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ISOTIS

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT TO TACKLE INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY

A comprehensive overview of inter-agency working as a strategy to reduce educational inequalities and discrimination
Evidence from Europe and Future Directions

AUTHORS: JACQUELINE BARNES, JOANA GUERRA, CATARINA LEITÃO, CLARA BARATA, PAUL LESEMAN, EDWARD MELHUISH WITH (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER) YVONNE ANDERS, ALESSANDRA BARZAGHI, MELISSA BE, IRENE CAPELLI, FRANZISKA COHEN, SILVIA CROCIANI, STANISLAV DANIEL, FRIDA FEYER, CLAUDIA GIUDICI, MAŁGORZATA KARWOWSKA-STRUCZYK, LENKA KISSOVÁ, CHARLOTTE MEIJERS,GIULIA GABRIELLA PASTORI, KONSTANTINOS PETROGIANNIS, MARIE PREUßE, JULIANE SCHÜNKE, CHRISTOFOROS SKAMNAKIS, RAFAELA TAKOU, ELINE VAN ROSSUM, OLGA WYSŁOWSKA, HENRIK DAAE ZACHRISSON.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The overall purpose of the ISOTIS (**I**nclusive **E**ducation and **S**ocial Support to **T**ackle **I**nequalities in **S**ociety) project, is to contribute to effective policy and practice development at different system levels to effectively combat early arising and persisting educational inequalities across Europe. In particular the focus is on reducing inequalities for culturally, linguistically and socioeconomically diverse children. The ISOTIS study examined in detail the experiences of families with young children in four specific disadvantaged groups:Turkish origin families, North-African (Maghreb) origin families, Romani families and low-income native-born working class families.

European policy has strongly promoted inter-agency or joined-up working as a driver to supporting children and families, especially those with multiple needs. The overall objective of this strand of the ISOTIS project was to develop a comprehensive overview of inter-agency working with young children and their families and its relation with the experiences of parents and professionals, developing an understanding of what contributes to the best implementation of services. The aim was to develop guidance for future policy and practice in the area of inter-agency working with young children and their families in Europe.

In this report, the political framework relevant to inter-agency working is outlined.. The nature and extent of inter-agency working with young children and their families in the ten ISOTIS European countries is described, focussing on facilitators and barriers to success and potential impact. The extent to which practitioners, service providers and and policy makers report inter-agency work, and perceived goals of this way of working are described. Finally each of the countries involved in the ISOTIS parent survey has been characterised on dimensions that reflect the legislation and governance climate that is most likely to support inter-agency working. Parents' reported use of services have been examined in relation to these country level characteristics.

Results

The political framework that is most supportive of inter-agency working is likely to involve a combination of both top-down state level policies promoting the strategy in combination with strong local capacity to provide bottom-up implementation and funding, fostering the involvement local communities. In conjunction with this, a move to decentralization of power in conjunction with integrated governance appears to be a prerequisite. Bottom-up support and local input will be enhanced with stronger involvement of the 'third sector', particularly voluntary and community organisations with a social mission.

Reflecting previous research, respondents in case studies of successful inter-agency working highlighted the importance of bottom-up, local support, strong leadership and the development of shared values through regular meetings as facilitators of their inter-agency working. In contrast, service providers, coordinators and policy makers interviewed in the ISOTIS parent interview areas placed most importance on top-down political support, while also acknowledging the importance of bottom-up support. In addition, they highlighted the importance of professionals being receptive to inter-agency working, which was likely to differ from their more traditional roles, and the development of clear professional goals.

Inter-agency working can be an innovation, subject to scrutiny, and all respondents - those working in successful cases and service providers, coordinators and policy makers - noted that funding uncertainty was the primary barrier to ongoing implementation of strong inter-agency work. In addition, the service providers, coordinators and policy makers highlighted staffing issues as a barrier, including problems recruiting, high staff turnover and limited time for the additional training necessary for a new way of working. The existing research has only minimal evidence about the impact of increased inter-agency working but there was agreement between the successful case study

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professionals and the local service providers, coordinators and policy makers that services provided in an inter-agency context were likely to be more able to deal with children and families with complex problems, reacting more flexibly. Service providers, coordinators and policy makers also highlighted economies of scale, in that duplication of services is likely to be reduced so that more specialised services could be provided. It was expected that the most vulnerable families with multiple problems would be more satisfied with the services provided with this model of working, and hence would experience less stress.

