplan for barnehagen i et implementeringsperspektiv” was published as one of the major deliverables and milestones of the project. The project also organised a conference to share the knowledge gained throughout the process with researchers, teachers and the interested public.



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 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.

Values:

Outstanding

- KINDknow researchers conduct research of the highest quality.
- KINDknow researchers are at the forefront of theory development and research in the kindergarten field.
- KINDknow researchers contribute to fostering a creative, inclusive and high-performing research environment.

Sustainability

- KINDknow researchers employ research designs that encompass ecological, cultural, social and economic perspectives guided by principles of systemic management.
- KINDknow researchers lead the discourse and provide valuable sustainability perspectives in education and society.
- KINDknow researchers enhance solutions aimed at bolstering the conditions for children's well-being, health, growth and education, while also prioritising the welfare of families and kindergarten staff.

Glocality

- KINDknow researchers engage in collaborative efforts spanning sectors, disciplines, institutions, countries, organisations, social categories and generations.
- KINDknow researchers uphold the representation of diverse cultural perspectives as a constant priority.
- KINDknow researchers foster collaboration at the local, national and international levels.

Co-creation and sharing

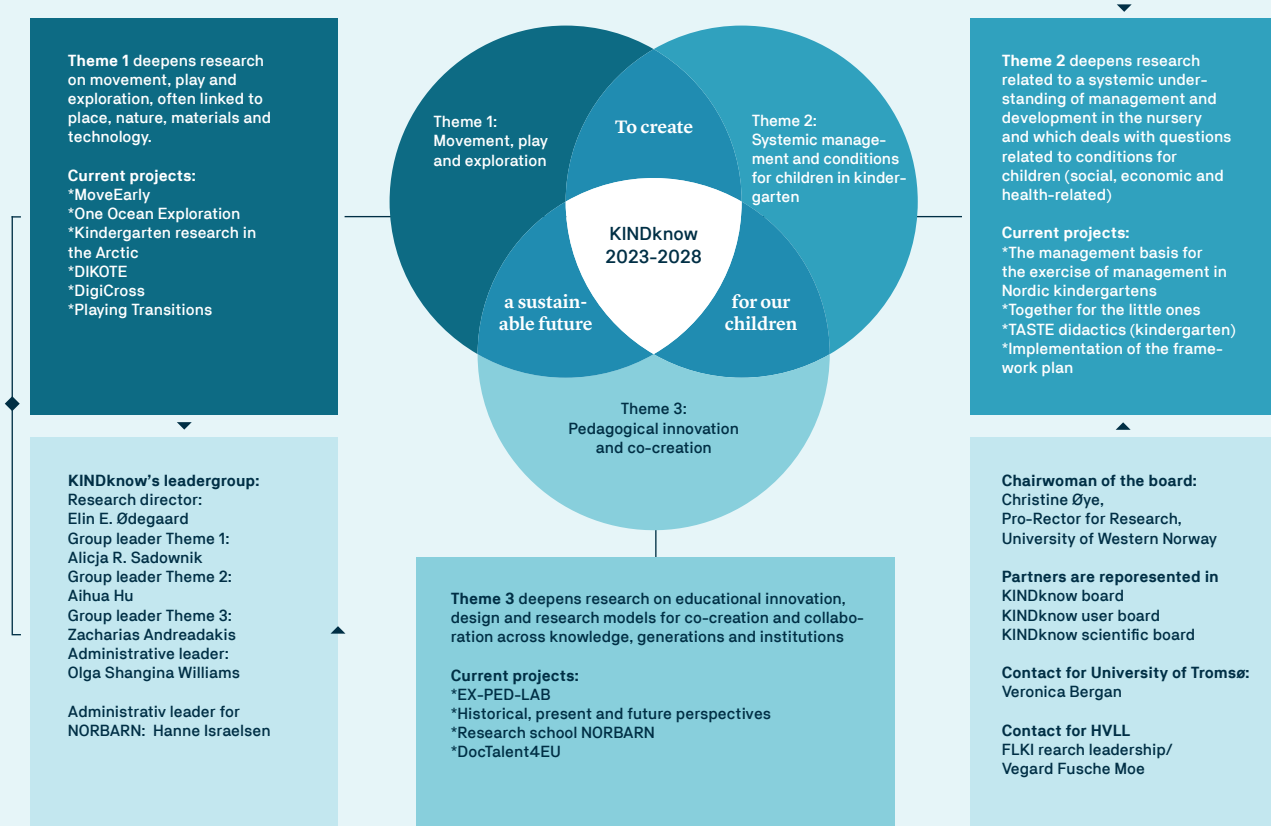
- KINDknow researchers actively contribute to the advancement of knowledge regarding co-creation and knowledge sharing.
- KINDknow researchers play a significant role in enhancing the quality, competence and efficacy within the kindergarten sector through participatory research designs.
- KINDknow researchers collaborate with colleagues and various social stakeholders to share knowledge and develop resources collaboratively.

Methodological design

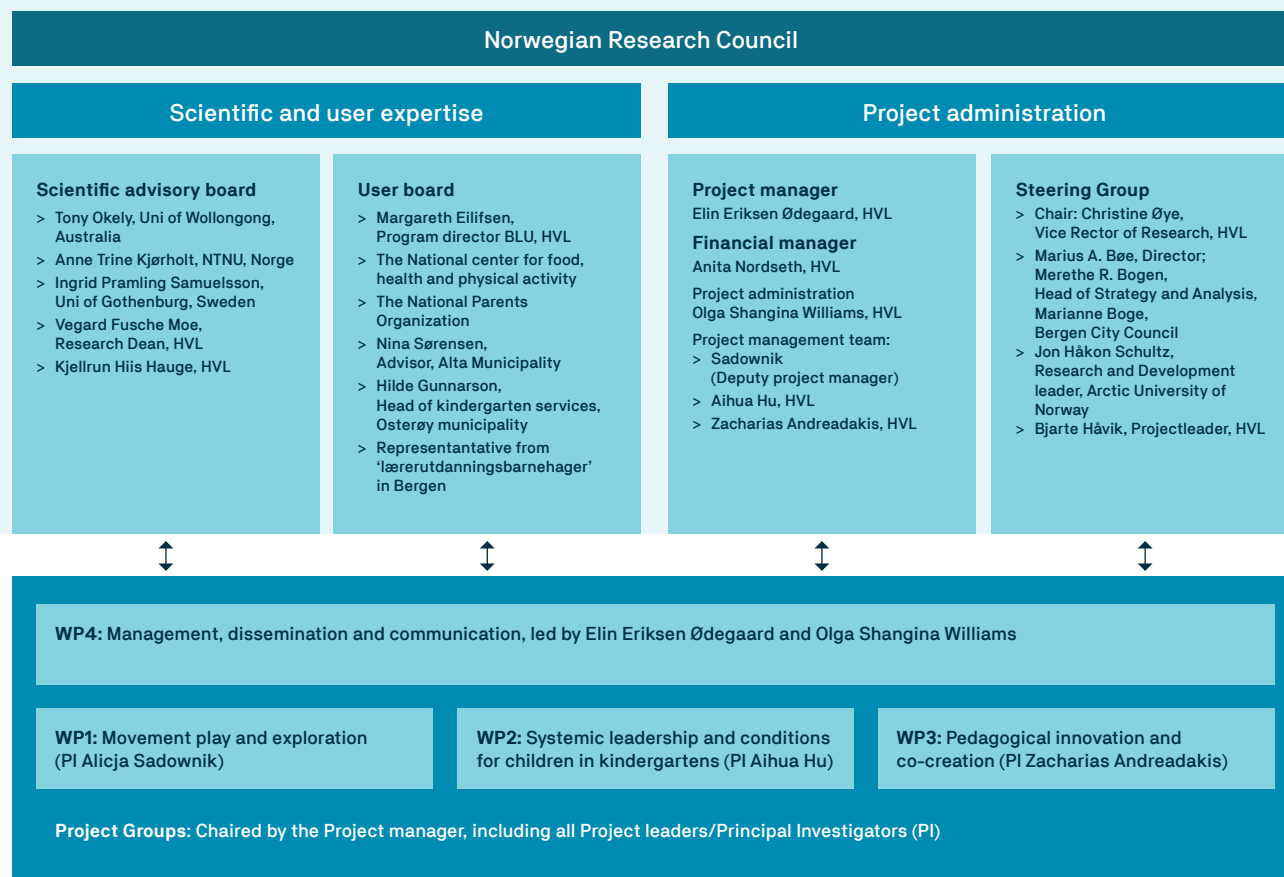
To accomplish its objectives, the centre will facilitate research opportunities involving kindergartens and various partners, spanning diverse regions within Norway and internationally. Given the global emphasis on sustainability (as outlined by the UN) and its integration into Norway's new framework plan for kindergartens, it is imperative to employ new research methodologies, particularly participatory research methodologies, to inform and reshape practices effectively.

Specific research projects will focus on evaluating and developing intervention studies, wherein new practices will be devised and assessed collaboratively by children, families, staff and researchers. For instance, intervention projects will be 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 will delve 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 will advance the understanding of how diversity can be leveraged as a valuable resource in kindergarten practices and in the context of kindergarten leadership.



