



Building partnerships for change in Kimberley childrens'

The CEIEC, in partnership with the Kimberley and Pilbara Children's Services Association (KAPCSA), has been awarded funds by the federal department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA) to run an action research project in the Western Kimberley region of Western Australia (2006 -2009.) This report is by CEIEC Director **Prof. Glenda MacNaughton**.

Past and present discrimination have limited access by remote, mainly Indigenous Australian communities in this region to self-managed services that are culturally relevant and that support the growth and learning of children within the communities.

This project's team will work with communities and key stakeholders in the Western Kimberley to answer two broad questions:

- What are culturally relevant quality indicators for children's services within the region?[#]
- What will support or impede high quality, culturally relevant services for young children within the region?

To answer those questions, the project team (Heather Lawrence, Vicki Hyman and Glenda Mac Naughton) will create a series of 'learning exchanges' between local communities, early childhood staff and other key stakeholders. The exchanges will take the form of 3

'bush meetings', 6 learning circle meetings, 2 conferences and a custom-built web site.

In these learning exchanges, communities will be invited to respond to these questions:

1. What should services for children in their community look like? What should they do?
2. What should children know? What should they learn and do?
3. What can improve the lives of children in their community?

As the project team learns about the possibilities and barriers to high quality, culturally relevant services for children in the region, they will pass-on their findings to participants to use in their discussions with government and other funding bodies about what they need for their children.

In 2005, the CEIEC collaborated with KAPCSA to develop its Strategic Plan, launched at KAPCSA's annual conference (see *CEIEC News* 4.3). The Plan summarises KAPCSA's mission: "advocating, networking, learning & supporting services for all children & families in the (region), based on a commitment to children's rights & voices & respect for Indigenous ways of knowing, cultural diversity & equity".

More about the FACSIA project:
Email: gmmacn@unimelb.edu.au
www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/CEIEC

[#] See CEIEC's 'Quality Indicators', p2.

INSIDE

CEIEC speakers creating impacts internationally p2

CEIEC 'Quality Indicators' project p2

Research that's making a difference p3

National recognition for CEIEC's 'Children's Voices' work p4

'Student engagement' in South Australia p4

REGULAR FEATURES

'Research with a difference' p3

Conference Call p5



CEIEC speakers creating impacts internationally

CEIEC staff have been invited recently to address audiences in three countries!

In Australia

Dr. Karina Davis was invited to address The National Association of Community Based Children's Services Annual Conference in Sydney, on 14-15 July 2006. Karina's presentation was titled, 'Excluded, embraced, invisible or tolerated? Cultural diversity in the everyday life of early childhood services'.

Prof. Glenda MacNaughton and Dr. Patrick Hughes were each invited to address a conference on 'Critical Curriculum Communities' in western Sydney on 26 August. Approximately fifty staff from early childhood centres in the area attended the conference.

Dr. Kylie Smith was invited to address the Port Phillip and Stonnington Curriculum Expo, *Investigation, Assessment and Reflection – Curriculum Journey in St Kilda* on 28th September 2006. Kylie's presentation was titled 'Fairytale and Fantasies in the early childhood curriculum: truths and their effects for seeing and assessing children.'



Prof. Glenda MacNaughton



In The USA

Dr. Sherie McLamm was invited to present 'Opening the Space' to the 'Three Deans Conference' at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in mid-September 2006. This annual event brings together Faculty of Education staff from The University of Melbourne, the University of Madison and London University.



Dr. Sherie McLamm



In Canada

Prof. Glenda MacNaughton and Dr. Patrick Hughes were invited to an international early childhood 'summit' entitled 'Alternative pedagogies'. Prof. Alan Pence and Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw of the University of Victoria, British Columbia hosted the 'summit', which ran in Victoria between 6 and 11 August. Participants came from New Zealand, Sweden, the USA, Canada and Australia. They met Ministers from the Victorian Departments of Education and of Children and Family Development; and gave presentations to a two-day Institute, attended by two hundred early childhood staff, managers and policy-makers from across Canada.

CEIEC's 'Quality Indicators'

A CEIEC research team has sent its preliminary findings for comment by communities in the Kimberley.

'Quality Indicators for Indigenous programs' is led by CEIEC's Prof. Glenda MacNaughton and Ms Heather Lawrence and funded by the Faculty of Education.

'Quality Indicators' is separate from the FACSIA project (see p.1), but related to it. Glenda and Heather have been asking local communities in the Kimberley how they would define high quality Indigenous programs. They have now asked the communities to comment on a draft report and will incorporate the comments in a final report. That report will be one starting point in the broader FACSIA project in 2006 - 2009.



Research with a difference to make a difference



'My current research draws on and develops my experiences in Australia, both as an early childhood practitioner and as a mother with young children speaking the languages of my country of origin.'