There is a strong rhetoric in the literature supporting the importance of inter-agency working as the best way to support children and families experiencing disadvantage, and managers surveyed in ISOTIS study areas were able to identify some of the expected goals, such as detecting problems early, enhancing continuity of children's experiences, improving child outcomes and supporting families with multiple needs. They less often endorsed the idea that discrimination would be reduced by this way of working. Nevertheless, the actual level of collaboration reported by managers in the ISOTIS areas only ranged from moderate to low depending on the agency involved. Collaboration was greater with education, child care and health but minimal with the third sector, law enforcement or the local community.

Information from service providers, coordinators and policy makers was used to describe the ISOTIS countries on four dimensions to reflect a political climate likely to support inter-agency working (decentralization; the presence of integrated services across sectors with integrated funding; involvement of NGOs and charities in providing services for disadvantaged families and children; and power and leadership at the local level with a social mission). They represented the full range of the resulting index (-4 to 4) with a higher score indicating greater likelihood of facilitating inter-agency working. Index scores were positively associated with the frequency that parents reported using services (home visits or centre visits). In particular, when the index was higher parents reported more use of services in centres, which were likely to provide a range of support in one location.

Policy Recommendations

A range of recommendations include the following:

- More recognition is needed of local governance to promote bottom-up solutions;
- National top-down support is essential to maintain sustainability of innovative inter-agency programmes;
- A cohesive national salary and training structure will enable professionals to have better job security, allow for more flexibility in the type of role that they can take and will increase cohesion of inter-agency teams;
- Concepts about inter-agency working should be included in training for a range of different professions;
- More attention should be paid to ECEC, education and health collaborating with agencies such as law enforcement, charities and local community programmes, and with voluntary organisations within communities;
- Creative solutions are needed to allow for secure data sharing between agencies. Additional barriers have emerged following the introduction of the EU General Data Protection Regulation;
- Active outreach is required so that families can be more involved in identifying need and providing feedback about the quality and impact of services.

INTRODUCTION

The thinking behind ISOTIS was informed by Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological approach to human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). According to this approach, human development results from the recurrent interactions of a person with his or her immediate environment and systems beyond it across the entire lifespan. The regularity and intensity of interactions between person(s) and context(s) shape developmental outcomes. A person participates directly in several *microsystems* (e.g., family, peer group, classroom). The connection between microsystems forms the *mesosystems* (e.g., the family-school-playfield-neighbourhood mesosystem) where the social agents involved in a person's microsystem are linked to other social agents' and their microsystems. Social agents and environments external to the direct experience but affecting the developing person constitute the *exosystem* (e.g. the parent's workplace; welfare services), while the *macrosystem* represents the larger cultural and ideological context in a society (e.g., social policies; attitudes and social values). Finally, the *chronosystem* represents changes over time in terms of life events and transitions (e.g., from preschool to school). Thereby, it also reflects changes in the socio-cultural expectations of and for the developing person regarding the social and cultural environment.

Within ISOTIS, according to the schedule of work agreed between the European Commission and the ISOTIS consortium, WP6 focussed on inter-agency working related to services for young children and their families. In undertaking this work there were a limited amount of resources allocated to WP6 within the agreed budget for ISOTIS, equivalent to 61 person-months spread across 12 partner organisations.

The general goal of WP6 is to gather information from research, grey literature, government reports and other sources in order to summarise existing knowledge of inter-agency working involving young children and their families; and extend this knowledge through further data collection in case studies of good practice in a number of countries and interviews with practitioners and policy makers at the selected study sites of WP2. In that its focus is on inter-agency working involving young children and their families, some approaches that deal with other age groups, such as SALTO (https://www.salto-youth.net) and the EC funded programmes of Erasmus+ in relation to youth work, fall outside of its purview, also the role of EC programs was not included as an objective. Although such inter-agency work in other domains may well be of interest in developing the European perspective on inter-agency work overall, they were excluded here to keep to the original specifications as well as to keep within available resources.