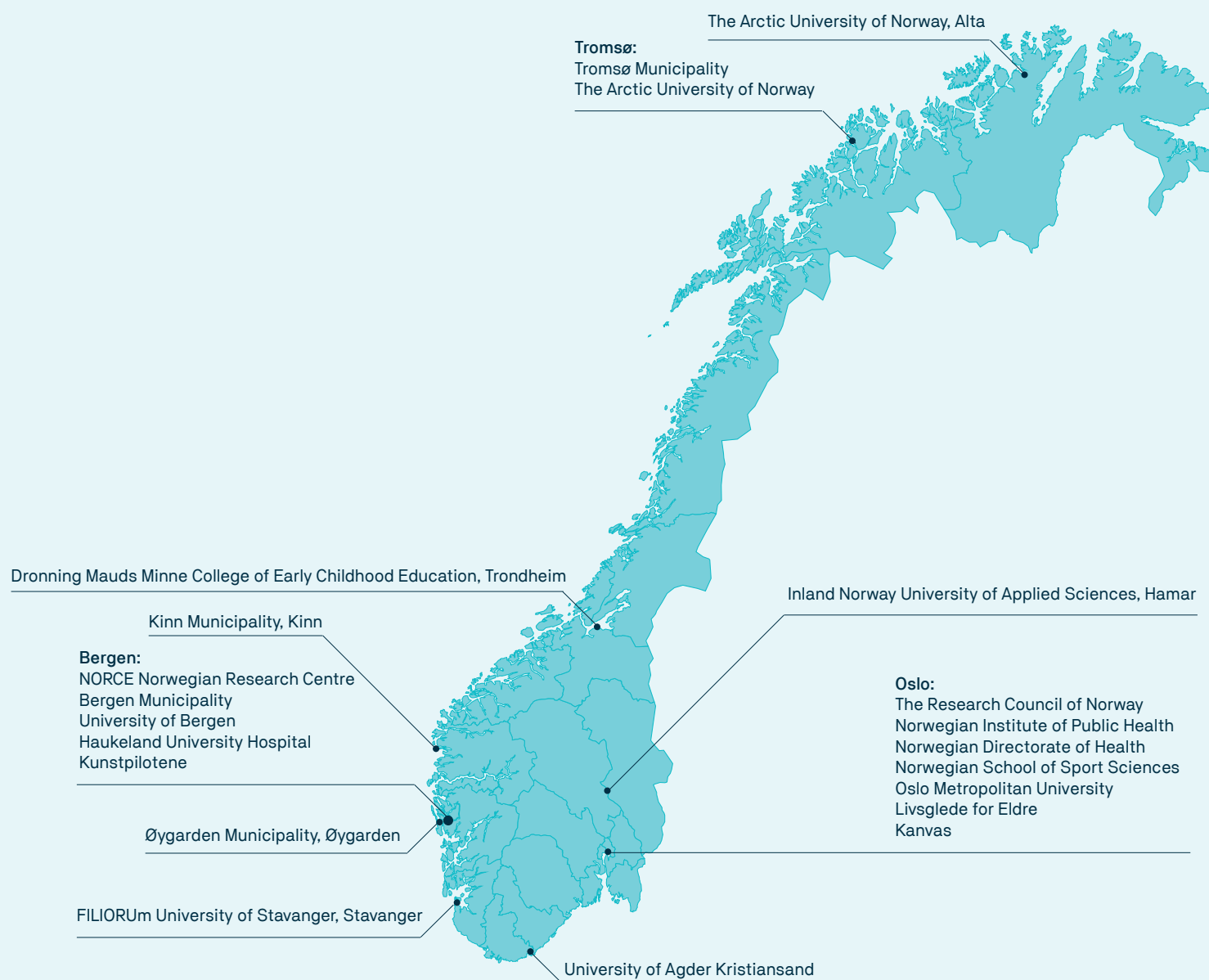
KINDknow ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN



Partners and collaborators

Our core partners

In 2023, our core partners have been refined to exclusively include Bergen Municipality and The Arctic University of Norway for the upcoming project period (2023-2028). This strategic decision was made to ensure the highest quality of research in collaboration with the practice field. By focusing on these key partnerships, we aim to bolster ECEC research, including the ECEC sector in the Arctic. This targeted collaboration will enhance our ability to address region-specific challenges and opportunities, ultimately contributing to the advancement of ECEC practices and policies in these unique geographical and cultural contexts. Through this refined partnership approach, we are committed to driving impactful research that supports the development and well-being of young children in both Bergen and the Arctic regions.



International Collaborations

KINDknow is deeply committed to international collaboration, partnering with a diverse array of esteemed institutions worldwide. Our global network includes the University of Wollongong and Monash University in Australia as well as the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, highlighting our connections in the Southern Hemisphere. In Asia, we collaborate with Beijing Normal University, East China Normal University and the Beijing Institute of Education in China, underscoring our engagement with leading educational research centres in this rapidly developing region.

In Europe, our partnerships extend to 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, reflecting a robust presence across the continent. We also work closely with OMEP, an international organisation dedicated to early childhood education, and Towson University in the US, illustrating our commitment to transatlantic academic exchange.

These collaborations enable KINDknow to leverage a wealth of geographical and cultural perspectives, enriching our research and innovation in early childhood education and care. Through these partnerships, we are better equipped to address global educational challenges and advance practices that benefit children and educators worldwide.



Our projects

OneOcean - exploration



Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard
Project Manager



Dr. Aihua Hu
Co-Project Manager



Two boys exploring life under the rocks, at Grøtvika, Øygarden, Photo: Elin Eriksen Ødegaard

This year, we proudly presented the film “Ocean Portrait - The Children by the North Sea”, a 30-minute documentary capturing the essence of the OneOcean - Ocean Portrait project. This multifaceted project encompasses four key components: 1) an arts initiative led by Andre Marandon at Kunstpilotene, 2) a participatory project facilitated by Øygarden municipality, 3) a research project aimed at narrating the collaborative exploration between children and adults, highlighting children’s sensory experiences in the biotopes between land and sea, and 4) a multimedia translation of the concept of Collaborative Exploration for the early childhood sector, teacher education students and a broader audience in the marine and climate sectors. This initiative showcases an early childhood approach to emerging ocean literacies. The film project team included Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, Ferruccio Goia, Sigrid Jordal Havre and Kjartan Lerøy Grønhaug.

The film was showcased during the OneOcean Week in Bergen City and as part of the five-year celebration event of BARNkunne. It aimed to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which focuses on high-quality education, and Goal 14, which promotes knowledge of life underwater and what is referred to as ocean literacies.

This year, we expanded the project with four additional sub-projects:

1. **Intergenerational Approach: Sustaining Stories of the Sea** - This project involved intergenerational storytelling by arranging meetings between older adults in a local community, who preserve old boats in a boat house, and kindergarten children and staff. This project was led by Czarecah Oropilla.

2. **Master’s Project: Waves** - This project focused on the exploration of waves by 2-year-olds, serving as a pedagogical arts initiative for the youngest children aged 1-3. Master student Andrine Kongshaug Ingebriksen led this project.
3. **Master’s Project: Collaboration by the Sea** - This project aimed to raise awareness of collaborative exploration as a pedagogical approach, representing high-quality kindergartens. Master student Janne Torsvik led this project.
4. **Master’s Project: Doing Gender by the Sea** - This project demonstrated that children, both boys and girls, play and explore loose parts and natural objects by the sea. This master’s thesis was written by Monica Gustavsen.

Within all these projects, we engaged in place-based, sensory and exploratory forms of education. Multiple objectives were pursued: to research, document and inspire education on how emergent ocean literacies are developed in children and how they can be taught in alignment with the goals of sustainable futures and within the context of the UN Ocean Decade — “The Science We Need for the Ocean We Want.”

This initiative aims to enhance our understanding of civic relationships with oceans and the importance of ocean stewardship. Particularly relevant for early childhood education is the UN Decade’s goal of fostering significant advancements in ocean education across all educational levels. The research project was led by Professor Elin Eriksen Ødegaard and Professor Emerita Åsta Birkeland.

Water and WaterScapes: local conditions for children's access to water



The project “Water and WaterScapes: Local Conditions for Children’s Access to Water” was developed by KINDknow/HVL in collaboration with OMEP World, inspired by OMEP World’s WASH project. This initiative aims to raise awareness about cherishing and protecting water and waterscapes while broadening the understanding of water as a concept and vital resource for children and their families across different contexts, nations and cultures.

The project invites children and teachers worldwide to engage in a collaborative exploration of the conditions for water and waterscapes that children have access to. It begins with a curiosity-driven enquiry into the origins of the local water supply and its significance for the community and individuals.

In 2023, the project completed its pilot study in Norway, New Zealand and Tanzania, with each producing a report. Researchers involved in the project have presented the pilot study at various international conferences and a conference paper has been submitted.

Following the pilot study, the project team adjusted their approach to exploring water and waterscapes. Each participating country has the autonomy to deter-

mine how they will conduct this collaborative and curiosity-driven project, provided they adhere to the project’s aims. The next step is to recruit as many countries as possible to participate in the main project. Project leader Elin Ødegaard has contacted the OMEP president and vice presidents, who have expressed their support in disseminating invitations to OMEP member countries. Furthermore, members of the project team will utilise their attendance at various international conferences as opportunities to recruit interested countries.