Each edition of *Centre News* introduces the work of one of the CEIEC's postgraduate students. This edition's research student is **Prasana Srinivasan**.

In my Masters in Education research, I am exploring whether and how early childhood practitioners acknowledge and respect linguistic diversity in their programs. I am using postcolonial theories to interpret current attitudes in Australia's public sphere towards linguistic diversity and to explore early childhood practitioners' responses to that diversity.

My current research draws on and develops my experiences in Australia, both as an early childhood practitioner and as a mother with young children speaking the languages of my country of origin. My current work also develops my Honours research project, which used an 'anti-bias' perspective to examine

early childhood practitioners' approach to cultural diversity.

Much research has been done already on young children's language development in general and, in particular, on school-aged children's first language development. Researchers have paid comparatively little attention to language development in very young children, even though early childhood is regarded as a critical time in language development.

Many researchers argue that languages are critical influences on our understandings of the world (their argument is summarised as 'linguistic determinism'). Thus, linguistic diversity is one part of the broader contest between dominant and peripheral cultures, i.e. between different ways to see the world and to be in it.

My project is associated with the CEIEC's RESPECT research into equitable relationships between staff and parents.

... and research that's making a difference



Kate Alexander

'My Masters research asks whether and how 'gender neutral' characters in children's books can combat gender stereotypes'

The CEIEC's **Kate Alexander** has won an **Australian Women Educators' Girls Education Award**. The CEIEC's **Karina Davis** reports.

The AWE award recognises newly graduated educators' contributions to equity for girls within education. Kate received the award for her undergraduate special research project, which examined how gender appeared in books for young children that had won (or been shortlisted for) an award from the Children's Book Council of Australia.

Currently, Kate is developing her

Award-winning research through her Masters of Education. She was the featured postgraduate student in *Centre News* 5.1 (where she described her research) and she wrote the *Members' Briefing** that accompanied edition 5.2.

Kate is also developing databases and bibliographies to support the CEIEC's work on Children's Voices (young children as citizens) and the CEIEC's RESPECT project on staff-parent relationships.

CONGRATULATIONS, KATE!

* CEIEC members receive a *Members' Briefing* with each edition of *Centre News*.



National recognition for CEIEC's 'Children's Voices' work

The CEIEC has received national recognition for its work around young children's participation in the City of Port Phillip's decision-making. This report by the CEIEC's **Kylie Smith**, who has been leading this work.

The work with the City of Port Phillip is but one of several CEIEC research projects concerning the place of children's voices in government decision-making. For more information on this program of research, contact Dr. Kylie Smith: kylieas@unimelb.edu.au

'Student Engagement' is the topic of the current Members' Briefing'. CEIEC members receive a 'Members' Briefing' with their copy of Centre News. It's one of the benefits of being a member of the CEIEC. To learn more about membership of the CEIEC, contact Ms Merlyne Cruz: merlynec@unimelb.edu.au

The CEIEC is assisting the City of Port Phillip, in Melbourne, to develop its Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYP). In August, the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) gave a Child Protection Week Award to the City of Port Phillip for its MEYP. The citation for the award stated that:

'(The Plan) establishes a new approach to how we think about the children of our city, creating opportunities for them to participate in council and community decision-making on matters that affect them.

'Over the next twelve months, two groups of council and community Service providers, in partnership with the **University of Melbourne's Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood** will be developing and practicing skills and protocols that can be used in everyday consultation with children that respects (them) as active citizens.

'A Children's Plan will be developed **by** children **for** children and a strategy will be designed for use by all departments of council. Children will be consulted when considering new developments, issues or policies that may impact on their lives.

'A forum will also be held for parents/guardians during Children's Week on the subject of respecting children as active citizens.'



'Student engagement' in South Australia

CEIEC Director Prof. Glenda MacNaughton is helping nearly forty early childhood staff in South Australia to investigate 'student engagement'.

The staff are in two groups - one in Elizabeth, the other in Eyre. They are running action research projects around student engagement as part of *Learning to Learn* - a professional learning program run by South Australia's Dept. of Education. Glenda is a consultant to the program.

Staff associated with *Learning to Learn* will present papers to the CEIEC's annual conference in November. These are their sessions:

'Learner engagement through children's voices.' Jacqueline Stratfold & Karen Agars.

'Change is about identity.' Margot Foster.





CONFERENCE CALL 5/3

Conference Call appears in each edition of *Centre News*.

Conference Call previews the forthcoming CEIEC annual conference. It introduces keynote speakers, highlights featured sessions and announces events linked with the conference.

The conference website has more up-to-date information and news about the conference, including backgrounds of keynote speakers and news about the sessions. The website address is at the bottom of this page.

You can make your own *Conference Call*. You can use this space to, e.g.,

- contact people with shared interests;
- announce a Special Interest Group;
- invite collaboration.