The specific objectives of WP6 were as follows:

O6.1 To gather information from research studies and other sources of the evidence regarding effective inter-agency working. This work is described in the deliverable of D6.1.
O6.2 To undertake case studies of examples of successful inter-agency working in eight countries order to illuminate processes leading to successful inter-agency working. This work is described in the deliverable of D6.2.
O6.3 To examine the degree of inter-agency cooperation in the 20 study sites of WP2 through an interview study with key-persons (e.g. heads of service providers, coordinators, local government representatives) with expected three to five informants per site and to relate this to experiences of parents and the professionals working with children and parents. This work is described in the deliverable of D6.3.
O6.4 Using all available information, including findings from the interview study of WP2 parents and the internet survey of WP5 managers of services and specialist professionals, to establish a comprehensive overview of inter-agency working and the relations with experiences of parents and professionals, evaluating hypotheses about effective inter-agency working in relation to the experiences of parents and (para)professionals.

The final objective is realised in this report, D6.4, which is the final report of WP6, that integrates work both within and without ISOTIS. This integration of WP6 is designed to guide future European developments in interagency working involving young children and their families.

Why focus on inter-agency working?

Historically, there has been a tendency to see hierarchical "silo working" at central and local government levels in many countries, with particular departments or agencies interested only in the service for which they were responsible and not with the potential effects on families of a range of services. This has strengths, each agency is clear about their responsibilities, but also weaknesses, especially for the experiences of disadvantaged families who may have multiple needs. Access to health, education and social welfare services are important for families with young children, but the way in which these services operate often creates fragmentation of experiences for the family (Wolf et al., 2011). Frequent duplication of assessments has been found and repeated requests to families for the same information. At the same time, some families may receive no service because they are not in touch with the right agency (Bruner, 2019). The move towards more integrated service delivery has been driven by a growing awareness of this fragmented nature of services for young children and their families, and understanding of the ways that fragmentation undermines the capacity of the service system to support them effectively. The families that are most affected by this situation are generally the most vulnerable.

Inter-agency working includes various types of partnership that involve differing degrees and levels of integration (Frost, 2005; Frey et al., 2006; James Bell Associates, 2011; Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood, 2009), from *networking* where agencies communicate, and may refer clients to partner agencies, to *collaboration* and *coordination*; coordinating agencies become more interdependent and plan together to address overlap and gaps in services (Bertram et al., 2002). Full *integration* results from different agencies becoming a unitary organisation. Inter-agency working may proceed at a local government level where multiple agencies work together across an entire local area. An example would be the inter-agency collaboration across the municipality of Łódź, Poland, or Milan, Italy (Bove et al., in prep.). Another model of inter-agency working operates via a centre or service hub, where different agencies provide coordinated services for common clients. Examples would be the Parent Child Centres in the Netherlands (Busch, Melhuish, et al., 2013) and the Children's Centres operating in England (Eisenstadt & Melhuish, 2013).

The goal of reducing inequality and discrimination in Europe, particularly in educational attainment, is challenging. Disadvantaged families living in poverty, including immigrants and especially those living in deprived neighbourhoods where risks tend to accumulate, have diverse needs for support. To tackle complex problems, policy subsystems are not controlled by state actors alone; rather, they are characterized by interactions of public and private actors (Adam & Kriesi, 2007). European policy strongly promoted inter-agency or joined-up working as a driver to supporting children and families, and inclusive education (Barnes et al., 2017; Burns & Köster, 2016; UNDP, 2007).

Integrated working for children's outcomes has been described as "*the holy grail of policy and services*" (Canavan et al., 2009, p. 385). Inter-agency partnerships (e.g., health care, youth care, social work, education, welfare) have become increasingly recognized internationally as important for national government policy to support children and families (e.g., Barnekow et al., 2013; Home Office, 2014; National Audit Office, 2001; Vargas-Barón, 2016). Inter-agency policy may occur at a local government level where multiple agencies work together across an entire local area (see also Andreotti & Mingione, 2016). However, while the expectation is that inter-agency connections can lead to more effective support and more shared knowledge between professionals with different backgrounds (Guerra et al., 2019) it is likely that moving to closer inter-agency work requires change in the way that problems and solutions are conceptualised (Frost, 2017; Oliver, Mooney & Statham, 2010). This requires both an understanding of different stages of inter-agency collaboration and devoting substantial time and effort to dialogue to identify common understanding of the issues to be faced. (Bertram et al., 2002).