EX-PED-LAB



Dr. Hege Fimreite
Project Manager



Co-creation between artists, teachers and students. Kunstpilotene Andre and Anette Marandon with Early childhood students. Photo: Hege Fimreite

2023 was a pivotal year for EX-PED-LAB. Many changes have occurred leading to new explorations for the second half of the project.

New Project Management

In mid-2023, the EX-PED-LAB project underwent changes in project management. Hege Fimreite assumed the leadership position, with Elin Eriksen Ødegaard and Czarecah Oropilla as co-leaders. Consequently, the EX-PED-LAB project plans are now focused on fulfilling the project's aims and deliverables.

Coordinator for Kindergartens

To ensure smoother coordination and communication with project partners in kindergartens, who have ongoing projects with various pedagogical themes and content, Evelyn Eggum joined the EX-PED-LAB team. She plays a crucial role in organising webinars and coordinating workshops for and with the partner kindergartens.

Workshops and Webinars

In light of the project reorganisation and feedback from project partners seeking more contact points, two main workshops are planned (January and November 2024) alongside partner-driven webinars in the intervening months. Proposed webinar topics include the role of a mediator and suggestions for content in the digital toolbox. As the partnership with the kindergartens concludes in 2024, their projects must be documented and shared in the upcoming digital toolbox. The first workshop, conducted by DSKD's Emilie Jespersen, was an initial effort towards this goal, with kindergartens further developing their local projects. DSKD remains a partner in this project, not only for workshop implementation but also for joint writing seminars with Dr Helle Marie Skøvbjerg and an upcoming study tour.



Early childhood students co-creating pedagogical innovations.
Photo: Hege Fimreite



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

EX-PED-LAB Digital Toolbox

The EX-PED-LAB Digital Toolbox aims to provide valuable resources for early childhood educators and teacher trainers. The content will primarily come from the project partners and will include links to publications, workshop guides (including those for kindergartens and education), teacher reflections, photos and videos as well as a podcast on pedagogical innovations. The conceptualisation of this resource began in 2023, with preparations and content creation continuing into 2024. The digital toolbox is scheduled for launch in 2025.

Study tour in Copenhagen

All EX-PED-LAB project partners are invited to a partially funded study tour in September 2024. The main objective of this activity is to further inspire project partners in their initiatives. Several institutions will be visited, including the PlayLab in Copenhagen and the new facilities of the Design School in Kolding. There will be learning sessions and meaningful dialogues with collaborators in these Danish institutions.

Replication Projects

OneOcean

In 2023, efforts have been made to integrate the EX-PED-LAB methodology into one of the OneOcean intergenerational co-creation research projects in the Øygarden commune. This initiative not only contributes to the replication of EX-PED-LAB's methodology but also underscores our commitment to developing innovative pedagogical approaches in kindergartens.

PlayLab

PlayLab is a replication project within EX-PED-LAB, involving co-creation through workshops that focus on arts and education at the Sogndal campus. This project investigates leading transformational learning and workshop methodologies in sustainable ECEC. It explores how students and ECEC teacher educators learn through educational workshops and examines the impact of the PlayLab project on ECEC education.

STM

The STM team (language, text and mathematics) in the ECEC education at the Bergen campus is also a replication project. This team of ECEC teacher educators investigates educational workshops with students and educators, and it discusses the project's impact on ECEC education.

Conference Host: Norwegian National Conference for Kindergarten Research 2024

The EX-PED-LAB team, in cooperation with other KINDknow researchers, is taking the lead in organising the Norwegian National Conference for Kindergarten Research 2024. The theme of the conference is "Co-creation and Research-based Educational Innovation in the ECEC Sector".

Together for the youngest



Dr. Alicja Renata Sadownik
Project Manager

The project “Together for the Youngest” is led by the City of Bergen and aims to strengthen the interprofessional collaboration between diverse services, including early childhood education, public health, psychological-pedagogical services and child protection services. This collaboration is intended to enhance the conditions for every child’s mental health and general well-being as well as safeguard the rights of the child in interactions within and across all services.

The partners in the project are the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and KINDknow, which contribute expertise in qualitative (KINDknow) and quantitative (NIPH) research during the different phases of the project. In 2023, the qualitative data gathered by the KINDknow team was analysed, providing a basis for the quantitative study (a survey) and two workshops conducted according to the InnoLab methodology developed by the City of Bergen. KINDknow is also responsible for publishing the findings of the quantitative study, with work on this beginning at the end of the year. Based on the preliminary findings and the existing network, KINDknow took the lead in preparing an RCN application under a call for a collaboration project. The submitted application, titled “Every CHILD Matters: UPgrading Interprofessional Competence Flow in/between Services for Young Children [CHILD-UP]”, is currently under evaluation. The results will be announced in June 2024. We remain hopeful!

The “Together for the Youngest” project has revealed numerous obstacles to interprofessional collaboration across services. However, it also highlighted the untapped potential of interprofessional teams (Tverrfaglige Utviklingsteam – TUT), which are: a) established in the City of Bergen at the intersection of three departments and four basic services for young children; b) led by the educational-psychological service, which is mandated to gather headteachers of kindergartens and representatives from child welfare services and public health services to discuss anonymous cases of potentially vulnerable children and related themes/dilemmas; c) authorised to invite representatives from any other service for which the team identifies a competence need; d) expected to provide competence support for universal services and assist these services in assessing the situations of diverse children/families (discussed anonymously).

The identified potential of TUT teams was indicated by kindergarten professionals feeling: a) supported in their professional assessments, dilemmas and insecurities related to potentially vulnerable children/families; and b) that they had a clear overview of the network of services around their profession. Building on this knowledge, the CHILD-UP project aims to support and influence local strategies for organising interprofessional collaboration between universal and specialised services involved in early childhood (0-5 years) with a focus on ensuring that the collaboration remains dedicated to the best interests of the child and family.

Move-play-explore in early childhood education (MoveEarly)



Prof. Eivind Aadland
Project Manager



From left: Katrine Nyvoll Aadland, Tracey Joyce, Eivind Aadland, Pernille Buschmann Eriksen, Sofie Riddervold, Anthony David Okely and James Robert Rudd.
Photo: Torkjell Einarson Venjum

MoveEarly is a large-scale interdisciplinary research project financed by the Research Council of Norway and HVL, running from 2022 to 2028. It addresses the “schoolification” within early childhood education and the increasing levels of physical inactivity in young children, which are concerning trends that do not serve the best interests of children. The project’s research activities include theory development and didactic design, the creation of new assessments, co-creation of professional development, outcome evaluation, process evaluation and knowledge transfer. The project’s main activity is an 18-month-long randomised controlled trial involving 50 kindergartens and 500 children in Bergen, aiming to evaluate the effects of a co-created pedagogical innovation/intervention on ECEC pedagogical practices and holistic child development.

MoveEarly seeks to co-create and promote an early childhood education pedagogy centred on movement, play and exploration. Through the project, researchers and kindergarten staff collaborate to develop optimal solutions for the professional development of staff, enabling the movement-play-exploration-focused pedagogy to be conceptualised, implemented into ECEC practice and then evaluated. The main research questions underpinning the developmental work are as follows:

1. How does movement-play-exploration-focused pedagogy affect children’s physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development and well-being?
2. How can partnerships between academics and the kindergarten sector work optimally to develop sustainable solutions for the professional development of ECEC staff and pedagogical innovation?

The progress in the project until the end of 2023 consisted of:

- Recruitment of 4 PhD students, 1 post-doc and 1 research assistant (working as an interdisciplinary team in HVL’s Research Group for Physical Activity and Public Health and KINDknow).

- Starting the pilot of the RCT.
- Co-creation of new assessment tools for movement competence, creativity and well-being.
- Development of 7 pedagogical principles for the intervention.
- Creation of digital resources (moveearly.no) that include an ideas bank of activities and approaches promoting movement, play and exploration; the 7 pedagogical principles of the intervention; and several video prompts supporting the ECEC settings in their developmental projects implementing the movement-play-exploration pedagogy.
- Co-creation of the framework for professional development based on which ECEC staff will design developmental projects implementing the movement-play-exploration pedagogy.

The co-creation process, conducted between January and March 2023, framed our intervention approach, which blends physical seminars with online meetings, written work and online resources. The professional development may be completed with 15 ECTS credits at the master’s degree level (<https://www.hvl.no/studier/studieprogram/bevegelse-leik-og-utforsking-i-barnehaugen/>), allowing participants to continue formal professional development in ECEC-related MA programmes. This education module is restricted to ECEC staff participating in MoveEarly in 2024-2026, but it may be offered to the kindergarten sector in the future if funding is secured.

The website moveearly.no is currently locked but will be made open access for all ECEC settings and the public after the project duration. The main intervention will commence in October/November 2024, with a kick-off event for more than 700 kindergarten staff at Campus Kronstad on 31 October-1 November as well as 7-8 November.

DocTalent for the EU



Dr. Zacharias Andreadakis



DocTalent4EU represents an advanced collaborative effort with HVL and 7 other European Universities which is aimed at improving PhD employability by integrating the training provided with the current demands of the labour market. This initiative is not merely academic; it involves a multifaceted approach incorporating various non-academic stakeholders, such as industry leaders and public authorities, thereby broadening the scope of PhD training beyond the traditional academic confines.