To make your 'Conference Call', contact Patrick Hughes:
patrickh@deakin.edu.au

"Cultures, Challenges and Change in Troubling times: Honouring the child, honouring equity 6"

The CEIEC will run its sixth annual conference between Thursday 16 and Saturday 18 November 2006 in Melbourne. The conference title is '**Cultures, challenges & change in troubling times: Honoring the Child, Honoring Equity 6**'.

This year's conference has the two features that characterize the CEIEC's annual conferences:

- a rich mix of keynotes, panels, presentations, workshops and posters
- numerous sessions featuring collaboration between people from diverse parts of the early childhood field.

On a different note: the catering firm that has delighted us for the past four years will once again be catering for the conference!

The conference's international reputation continues to expand. This year's conference committee has accepted proposals for sessions from people in seventeen countries covering the five continents: Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Hong Kong, India, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, the UK and the USA.

See page 6 for an outline of the conference program, together with a selection of the presentations. The next *Conference Call* will include a review of the conference.

'Visiting Scholars' link with the conference

Associated with the conference, the CEIEC will welcome three distinguished guests as part of its Visiting Scholars program.

Prof. Margaret Eisenhart, from the University of Colorado will visit the CEIEC immediately before the conference and two keynote speakers at the conference - Prof. Gaile Cannella and Prof. Peter Moss - will stay on at the Centre after the conference.

Each Visiting Scholar will run seminars and workshops for CEIEC staff and postgraduate students and will discuss the Centre's work with them. A big CEIEC 'Welcome!' to each one.

YET TO REGISTER?



You can register to attend the conference via the website (see the bottom of this page).

The CEIEC Conference website is (deep breath!):
www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/eesc/ceiec/events/conferences/current/CEIECAnnualConf/index.html



THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM IN OUTLINE



Thursday 16 November

5.00 - 5.30	Registration
5.30 - 6.00	Drinks and nibbles
6.00 - 6.30	Welcome (a Wurrundjeri Elder)
6.30 - 6.45	Opening Remarks
6.45 - 8.00	Keynote 1:
8.00	Close

Friday 17 November

8.30 - 9.00	Registration
9.00 - 10.00	Keynote 2:
10.00 - 10.30	Morning Tea
10.30 - 11.30	Session 1
11.30 - 12.30	Session 2
12.30 - 1.30	Lunch
1.30 - 2.30	Keynote 3:
2.30 - 4.00	Workshops & Panels
4.00 - 4.30	Afternoon Tea
4.30 - 5.30	Session 3
6.30	Conference Dinner

Saturday 18 November

9.00 - 10.30	Featured Workshops
10.30 - 11.00	Morning Tea
11.00 - 12.00	Session 1
12.00 - 1.00	Session 2
1.00 - 2.00	Lunch and poster sessions
2.00 - 3.30	Workshops & Panels
3.30 - 4.00	Afternoon Tea
4.00 - 5.00	Session 3
5.00 - 6.00	Session 4
6.00 - 6.30	Conference Close



SOME FEATURED SESSIONS

These sessions have been selected to indicate the diversity of the ideas and the presenters.

'HIV/AIDS and children's rights in a rural Thai village.' Karyn Stein, Khon Kaen University, Thailand.

'Cultural diversity: what's "child fault"?' Zohra Nisar Ahmed Hunsai. Aga Khan University, Pakistan.

'Speaking up, not talking down: doing the 'rights' thing by strengthening culture for Indigenous children' Muriel Bramblett and Peter Lewis, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Australia.

'Farm crèche: child care for underprivileged children.' Dr. Juri Baruah, Assam Agricultural University, India.

'Placing rights in a socio-cultural framework.' Michael Gaffney, Otago University, New Zealand.

"Leadership cocoons": the undiscovered (hidden) leadership potential of school non-achievers.' Errol Sundelowitz, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

'Troubling the truths of the Australian Quality Assurance and Accreditation System.' (Staff from Swanston Street Children's Centre, Australia.)

'Learning to be kindergartners: children's strategic adaptations to kindergartens in Hong Kong.' Michelle Lam Mei Sung, Hong Kong Institute of education.

'Challenges in rights-based early childhood care and development programs in India and Bangladesh.' Kate Ramsay, Plan Australia.

'The right to know your history: talking to children about the Holocaust and other genocides.' Prof. Heike Deckert-Peaceman, Institut für Erziehungswissenschaften, Denmark.

'Following an exodus: tracking the inclusion of refugee children and their families from Sudan.' Nicole Vesperman & Rachael Kinsella, Carinya Children's Service & Hunter Institute of TAFE, Australia.

'Talking pictures: supporting young Aboriginal children to research their play.' (Staff from Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and members of the Jilkminggan and Gapuwiyak Communities, Australia.)

'Implementing changes in the pre-school classroom: an action-based case study from Bangladesh.' Sadika Akhter, Plan International, Bangladesh.