Political Framework relevant to changing policies

European governments are committed to contribute to reducing inequalities through the level of government that is closest to citizens. In this sense, inter-agency working is an institutional expression of the multidimensional nature of problems (Stoer & Rodrigues, 1998). Policies aim to solve a public problem played out between various types of public actors - political-administrative actors, social actors, target groups, beneficiaries - who make a concerted effort to resolve a collective problem in collaboration with, or in opposition to, non-state and private actors (Howlett & Cashore, 2014; Knoepfel, 2011). Inter-agency coordination involves political and institutional processes. Inter-organizational collaboration between public and private/third sector organizations can expand social

policy developments aimed to empower individuals and improve human capital. When agencies in a local area, or government departments, work together to develop policy and to plan services it is more likely that the resultant policies will incorporate understanding of the multiple levels of difficulty faced by many families, so that appropriate services can inequalities and provide social support to disadvantaged children and families (Borosch, Kuhlmann, & Blum, 2016). Various agencies are involved directly or indirectly, and it is essential to examine different kinds of arrangements that may occur between public, non-state and private actors to policy implementation (Rahmat, 2015).

In regard of the role of private organisations we can consider corporate social responsibility (CSR), which refers to private business self-regulation (Sheehy, 2015) in order to contribute to societal goals of a philanthropic, activist, or charitable nature by engaging in or supporting volunteering or ethically-oriented practices (Lee & Kotler, 2013). International laws have developed and some organisations have taken it beyond individual companies. Over recent years it has moved considerably from voluntary decisions by individual organisations, to mandatory schemes at regional, national and international levels. At an organisational level, CSR may be integrated into the business model of an organisation. Sometimes an organisation's implementation of CSR transcends regulatory requirements into "actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law" (Mcwilliams, Siegel & wright, 2006). From a business perspective, organisations aim to increase profits and shareholder trust through positive public relations and high ethical standards and to reduce legal risk by taking responsibility for corporate actions (Farrington et al., 2017). However, critics have questioned the "unrealistic expectations" in CSR (Henderson, 2001) or that it might be window-dressing, or an attempt to pre-empt the role of governments as watchdogs over powerful multinational corporations. It has also been argued that CSR has become transformed by corporations into a "business model" and a "risk management" device, often with questionable results (e,g. Shamir, 2011). As yet CSR has not been a focus of European law but it might be considered for legislative action in the future, and, if that happens, the area of inter-agency services could well be affected. Examples of private organisations being involved in inter-agency service delivery are included in the discussion section of this report.

The emerging European "regulatory" state led to a fundamental shift in the agenda and focus of public policy (Majone, 1994). One important shift has been the transformation of the simple hierarchical top-down relationship, where the state government directs service delivery with an active state and a passive society, to a new governance model, with a negotiation system involving the cooperation between public actors from different levels and private actors in the production and execution of policies (Pülzl & Treib, 2007). Service delivery has been increasingly contracted out to private agencies, with privatization accompanied by public management reform (Clarke & Newman,1997; Krupavičius et al., 2013; Polanyi, 2012; Pollitt, 2013). These reform processes have liberalized some top-down aspects of central administration in many countries, while creating new layers of regulation over public sector activities, frequently in new or remodeled freestanding agencies (Hague & Harrop, 2016; Krupavičius et al., 2013).

The marketization of welfare services resulted in a new kind of fragmentation of provision, with different agencies responsible for different services. Governments aimed to modernize public services by promoting greater cooperation and communication between agencies whose joint working was essential to address a wide variety of "wicked problems". These problems are considered multi-faceted problems with complex underlying causes and no clear solution, such as the poor educational outcomes of disadvantaged children and families (Bogdanor, 2005; Green & Clarke, 2016; Haynes, 2015).