The consortium's mission centres on the development of an innovative, transparent recognition system for transferable skills, employing the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) framework. This system is designed to validate and accentuate the non-technical skills that early-career researchers (ECRs) develop throughout their doctoral education. The project's multi-actor approach involves collaboration with various stakeholders outside the traditional academic setting, including industry and public authorities, to ensure that the transferable skills training aligns with non-academic sector needs. A key element of DocTalent4EU's strategy includes the deployment of an AI-driven, machine learning prototype to continually assess and predict the labour market demands for specific skills at the eighth European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level.

In terms of pedagogical innovation, the consortium has made significant advancements, particularly through the efforts of KINDknow's Zacharias Andreadakis in developing a novel course on teamwork and networking. Zacharias Andreadakis, from KINDknow, has notably contributed to this effort by developing a unique syllabus and comprehensive scientific material for a new course on teamwork and networking. This course, a first in Europe, reflects the project's commitment to addressing the skills gap directly by offering practical, applicable training to ECRs. In addition, the initiative aims to establish local talent management centres, inspired by successful European and broader international models. These centres are intended to offer structured career development services and facilitate networking between PhD students and a broader professional community, including alumni and industry representatives.

Through its comprehensive approach, from in-depth skills analysis to the practical application in course design and talent management, DocTalent4EU is setting new standards for PhD training and employability. The project's innovative strategies and collaborative framework hold the potential to make a significant impact on the academic and non-academic sectors alike, promising a brighter future for PhD holders across Europe.

Nordic early childhood educational research journal – Nordisk Barnehageforskning tidsskrift



Prof. Liv Torunn
Chief Editor



**nordisk
barnehageforskning**
nordic early childhood educational research

We are proud to announce that 36 manuscripts were published in 2023, with 21 manuscripts already in production for 2024. In 2023, there were four issues, including two special issues: “Mathematics in Early Childhood Education” and “Creating Sustainable Early Childhood Institutions – Perspectives, Possibilities and Challenges”. The 36 manuscripts have been downloaded in full-text more than 65,000 times, compared to 53,188 full-text downloads in 2022. These figures demonstrate the journal’s relevance in the early childhood research field, both in terms of publishing and readership. This is facilitated by the fact that it is an online, Open Access journal, freely available to all interested readers. The option to publish in any of the Scandinavian languages as well as English reflects the multifocal approach to languages at KIND-know and allows a variety of scholars to contribute.

This is evident from the 169 manuscripts received in 2023, providing editors with the opportunity to forward high-quality manuscripts to a subject editor with specific knowledge and a network for finding reviewers. Of these, 107 manuscripts were rejected, many at the desk review stage, followed by an invitation to resubmit after specific revisions to improve quality, and most authors do so. The increasing quality of the journal is also evident as NBF has received the DOAJ Seal, achieved by only 10% of the journals indexed in DOAJ.

The distribution of tasks in the publication process, involving editors-in-chief from three institutions (HVL/KINDknow, UiS/FILIORUM, OsloMET), subject editors or special issue editors as well as reviewers, serves to improve the quality of published articles and build a strong early childhood research community. To achieve this, several early career researchers are involved in the publication process. Moreover, the single-blind review approach aims to prioritise PhD candidates’ progression. When applying for special issues, NBF asks for editors from more than one institution or country.

To acknowledge and highlight the meritorious contributions from the involved scholars, accepted articles include the names of the reviewers who recommended them. Conversely, reviewers who withdrew from the peer-review process or recommended rejection are not named in the published article. To acknowledge the responsible editor’s contribution, their name also appears in the published article.

Past, present and future – Historical perspectives on children, childhoods and kindergarten



Dr. Geert Thyssen
Project Manager

BARNkunne's history project addresses from different historical perspectives the question of what key lines of development and features are of early childhood education in Norway and in the Nordics. Its focus is on such education particularly in kindergarten in the form of *danning*, *bildung*, etc. viewed as (material-)cultural (self-)formation. It endeavours to grasp from dense nodes of activity historical dilemmas and tensions having come to affect childhoods, forms of early childhood (especially kindergarten) education and kindergarten teacher education. This is important with a view to garnering the kind of knowledge that may help to understand what is often referred to as a Nordic (even Norwegian) model of kindergarten education policy and praxis.

From a historiographical perspective, the project in turn addresses the question of how histories of Nordic and Norwegian kindergarten education can be figured as having to do with sustainability, in touching upon values, tradition and wisdom of practice, forms of knowledge, senses of belonging, etc. having been deemed worth safeguarding across multiple generations. Situating history thus, in the present and future just as much as in the past, the project aims to add new knowledge and insights to themes which are central to kindergarten education policy and praxis, such as concepts of childhood, views concerning kindergartens and imaginaries around kindergarten (teacher) education, with different values assigned and positions taken across space and time.

This brief project summary, building on work done since 2009 when the project started as part of an NFR-funded project called *Barnehaugen som danningsarena*, 2009-2014, already reflects some of the efforts its leaders Geert Thyssen and Elin Ødegaard have made in 2023 to reorient BARNkunne's history strand in line with the most current developments within the history of education. Among these are cutting-edge approaches of temporality, the presumed singularity of which has been complicated to foster new understandings of the fabric of time as gathering multiple pasts and presents and opening up to equally many possible futures. Such approaches trouble Modern imaginaries of a mere succession of events and of increasing progress along a single timeline (the arrow of time) and, along with it, such notions as pioneers and pioneering policies and practices. One main achievement of the project in 2023, then, has been to rethink the concepts of time, temporality, history and historiography thus far underpinning the project. At a project meeting in autumn 2023, the project leaders thus agreed on texts better suited for the project's website, and recently some the project web pages have been updated accordingly (the Norwegian pages thereby having also received priority in view of BARNkunne's creating of a PhD position in the history of education due to be occupied in early May 2024).

Likewise, in autumn 2023, the project leaders successfully applied for a Professor II position (based on 50 per cent within BARNkunne) for Professor Merethe Roos, Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge, whom the University of Upsala was to award an honorary doctorate in January 2024 – Merethe Roos has joined BARNkunne on 1 January 2024 and as soon as on 18 January 2024 delivered a first inspiring BARNkunne seminar entitled *Skolens og barnehagens doble utvikling som et prisme for å reflektere over «drivende aktører» i utdanningshistorie*. Merethe Roos will collaborate for two years with the project leaders in elaborating a fruitful agenda for BARNkunne's history strand which is also intended to feed into the work related to NORBARN.

For 2024, the project leaders with assistance from Merethe Roos intend to elaborate a feasible PhD project for BARNkunne's new PhD candidate, who will be supervised by Geert Thyssen and Alicja R. Sadownik. Alicja's Sadownik collaboration with the Norges Fiskerimuseum resulted by submitting an application to Research Council of Norway for an additional public sector-based PhD candidate (Gitte Bastiansen) to be supervised by Alicja Sadownik and Geert Thyssen. Moreover, Geert Thyssen and Merethe Roos envisage producing, with assistance from Elin Ødegaard, a paper on the state of the art in Norwegian and Nordic early childhood education history.

This work will help set the course for future research on the history of kindergarten education in the Nordics, drawing on Geert Thyssen's expertise on the historiography of education as lead convenor of Network 17. Histories of Education of the European Educational Research Association and an editor of the level II journal *History of Education*, Merethe Roos's expertise on the history of Norwegian and Nordic childhoods and education as president of the *Utdanningshistorisk Nettverk i Norge* and an editor of *Norsk Pedagogisk Tidsskrift*, and Elin Ødegaard's expertise on the history of early childhood and kindergarten education as the leader of BARNkunne and NORBARN. Such work will no doubt also serve to prepare the next *Utdanningshistorisk konferanse* which is anticipated to be held in April 2025 and organised by the project leaders with help from project members like Merethe Roos, who organised the first conference of this kind in Drammen in April 2023.

DigiCross 2023



Prof. Siri Sollied Madsen
Project Manager



From left to right from the top: Helge Habbestad, Aleksander Janeš, Rita Brito, Marit H. Lier, Łukasz Tomczyk, Natalia Demeshkant, Jane O'Connor, Steinar Thorvaldsen, Siri Sollied Madsen, Thomas Bjørner, Maria Dardanou, Torstein Unstad, Johannes Sæleset, Nils Christian Tveiterås, Heidi Iren Saure, Andreja Klančar, Olga Fotakopoulou

The national strategy for digital transformation in the university- and university college sector 2021-2025 states that higher education must transform to better take advantage of digital technology, and that there is a great potential still unused. To do so, more knowledge about the digitalisation of education is needed. The aim of DigiCross has been to contribute to this area, mainly focusing on the dynamics of pedagogical practitioners' digital competence, and the investigation of prerequisites for the development of practitioners' professional digital competence.

The project is led by Siri Madsen at the UiT, and partners in the project are from nine different institutions across eight countries: NLA University College (Norge), Birmingham City University (England), University of Primorska, ISEC Lisboa (Portugal), Pedagogical University of Krakow (Poland), Erciyes University (Turkey), Kharkiv National Pedagogical University Named after G.S. Skovoroda (Ukraina) og Al-Hussein Bin Talal University (Jordan). Data is collected at all partner institutions and has resulted in several peer-reviewed articles with the following papers published in 2023:

- Janeš, A., Madsen S. S., Saure, H. I., Lie, M. H., Gjesdal, B., Thorvaldsen. S., Brito, R., Krasin, S., Jwaifell, M., Konca, A. S. og Klančar, A. (2023). Preliminary Results from Norway, Slovenia, Portugal, Turkey, Ukraine, and Jordan: Investigating Pre-Service Teachers' Expected Use of Digital Technology When Becoming Teachers. *Education Sciences*, 13(8):783. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13080783>

- Madsen S. S., O'Connor J., Janeš, A., Klančar, A., Brito, R., Demeshkant, N., Konca, A. S., Krasin, S., Saure, H. I., Gjesdal, B., Ludgate, S., Jwaifell, M., Reham A. og Thorvaldsen. S. (2023). International Perspectives on the Dynamics of Pre-Service Early Childhood Teachers' Digital Competences. *Education Sciences* 13(7). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13070633>
- Demeshkant, N., Madsen, S. S., Janeš, A., Klančar, A., Brito, R., Konca, A. S., Krasin, S., Saure, H. I., O'Connor J., Jwaifell, M., Thorvaldsen, S. og Trusz, A. (2023). What digital tools teachers are ready to use in kindergarten – international comparative study with early childhood pre-service teachers. *Proceedings of the 31st International Conference on Computers in Education*. Asia-Pacific Society for Computers in Education.

The project and its results have on several occasions been presented at scientific conferences and educational settings throughout 2023 (e.g. NERA, NMP, BIP Erasmus+, international summer school). An international DigiCross seminar was conducted in Copenhagen during spring 2023, arranged by the UiT. The preliminary findings were discussed in the network of partners. During autumn 2023, several of the partners met in Krakow at the international conference Digital remote education - from the COVID-19 Pandemic to Best Practices for the Future. Plans for the future were discussed, and as DigiCross is a longitudinal study, it is planned to collect new data during 2025. Several articles are drafted (led by Heidi I. Saure, NLA), and there are three planned publications in process which are expected to be published in 2024.

Nordlige hager/Gárbbis



Dosent Anne Myrstad
Project Manager



Children playing. Photo: Ole Åsheim.

15 November 2023 was the official opening of the Sami-inspired outdoor area, Nordlige hager/ Gárbbis, in Sjømannsbyen kindergarten, Tromsø/ Romsa. Deputy mayor Sigrun Bjørnhaug Hammer (SV) marked the opening by a speech and pouring water on the outdoor area. Joik was performed by Niko Valkeapää, and stockfish was served.

The unique outdoor area consists of two play installations designed by artist and architect Joar Nango, in collaboration with boat builder Arne-Terje Sæter. The design of the installations combines boat building traditions with Sami traditional construction techniques and reflects the culture- and natural landscape in the area with clear references to Sami coastal culture.

Through a participatory research design, the KINDknow researchers Myrstad and Kleemann have followed the construction process together with children and staff. The children have been given the opportunity to observe and document through drawings and the use of a GoPro cameras. The researchers consider the outdoor area as part of an indigenising process, where space is created for Sami values and knowledge in the kindergarten's everyday practice.

The aim for 2024 is to publish articles based on data from the project.



Vice Mayor in Tromsø Municipality Sigrun Bjørnhaug Hammer opening the Sami-inspired outdoor area. Photo: Ole Åsheim



Niko-Mihkal Valkeapää, Sami musician, in national Sami clothing, Vice Mayor in Tromsø Municipality Sigrun Bjørnhaug Hammer and children at the opening of Sami-inspired outdoor area. Photo: Ole Åsheim

Research school NORBARN



Prof. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard
Project Manager



Members of the research school NORBARN, Autumn 2023

The research school NORBARN [NORCHILD] started up in January 2023, with Professor Elin Eriksen Ødegaard as project leader and soon after we employed Hanne Israelsen as coordinator in an 80% position. The first months were used to get to know the partners, create a website and start creating the larger courses stipulated in the project description. We had several board meetings, where, among other things, we adopted guidelines for admission to the research school and discussed plans for further progress. From the start, we recruited Mikhail Gradovski as Professor II. His task was to create a design for the follow-up research with the project manager and develop some courses. This is a work in progress.

On 9 May, the research school had a great Kick-Off with invited partners and interested parties from HVL as well as some of the PhD students who soon applied for admission to the research school. The day took place physically at HVL, campus Bergen, and was also transferred to those who had signed up for digital participation. Later, on 11 May, the project leader presented NORBARN to researchers at BIN Norden at the conference Child Cultures: landscapes for Play, Art and Explorations.

In summer 2023, the research school admitted its first PhD students and three postdoctoral fellows were offered membership. In December 2023, the research school had 19 active PhD students. Course 1 - Newer Kindergarten

Research in a Nordic Perspective, was planned for spring 2024, while Course 2 - Responsible Management of Knowledge Development - Establishing Change Agents was planned for autumn 2024. The research school was active in autumn 2023.

In September, Dr Zacharias Andreadakis became involved in course development in webinar form. The research school students have been offered two short digital seminars. On 20 September, the theme was “Academic writing and innovation”, while on 6 October, a seminar was given with the theme “Innovation and academic impact”. On 7-9 November, the students (and others) were offered the mini-course Open Science, but the course had too few participants to complete. The course will be offered in April 2024. The research school will also continue with short digital seminars in 2024.

On 23 October, the research school organised its first PhD day in connection with the Norwegian Kindergarten Research Conference in Stavanger. Keynotes from the Norwegian Kindergarten Research Conference held lectures for the fellows. The fellows could participate in round tables with feedback from seniors and other fellows. They also participated in a workshop to record the theme for courses in NORBARN.

Next year, the PhD day for NORBARN members will be held in May in Hamar in collaboration with Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, and later on in October in Bergen.

Since one of the stands of the research school is work-life relevance, the project leader presents the research School to work life organisations; on 16 November, the project leader was invited to the organisation Virke, Lederforum kindergarten.

In 2023, the research school has also engaged in activities with clear synergy for the research school. The project leader has, together with postdoctoral fellows Czarecah Oropilla and Hege Fimreite, collaborated with Bjarte Håvik, project manager in the DOCTALENT 4EU project, with course development for the work package led by HVL.

Dr Zacharias Andreadakis started a study this autumn on transferable skills, investigating transferable skills in ECEC PhD programmes in Greece and Norway. In collaboration with researchers at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, research is being conducted on whether and possibly how doctoral courses relate to transferable skills. The research assistant has been Evelyn Eggum. Nordic Kindergarten Research Journal, a journal at level 1, which is funded by BARNkunne, HVL, Filiorum, UIS and BLU v/OsloMet, the same players who develop the main courses in NORBARN, is a journal that editorially has the same goals as NORBARN. From December, this journal will be associated with the website for NORBARN and will become a journal important to the candidates and the research that is relevant to NORBARN.

For 2024, the research school plans to follow up on working life relevance towards the municipal sector's organisation (KS) and Virke.

The plans for 2024 are:

- Further develop the websites, for example by a bio-book for the fellows with a presentation of their projects.
- Present NORBARN to a group from the Ministry of Education on 4 January.
- Present NORBARN to municipal leaders in the Norwegian nursery sector for the Organisation of Municipalities (KS) on 31 January.
- Co-create designs for follow-up research with NORBARN'S' advice
- Start follow-up research on the research school students.
- Develop and implement several webinar series. For example: a) on transferable skills, b) policy analysis and c) bring an outsider into dialogue.
- Plan and implement innovation workshops that use play as a transferable skill.
- Arrange PhD day in May and October.

Stories

This time, we would like to focus our Stories on the projects by our postdoctoral and PhD fellows. We are proud of our enthusiastic team and the variety of the projects they are doing, and so they can speak for themselves.

Hege Fimreite

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



My postdoctoral project is part of the Exploration and Pedagogical Innovation Laboratories (EX-PED-LAB) project, related to work package 5. This work package replicates co-creation in workshops in ECEC education and aims to investigate how co-creation processes can support ECEC teacher educators in enhancing the quality of ECEC teacher education, in close collaboration with researchers, ECEC teacher educators and in-service teachers.

My work aims to investigate transformative learning processes when the participants in co-creation shift roles from, for instance, educators and students, to co-creative partners and how the leadership actions support this process and investigate if workshops in education can contribute to increasing the quality of ECEC teacher education. I am part of a group that initiated an action research project, PlayLab, co-creation through workshops focused on arts and education, aiming to change our current teaching practice to ensure that the teachers and the students become more engaged and activated: How can we develop our teaching practice to be more ECEC relevant, engaging and active for the ECEC teacher students?

This project investigates leading transformational learning and workshop methodology in a sustainable ECEC education, students and ECEC teacher educators learning through educational workshops and the PlayLab project's impact on ECEC education. We have started analysing the material focusing on different leadership actions that support or hinder transformational learning, and the preliminary findings identified three actions that can support transformative learning for both students and ECEC teacher educators: Collective preparation, PlayLab researchers as leaders and breaking established patterns of action. We also identified two leadership actions that can hinder transformative learning: Accepting guests in co-creation and an unclear division of responsibilities.