Both Top-down and Bottom-up policies are needed

The shift in emphasis away from a 'top-down' approach towards a 'bottom up' approach, along with a shift from a 'supply-orientation' to a 'demand orientation' marks a change in philosophy that acknowledges the importance of working with service users to identify needs and ways to meet them.

This differs from previous approaches that focused on services for users and service delivery through separated specialised agencies. In the top-down approach, the political process sometimes ignores the different levels of decision-making and the diversity of actors involved and makes authoritative (authoritarian) decisions on behalf of citizens. This expresses a linear hierarchical relationship, which starts with a decision made by the central government and the establishment of bureaucratic procedures to ensure that policies are executed (Fischer et al, 2007; Knoepfel, 2011; Pülzl & Treib, 2007). The top-down approach argues that an effective implementation process requires a "chain of command" with the ability to coordinate and control the policy implementation process.

The bottom-up approach aims to give an accurate description of the interactions and problem-solving strategies of the actors involved in policy delivery (Fischer et al., 2007; Lipsky, 2010). The bottom-up approach values the influence of street level bureaucracy to deal with situations of uncertainty as critical for the success or failure of the policy implementation (Lipsky, 2010; Rodrigues & Araújo, 2016). It involves increased participation of non-state actors (Stubbs, 2005). Local partnerships can provide a mechanism for organizations to work together and adapt policies to respond effectively to local needs. The participation of service users in the design of initiatives that aim to support them is said to be crucial to ensure that their needs are best served and can contribute to their social empowerment (European Commission, 2016).

Depending on the local context, the bottom-up approach puts issues like inclusive education onto, or back onto, the political agenda. When local organisations become more aware of the specific needs of the particular disadvantaged groups in their area, they are also able to specify more tailored strategies and provision to these specific needs. Among the benefits of the bottom-up approach is its focus on local actors who devise and implement government programs, considering the relevance of contextual factors within the implementing environment. Actors and their goals, strategies and activities need to be understood in order to comprehend implementation. Bottom-up approaches do not present prescriptive advice, but rather describe what factors have caused difficulty in reaching stated goals (Matland 1995; OECD, 2013). They propose strategies that are flexible and adaptable to local difficulties and contextual factors, what helps local actors to develop and express a strategic vision of the territory's future. Such an approach assumes the availability of sufficient capacity to plan and enact policies with each locality.

Notwithstanding the advantages of the bottom-up approach, there are some concerns when governments allocate to private sector roles or services that usually are central state-directed goals (Donahue & Zeckhauser, 2006; Verma, 2016). It may introduce potential losses: local actors may not faithfully fulfill the public mission; ceding state powers to non-state actors can lead to a shrinking state and dilution of control and authority; indirect production can sometimes prove more costly than direct production; reputational vulnerability, when local actors adversely affect state reputation and government becomes dependent on private capabilities (Donahue & Zeckhauser, 2006)

Move to More Decentralization

> **Decentralization** aims to reconstitute government, from a hierarchical, bureaucratic mechanism of top-down management, to a system of nested self-governments, characterized by participation, cooperation, transparency, and accountability to the governed actions as a binding constraint on public servants' behavior (Faguet, 2011).

In order to understand the reconfiguration of the state roles, the *proliferating jurisdictions, the rise of non-state actors, and the related challenges to state power (Stubbs, 2005), it* is relevant to address the concept of decentralization or decentralized governance. The Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD II; UCLG, **2010)** set out decentralization on two basic propositions. First, local governments are closer to the people than the central governments, and they have superior

access to local information, what allows them to respond better to the needs of citizens. Second, local governments face stronger incentives to perform well on local matters than the central government, so that they are in a better position to derive the most from public resources at their disposal, and are more likely to seek innovative means of doing so.

The literature highlights four major forms of public sector decentralization arrangements:

- *Administrative decentralization* aims at transferring decision-making authority, resources and responsibilities for the delivery of a select number of public services from the central government to other lower levels of government, agencies, field offices of central government line agencies;
- *Political decentralization*, political power and authority have been decentralized to sub-national levels. Devolution is considered a form of political decentralization, involving a full transference of responsibility, decision-making, resources and revenue generation to a local level of public authority that is autonomous and fully independent from the devolving authority.
- *Fiscal decentralization* aims to turn subnational governments into key actors in the mobilization of revenues, and delivery and provision of public goods and services to citizens.
- *Market decentralization* is a form of devolution of government responsibilities and authority that is done in favor of non-public entities. Planning and administrative responsibility or other public functions are transferred from government to voluntary, private, or non-governmental institutions.