In addition to the PlayLab project, I collaborate with the STM team (language, text and mathematics) in Bergen at various educational workshops, where I have a special focus on the role of mediator. Included in my postdoc project is also how exploration as a term is understood and used in ECEC education.

Czarecah Tuppil Oropilla

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



In May 2023, I embarked on my postdoctoral journey after successfully defending my PhD in April 2023. Over the next three years, I will take on a co-leadership role within the EX-PED-LAB project, co-creating initiatives to advance pedagogical innovations in early childhood education and care. My primary research focus revolves around pedagogical innovations which include the development of the Digital Toolbox for EX-PED-LAB, a comprehensive resource aimed at enhancing pedagogical practices in kindergartens. Alongside this, I am actively involved in the creation of a podcast dedicated to unravelling the intricacies of pedagogical innovations in early childhood education and care. Through the conversational interviews with leading researchers in the field, I hope to contribute to the co-creation of knowledge and foster richer understandings on this theme.

Simultaneously, I am undertaking a scoping review on pedagogical innovations in collaboration with Dr Zacharias Andreadakis, hoping to offer valuable insights to academic discourse. I have also taken on the role of co-editor for a book series on sustainable possibilities emerging from early childhood studies in the face of societal poly-crisis and uncertainties. Furthermore, I am still committed to sustaining collaboration in intergenerational research and engaging in collaborative writing projects with peers from various institutions and countries.

Lastly, I am also involved in co-organising committees for KINDknow events, in the hopes of extending my influence beyond academic realms. I am deeply invested in research translation efforts, striving to bridge the gap between academia and the wider community. In actively participating in workshops of diverse formats, including festivals, children's books, public forums, podcasts and short films, I hope to ensure the broader dissemination of our research findings.

Maria Grindheim

PhD fellow, HVL

January 2023–December 2026



My PhD project is part of the MoveEarly Project (Move-play-explore in early childhood education), funded by the Research Council of Norway and Western University of Applied Sciences. MoveEarly is a multi-methodological and interdisciplinary research project promoting movement, play and exploration. My PhD project is a part of work package 1, aiming at conceptualising and theorising the move-play-explore nexus. My research comprises theoretical and empirical perspectives on movement, play and exploration, including 1) a narrative literature review 2) drawing of maps, focus group conversations and guided tours with children and staff, and 3) microanalysis of moments of move-play-explore videorecorded by teachers. During the first year of my PhD, 2023, I have been lucky to be able to participate in various PhD courses, and to be enrolled in the PhD programme Bildung and Pedagogical Practices at HVL and the research school Norbarn.

I have finalised my fieldwork and held presentations at national and international conferences. I have started working on analysing the data and exploring ways of communicating the research. In addition to writing academic articles, my PhD colleague, Tracey Joyce, and I have, together with the illustrator Karoline Ådnanes, received great support from KINDknow and MoveEarly in publishing a book communicating research from my fieldwork. The book, “Alex og det store treet”, (Alex and the big tree) is aimed to support dialogical reading between children and staff. I am looking forward to continuing to work on my project, and I am grateful to be part of such a supportive and inspiring team in MoveEarly and KINDknow.

Nils Christian Tveiterås

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



In my PhD project, I investigate different factors that influence the development of digital competence among pre-service early childhood teachers. Broadly, it concerns digitalisation in higher education in general, but the focus on early childhood teacher education also presents some unique characteristics. Students in early childhood teacher education are not only expected to use technology in their own education but also to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes towards digital technology for their future professional practice in kindergartens.

Together with my supervisor, Siri Sollied Madsen, I have published a research review on teacher students and digital competence in a Norwegian context. Among other findings, we discovered that research on this topic from early childhood teacher education programmes was underrepresented. Furthermore, I have collaborated with several colleagues to examine how digital technology and competence are emphasised in the curricula for early childhood teacher education in Norway. Research and policy documents are thus two broader tracks in the project.

In addition, I have conducted some more practice-oriented studies. A survey was conducted with graduating students, where they were asked about their digital practice and attitudes towards digital tools as well as about the training they received during their studies. Alongside the other investigations, I have explored the use of immersive virtual reality technology for digital seminar work and group discussions with a group of students. Through this, I have not only looked at what possibilities such technology can offer for decentralised studies where much teaching occurs online, but I have also investigated how such exploration of new technology can affect the digital competence of pre-service early childhood teachers.

Karoline Jangård Selliseth

PhD fellow, HVL

September 2019–May 2025



My project enquires about how the use or deselection of commercial communication applications (CCA) like MyKid contributes to the perceived effect on parent-teacher communication, perceptions of kindergarten quality and work organisation among parents, staff and owners in two Norwegian kindergartens.

My project is a qualitative case study with an inductive design. The selection method of the two cases was strategic, with one of the selected kindergartens using a CCA called MyKid for internal and external information distribution and communication (the “CCA-kindergarten”). The second kindergarten did not use CCA (the “no CCA-kindergarten”). I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with kindergarten staff, parents and owners to gain access to empirical data regarding CCA’s implications for communication, quality and work processes. Most of the interviews were conducted by phone (due to the COVID-19 pandemic). However, I conducted two face-to-face interviews (with one owner and a parent couple).

My findings indicate that CCA-use can strengthen staff’s epistemic discretion and parent-teacher communication while potentially weakening structural discretion. The deselection of CCA has both positive and negative implications on discretion while somewhat restricting communication. Moreover, the actors’ arguments on rejecting or introducing CCA reveal conflicting interpretations of the “professional kindergarten quality” concept. The “no CCA-kindergarten” respondents conceptualise the concept as close, personalised parental relations and care, and they see CCA as a hindrance. The “CCA-kindergarten” respondents present digitalisation as future-oriented and self-evidently optimistic. Parents are perceived as customers, and interviewees justify CCAs as modernisation and professional information.

In addition, my tentative findings indicate that posting pictures and information in MyKid is mainly done for parental benefit. Pedagogical leaders thus spend a lot of time taking pictures, uploading them, sorting images, tagging children and posting photos and written information about everyday kindergarten life. However, the staff’s reasoning for doing this work shifts between burdensome parental demands and a more motivational factor of positive feedback.

Tracey Joyce

PhD fellow at MoveEarly
project, HVL

December 2022–November 2026



My PhD research project forms part of the overall MoveEarly Project, a large scale RCT investigating movement, play and exploration in kindergartens. The main aim of my research is to develop instruments to measure how movement, play and exploration affect young children's development. During the first year, I have focussed on developing and piloting the child level instrument. This comprises a set of challenges which the children are invited to take part in through storytelling. The challenges are developed to measure children's adaptability of skills and their creativity.

At present, I am midway through the field testing of the instrument and, so far, we have positive feedback from both children and kindergarten staff that the challenges are playful and fun for the children to take part in. I have also developed a staff level questionnaire which aims to capture kindergarten teachers' reflections on children's playfulness, exploration and well-being. The results of these field tests will be analysed over the next few months.

In addition to the development of these instruments, I have completed PhD courses and have become a member of Norbarn. Together with my colleague, Maria Grindheim, we have also been developing a creativity section for the online resource connected to the MoveEarly intervention and have written a children's book. My first year studying here in Norway has been very positive and has inspired me to progress further, not only with my studies but also into future research and teaching. I am also continuing to study Norwegian, and so I hope I will be fluent in it soon!

Inga Margrethe Fagerbakke

PhD fellow, HVL

August 2019–February 2024



My PhD project explores how pre-service kindergarten teachers act and reflect upon their own science conversations with children within the framework of the Erasmus+ project Science Talk in Teacher Education. The aim is to contribute to developing a conversational pedagogy for science in preschool teacher education. The study is built on the fact that daily conversations about natural phenomena are common in kindergartens, but many kindergarten teachers face challenges in following up on children's curiosity and stimulating deeper understanding.

Through three qualitative studies, my dissertation focuses on analysing pre-service kindergarten teachers' experiences with and reflections on science conversations. It discusses the importance of, but also nuances within, exploratory conversations, and how these can promote children's language and knowledge development. In the unpublished article, I focus on sensory exploration as part of exploratory talk with small children, and in the work in progress, I discuss outdoor multiparty conversations and what the students themselves highlight as important when they reflect on their own conversations.

My dissertation will hopefully contribute with insights into how education can improve students' abilities to engage children in meaningful science conversations and highlight the need for didactic approaches that leverage the pedagogical potential in everyday conversations about science.

Marion Oen

Public PhD fellow, Bergen City
Council/HVL

January 2020–May 2024



My public PhD project (funded by the Municipality of Bergen and the Research Council of Norway) examines what kindergartens can do to make play accessible and available to all children. To get an overview of the possibilities, I search for existing research to find kindergarten teachers' activities to facilitate children's play and thematically analyse these activities. Through this, I develop a navigational taxonomy for play facilitation.

Furthermore, I collaborate with two kindergartens to investigate new possible ways to facilitate children's play. By conducting workshops with educators and intermediary play sessions with teachers and children, we identified and broadened the navigational spaces of framing, conditioning, knowledging and timing. In addition, my project offers theoretical insights into workshop methodology and aims to identify elements for successes and barriers in practice-developing research.