Decentralization can help cut complex bureaucratic procedures and it can increase government officials' sensitivity to local conditions and needs. Moreover, decentralization can help national government ministries reach larger numbers of local areas with services; and allow greater political representation for diverse political, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in decision-making. However, it should also be noted that an appropriate balance of centralization and decentralization is essential to the effective and efficient functioning of government. Not all functions can or should be financed and managed in a decentralized fashion. Even when national governments decentralize responsibilities, they often retain important policy and supervisory roles. They must create or maintain the "enabling conditions" that allow local units of administration or non-government organizations to take on more responsibilities (World Bank Group, undated).

European countries are decentralizing much administrative, fiscal, and political functions of central government to local level governments (Guerra et al., 2019). Decentralization can reduce complex bureaucratic procedures and increase officials' sensitivity to local conditions and needs. Moreover, decentralization can help government ministries reach larger numbers of local areas with services; and allow greater political representation for diverse political, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in decision-making. Decentralizing has profound impacts on governance of public services. The most common theoretical argument for decentralization is that it improves the efficiency of resource allocation because local governments are closer to the people, have better information about local preferences and are better informed to respond to variations in demand for goods and services than central government (Demmke et al, 2006; Borosch et al, 2016). Local governments are also considered to better placed to coordinate variations in demand and costs of providing public goods. Citizens may reveal their preferences for those goods by moving to those jurisdictions that satisfy their tastes, that is, by "voting with their feet." Absence of public services promotes privatization of essential goods which can put services beyond the means of the most disadvantaged. This is seen to pressure local governments to pay attention to the preferences of their constituents and tailor service delivery accordingly, whilst risking the loss of tax revenues (Azfar et al, 1999).

The Importance of Integrated Governance

As a general term, governance refers to the "means to steer the process that influences decisions and actions within the private, public, and civic sectors" (O'Leary, Bingham, & Gerard, 2006). According to

Christensen (2015), governance alludes primarily to networks related to service production and delivery. But, it can also relate to policy decisions, planning and content of policies. The term is related to access and the potential influence of third sector actors towards the government, but also to the degree of autonomy that actors have in relation to the government.

> The concept of **integrated governance** is used to mean integration within government (both inter and intra) and collaboration with other sectors

Integration is about addressing issues and problems that can only be solved in partnership, involving acknowledgement of a multiplicity of stakeholders (Keating, 2002). This definition encompasses multi-partner governance, which can include partnerships among the state, the private sector, civil society, and the community, as well as joined-up government and hybrid arrangements, such as public-private and private-social partnerships, and co-management regimes (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). Efficient division of responsibilities among different levels of government requires that the role of each level of government must match its capability, and clear transparent rules matching authority with accountability. Fundamental rules are often spelled out in the constitution, leading to laws and regulations covering specific implementation of the fiscal system and public goods delivery (Azfar et al., 1999).

The Central Role of the Involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

A third type of relationship recognizes that the activities of non-governmental actors may, and very often do, influence governments policy decisions, and governments will sometimes leave the implementation or some other aspect of policy-making to non-governmental (often charity) organizations (NGOs), sometimes referred to as the 'third sector'.

> **Third sector organisations**
>
> A term used to describe the range of organisations that are neither public sector nor private sector. It includes voluntary and community organisations (both registered charities and other organisations such as associations, self-help groups and community groups), social enterprises, mutuals and co-operatives. (NAO, 2010)

Civil society encompasses non-governmental and non-profit organizations such as civic groups and associations, cooperatives, and user groups. Also, societies vary in social and economic heterogeneity of the population, trust among different groups of people, cultural norms and traditions that affect relations among people and social cohesion (Putnam,1993). The role of associations founded by active citizens became an important point of reference in Europe for the debate on the history and role of a 'third sector', and the notion of a 'non-profit' sector (Evers & Laville, 2004).