Elena Merzliakova

PhD fellow,

Arctic University of Norway

August 2017–June 2024



My project presents a better understanding of the professional conditions for the internationalisation of kindergarten teacher education. Since internationalisation is a wide dimension in higher education, I have limited internationalisation to student mobility. I have an ambition to find out more about a specific approach to student mobility by way of a dialogical approach. The research question for my study is: How can a dialogical approach to short-term stays abroad organised in groups contribute to the education of future kindergarten teachers? I have collected the data material through a student exchange project between two kindergartens in opposite countries, one in northern Norway and one in northern Russia.

The research question is answered in three different articles and kappa (a summarising text). In my first article, I have discussed the conditions for dialogue between two different countries' understandings of children's learning as they appear in the textbooks on kindergarten teacher education in northern Norway and northern Russia. In my second article, I show how a short stay abroad can contribute to Norwegian kindergarten teacher students' socialisation to the profession. In my third article, I show how participation in a short-term bilateral student exchange project can contribute to the development of students' general pedagogical thinking. In kappa (a summarising text), I argue that there are advantages of organising student mobility as bilateral agreements between the education systems in two countries with the exchange of students who have come about the same in the educational process. I also argue that the choice of region and country have a crucial significance for students' benefits. My study confirms the previous research on the positive effects of internationalisation, while at the same time proposes future research.

Ingrid Skarprud

Public PhD fellow,
Bergen City PhD fellow
February 2024–January 2027



My PhD project is a part of EX-PED-LAB, which is funded by the Research Council of Norway, and it is led by the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. EX-PED-LAB focuses on co-creation across disciplines and institutions as well as research on how the workshop method can create pedagogical innovation in kindergarten teacher education and kindergartens. The main research question is the following: What are the success criteria, tensions and pitfalls of the workshop methodology EX-PED-LAB that lead to pedagogical innovation, knowledge and transformative learning among the players? Here, I seek to contribute by exploring workshop as a phenomenon and exploring how you can benefit from this in education and create new insights for the project. My project aims to develop new pedagogical practices in early childhood education, where I apply the co-creation principle to EX-PED-LAB. My project investigates the art education potential for new pedagogical practice. The project will focus on the education that can take place in the tension between teachers, students and the field of practice. By using workshop as a method, I will facilitate creative processes in my education as well as look at how I can meet the requirement of exploring and further developing research methods that challenge the contradiction between theory and practice.

With a starting point in the arts, I ask the following: What potential for pedagogical innovation can you develop through creative processes linked to the workshop as a phenomenon, place and exploration?

Thilde Kleppe Vårnes

PhD fellow at MoveEarly
project, HVL

January 2024–December 2027



My PhD project is a part of a multi-methodological and interdisciplinary research project called “Move-play-explore in early childhood education” (MoveEarly). This is a big RCT at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, where the main aim is to “develop and test a novel early childhood education and care (ECEC) pedagogical approach integrating movement, play and exploration as conceptual cornerstones for improved child development”.

The projects’ background is two challenges in our society, 1) the “schoolification” within the ECEC system and 2) the ongoing globally challenge around inactivity and sedentary lifestyles. The present study is part of work package 4, and it will focus on the child-level effect of the intervention, i.e. the impact on children’s movement competence, physical activity, sedentary time, physical fitness, motor creativity and self-regulation.

Kine Melfald Tveten

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



The early childhood education (ECE) should be an arena for daily play and physical activity and, therefore, it is important for promoting health, joy in movement and motor development in children. However, today's practice tends towards "schoolification", and we find decreasing activity levels among children at the population level. I am very happy to take part in the Move-Play-Explore in Early Childhood education project (MoveEarly) which is a response to these tendencies.

The project consists of five different work packages (wp), and my postdoc project is connected to wp4 - the effect evaluation. In this wp, I will investigate the effect of a co-created continuous professional development course for early education staff targeted towards movement, play and exploration in daily practice. The main outcome measure will be the newly developed tool from wp2, which is currently called the MoveEarly measure.

Part of my research will also include the investigation of selected psychometric properties of this measure as it is important to know to what extent a new measure actually can detect a change, and what we can consider an important change. Secondary outcomes will be physical activity levels, early academic levels, sleep and well-being. In that sense, I will cover broad aspects of child development in terms of both associations and effects.

The main study consists of a cluster randomised controlled trial involving 50 kindergartens and 500 children in Bergen. I will take part in the comprehensive testing at baseline, midterm and post-intervention together with two scientific assistants and a PhD student. My role as a postdoc will also involve supervision at the master's degree and PhD level. The time period for the postdoc position is 1 February 2024–31 January 2028.

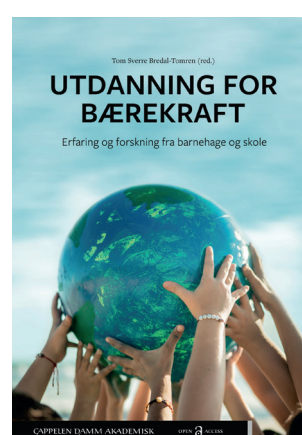
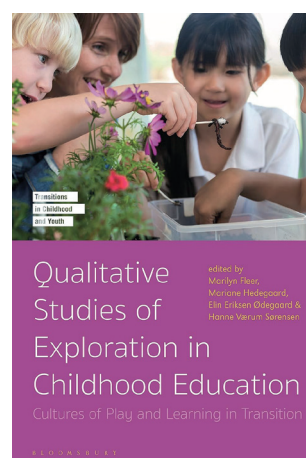
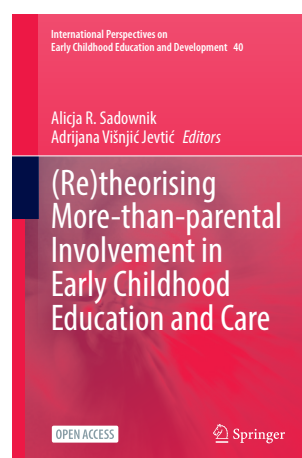
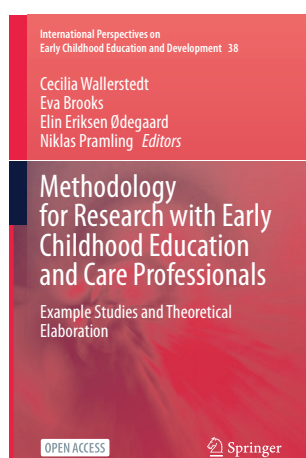
The tentative titles of my papers as first author are as follows:

- Paper I Psychometric properties in terms of responsiveness and the minimal important change of the MoveEarly-Measure in Norwegian preschoolers.
- Paper II Reference values of the MoveEarly Measure. A cross-sectional study.
- Paper III MoveEarly. The short-term effect on movement competence and physical activity. A cluster randomised controlled trial of early education staff professional development to promote movement, play and exploration in preschoolers.
- Paper IV The effects of a two-year movement, play and exploration intervention on movement competence development in preschool children: the MoveEarly cluster randomised controlled trial.

Our Books

In 2023, KINDknow made significant strides in disseminating research by publishing several open access books. These publications underscore our commitment to making high-quality academic work freely accessible to researchers, practitioners and the general public. The open access format ensures that the valuable insights and knowledge generated by our researchers reach a broad audience, facilitating a greater impact and engagement within the field of early childhood education and beyond. By providing unrestricted access to these comprehensive resources, we aim to foster a more inclusive and collaborative academic environment, encouraging the exchange of ideas and promoting advancements in early childhood research globally. We have also published two books for children. Read more about them in the next chapter.

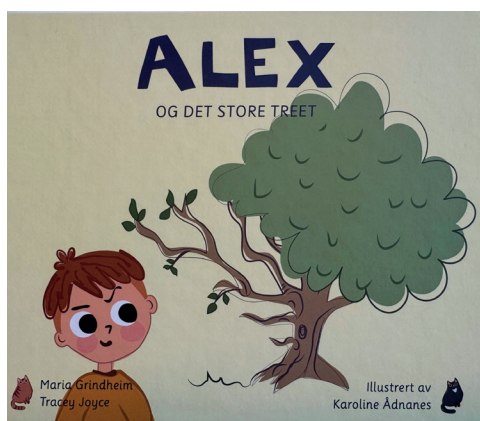
Open access books





The book: *What does it mean to be alive*, [Hva betyr det å leve] by Ødegaard, Hoffart and Marandon (2023) was a result of our plan to experiment with dissemination genres for a wider outreach of the concept and practice of collaborative exploration. This picture book project was a dialogical co-creation process between two artists and a researcher. While writing short articles and research syllabi books are familiar to many researchers, animation films and the picture book genre as research translation or co-creations are seldom to be found. This particular book was created as a spin-off of an animated video of the same name, which in turn was previously created to exemplify collaborative exploration. The narrative was published in the scientific article: Ødegaard, E. E. (2021).