The third sector in Europe is associated with the expansion of public intervention and has been the source of several action models that have generated public services. This sector has focused on the production of goods and services and establishing a relationship with the market. In Europe, there has been an increasingly complex relationship between public policies, state authorities and actors within the third sector, resulting in a broad and stable area of welfare services with often shared and complementary arrangements for service provision between the sectors (Evers, 1990; 1995).

The activities of non-governmental actors may, and often do, influence government policy decisions, and governments will sometimes leave the implementation or some other aspect of policy-making to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, governments often maintain control over whether, when, and how, other actors may be involved (Howlett & Cashore, 2014; Pülzl & Treib, 2007). This

type of relationship has been analysed considering the possibility of accomplishing a hybrid approach, which retains the best of top-down and bottom-up approaches, embracing both central steering and local autonomy.

Public, private, and non-profit entities are playing an increasingly important role in the implementation of measures to promote inclusiveness. Integrated working for children's outcomes, with public services and NGOs working closely together in local communities is frequently linked with bottom-up policies for service delivery, such as the UK Sure Start Local Programmes policy developed in 1999 (Anning & Ball, 2008), although not sustained by later administrations. The expectation that mainly bottom-up integrated services could be the panacea for supporting disadvantaged children and families may be too optimistic given the current level of knowledge. Nevertheless, inter-agency partnerships (e.g., health care, youth care, social work, education, welfare) have become increasingly recognized as important in supporting culturally, linguistically and/or economically disadvantaged children and families throughout Europe (e.g., Barnekow et al., 2013; Home Office, 2014; National Audit Office, 2001; Vargas-Barón, 2015) and beyond (Moore, 2010).

Facilitators and Barriers to inter-agency working

The likelihood of success in developing and providing a programme of integrated services for young children and their families should be enhanced by awareness of potential facilitators. A focus on integrated inter-agency working is often accompanied by a shift in emphasis away from a *top-down* approach to supporting families towards a *bottom-up* approach, to ensure meeting the needs of the local community, providing more relevant and appropriate services (Katz & Valentine, 2009).

Nevertheless, while community input is vital to ensure that local needs are best served, political support is one of the most critical facilitators of changes to services for young children, and is likely to be vital if services are to be maintained with appropriate and *secure financial support* (Barnekow et al., 2013; Statham, 2011). Without sufficient central and/or local government support innovative developments often fail to be sustained, as has been found in the UK with respect of children's centres (Smith et al., 2018).

Effective management with a strong shared ethos and governance relies on *good leadership* (e.g., by identifying key staff, appointing leaders with special attributes).Strong leadership has been identified as important to successful inter-agency work (Anning et al., 2007; Wideman et al., 2012). Previous research has also concluded that the need for inter-agency cooperation must be anchored with the leaders of the respective agencies, with formal structures and meetings to clarify roles and resolve disagreements (Heenan & Birrell, 2006; Hudson, 2007).

Strong leadership and meetings alone will not necessarily suffice; the agencies involved and their members need to share a *common purpose* and focus on that in order for collaboration to be successful. It has been found (Atkinson, Jones & Lamont, 2007; Einbinder et al., 2000; Hubbard & Themessl-Huber, 2005) that establishing effective partnerships depended on securing commitment at all levels of agency hierarchies and having a shared purpose.

While facilitators are understood, reviews (Robinson et al., 2008; Statham, 2011) have concluded that there is considerable consensus in the literature that there are many barriers to successful inter-agency working, more numerous than facilitators. They include differences in geographical boundaries of agency catchment areas, status inequalities and professional differences, turf warfare, power differentials and mistrust (Canavan et al., 2009; Cameron et al., 2007; Hudson, 2002; Winsvold, 2011).