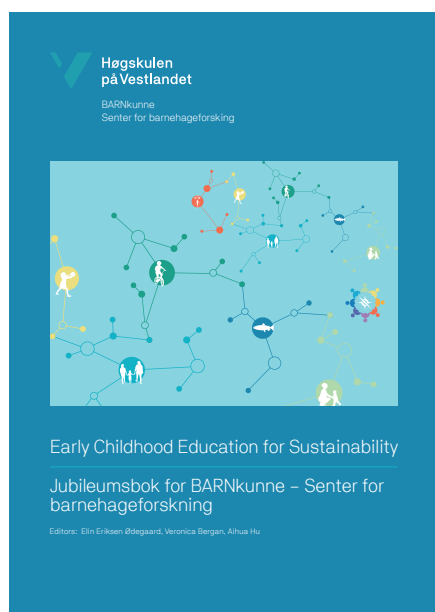
Reimagining “Collaborative Exploration” - A signature pedagogy for sustainability in early childhood education and care. *Sustainability*, 13(9), 5139. MDPI AG. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su13095139>. The example is a story of a kindergarten teacher responding to children’s curiosity about what it means to be alive. The teacher takes the children on a collaborative explorative expedition outside the kindergarten fence to find it out. The narrative was first co-created by Elin Eriksen Ødegaard and André Marandon, based on Marandon’s report from a children’s art project: Rewilding - art and nature activism in the kindergarten. Ødegaard rewrote the report into a short narrative to illustrate collaborative exploration. The story later transformed into an animated film (2022) and picture book (2023). In close dialogue with Ødegaard and with permission from Marandon, the artist Håkon Hoffart retold the story through visual elements and added visuals to the narrative, for a well-functional visual narratology, allowing artistic freedom for communicating collaborative exploration.



Alex and the Big Tree is a book designed to spark ideas between children and staff in kindergarten. The inspiration for the book comes from research undertaken in kindergartens and the pedagogical framework that is used in the intervention in the MoveEarly project. The purpose of the book is to find a way to communicate and share research directly with children and staff in kindergartens.

This is the first book about Alex and his friends. Alex is four and half year old and he goes to kindergarten. In the kindergarten, they have a very big tree. One day, two toy kittens are stuck in the three. How can Alex and his friends save them?

The story is written by Maria Grindheim and Tracey Joyce, both of whom are PhD students in MoveEarly. Karoline Ådnanes, from Iterate, has illustrated the book. Elin Eriksen Ødegaard and Eivind Aadland have supervised the work and Julie Grindheim have contributed with editorial reading. The book is financed by KINDknow seed funding.



Anniversary book

With this anniversary book, KINDknow - Centre for Kindergarten Research provides an insight into kindergarten-relevant research that relates to a sustainable future. If we, as a society, are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we must focus on societal and planetary challenges in education. In Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC), it is important to see the institutional spaces as a place for good childhoods, where play and exploration give pleasure, learning and growth for each child enrolled. When we can see this, we can also see quality education for all.

The year 2023 was a year of celebrations. We celebrated five years with the KINDknow [BARNkunne] research centre and 75 years with kindergarten teacher education in Bergen. During the year, we organised a series of events:

1) An open seminar on Kindergarten history: Looking back at 75 years, we launched a new film on the pioneering work on digitalisation in kindergartens and kindergarten teacher education, through an interview with Ida Margrethe Knudsen, a pioneering kindergarten teacher, educator and researcher.

Watch the film [here](#).

2) An open seminar on the five-year history of the KINDknow centre. We saw the history in connection with the Norwegian and international Early childhood educational landscape. We celebrated the achievements from five years of research with a special focus on the PhD students' achievements. We are proud that seven PhD students have graduated in five years. All of them produced a short video for the occasion.

3) An open film launch of the documentary film: One Portrait – The Children by the North Sea. From a project with Øygarden commune and Kunstpilotene. The film was introduced by Ferruccio Goia, the filmmaker and Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, the producer and commented on by Sustainability coordinator Siri Smith. The trailer of the film can be seen [here](#):

4) The Jubileums book on Sustainability. The anniversary book aimed to make the research conducted on education for sustainability available to more people. Researchers, for many years, even before the start of the research centre five years ago, had been concerned with the topic of sustainability and how kindergarten research can contribute to sustainability goals. We selected 32 articles on sustainability, from the last five years, for free redistribution. The articles in this collection result from a strong commitment from the research community at KINDknow. These are articles all have in common that they contribute to the development of knowledge about education for sustainability and they are published under Creative Commons, a licence that permits reprinting and redistribution.

The articles cover theory development, systematic analyses, practice-developing research, case studies, etc. All of them put sustainability on the agenda. The editors were Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, HVL, Veronica Bergan, UiT and Aihua Hu, HVL. At HVL, the milieu had a long history of researching processes of cultural formation, lived democracy, collaborative exploration and good governance in ECEC institutions and what such perspectives can mean in the ECEC sector. At UiT - the Arctic University of Norway, there was a strong background in researching diversity, Sami culture, place, digital technology, harvesting and gardening with children. These topics can be found in the book. Articles cover theory development, review articles, case studies and other empirical studies. They all put sustainability on the agenda in the kindergarten sector. The editors also added a new introduction, and a foreword is written by UNESCO professor Arjen Wals.

The year 2023 has also been a fruitful year for collaborating with visiting researchers.

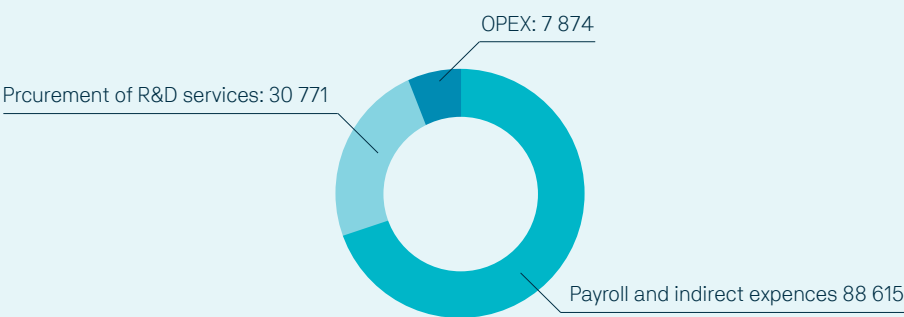
Dr Ana Marjanovich-Shine, Global Fulbright Scholar, researching Dialogic Pedagogy, Teacher Education and Higher Education, Early Childhood Education, Creativity and Critical Ontological Dialogue and Democracy in Education, stayed at KINDknow Setter for 2 months financed from a Fulbright Stipend.

Dr He Min, Associate Professor from East China Normal University and Scholar Lin Huo from Beijing Institute of Education, stayed with us 6 and 11 months, respectively.

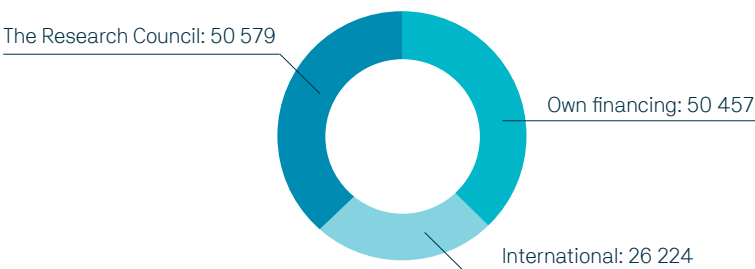
Dr Glykeria Fragkiadaki, Assistant Professor at School of Early Childhood Education of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, stayed with us for 1 week within the Erasmus + programme, the same as Dr Mehmet Mart, a postdoc at Necmettin Erbakan University, Turkey.

KINDknow Annual accounts

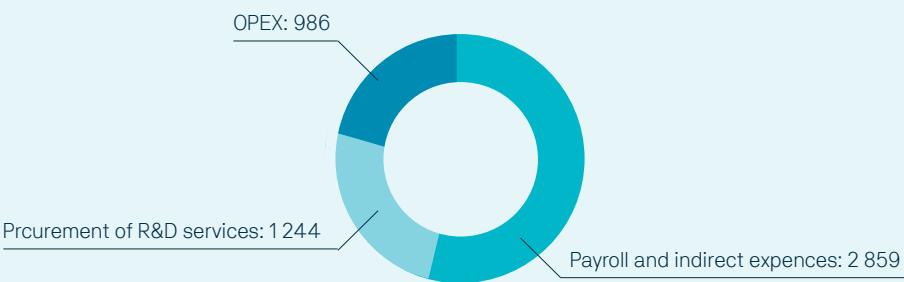
Total costs 2018-2028, in 1000 NOK



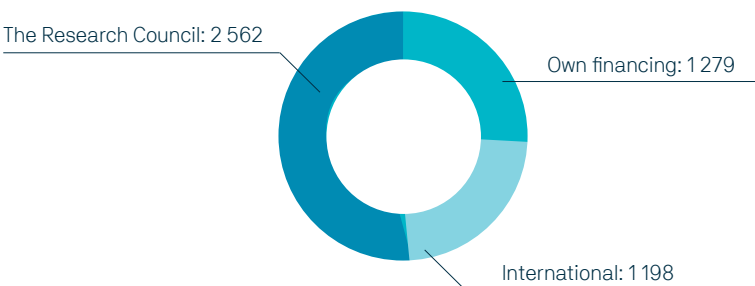
Funding plan 2018-2028, in 1000 NOK



Costs in 2023, in 1000 NOK



Funding plan 2018-2028, in 1000 NOK



Publications, Keynotes, Books and Visual knowledge transfer

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