> **Types of barrier to inter-agency working**
>
> (1) *Contextual* barriers/political climate, including political change, financial uncertainty, local needs at odds with national priorities and agency reorganisation;
> (2) *Organisational* challenges relating to different agency policies, remits procedures and systems, not collecting the same data, obstacles to information sharing;
> (3) *Cultural and professional* obstacles such as different professional beliefs, qualifications or experience leading to conflicting views or stereotyping; and
> (4) *Commitment* obstacles with differing levels of 'buy-in' with some agencies reluctant to engage, or where managers do not experience inter-agency working as part of the core work.
> (Statham, 2011)

Limited knowledge of the Impact of inter-agency collaboration on children and families

Evidence on the impact of increased inter-agency coordination is still limited, especially in relation to children's developmental outcomes or family functioning (Atkinson et al., 2005; Cleaver et al., 2004; Oliver et al., 2010; Percy-Smith, 2006; Siraj-Blatchford & Siraj-Blatchford, 2009; Sloper, 2004). Impacts for families in existing literature focus mainly on the service that they have received – but not on any particular outcomes. Several studies have concluded that inter-agency provision is likely to lead to increased access to relevant services and that it may provide services that previously had not been accessible. It has been suggested that closer inter-agency collaboration can also result in greater involvement of service users which can strengthen bottom-up influences to determine local needs, and a reduction in the length of time between identification of an issue and receiving a service, and increased prevention and early intervention (Abbott et al., 2005b; Atkinson et al., 2002, Siraj-Blatchford & Siraj-Blatchford, 2009; Window et al., 2004). It has also been found that inter-agency provision may reduce stigma associated with contact from agencies such as social services or the police (Moran et al., 2007). Nevertheless, lack of continuity in government support for this way of working has limited the chance for long-term examination of outcomes for children and families as evaluations of these and other innovative initiatives are not sustained over the long-term (Melhuish, Belsky & Barnes, 2018).

There is more evidence that closer inter-agency working can lead to changes for the services themselves and for the professionals involved (Statham, 2011). Evaluations in the UK during a time (1997 to 2010) when the national government actively promoted inter-agency work found that there was an improvement in the quality of services in conjunction with greater reach (Bertram et al., 2002). Other studies have found that professionals find multi-agency activity more enjoyable, rewarding and stimulating, bringing with it increased knowledge and understanding of other agencies (Abbott et al., 2005a; Pettitt, 2003), which often leads to improved relationships and communication between agencies (Coxon, 2005). However, professionals have also reported negative impacts related to uncertainty regarding professional identities (Coxon, 2005).

ISOTIS approach to inter-agency working
The objective of this report is to develop a comprehensive overview of inter-agency working and its relation with experiences of parents and professionals. By developing an understanding of what contributes to the best implementation regarding inter-agency working, we aim to provide guidance for future policy and practice in the area of inter-agency working with young children and their families in Europe.

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This report integrates a number of sources of information from the ISOTIS study:

- Reviews of the existing literature in relation to inter-agency working;
- A structured parental survey with 3,942 parents from the four specific disadvantaged groups across ten European countries;
- Case studies in eight European countries, seven of which were involved in the parent survey, to illustrate examples of successful inter-agency working;
- Summaries of the national policy framework for inter-agency working in nine countries.
- Interviews with 61 service providers, coordinators and policy makers from nine countries working in areas where parents had been interviewed on the status of inter-agency working in their areas;
- An internet survey with 132 managers and specialist professionals in all countries where parents were surveyed, asking about the nature and extent of their own inter-agency working, and perceived goals of closer inter-agency working.

Identifying facilitating factors, barriers, and impacts regarding inter-agency working can contribute to ensure adequate social responses and services to support the needs of children, young people and their families, as well as to the wider community. Thus, they have been summarized, drawing on previous ISOTIS reports. However, the development of policies and practices need to be adapted to the context in which inter-agency working occurs. Clarifying country models is important to develop an understanding of how (de)centralization processes are managed, which frame or motivate inter-agency working.

The integrated account of country models proposed as the most useful for understanding the relevance of and facilitators for increased inter-agency working concentrates on ideas that were foremost in interviews conducted with service providers, coordinators and policy makers. The most relevant dimensions were evidence of decentralization with emphasis on local systems, including local governance strategies and how they are partly determined by national policies, but also liberated to some extent by NGOs and professionals' partial autonomy (and therefore by their multicultural attitudes and practices, which may oppose official national policies).

METHODS

This report brings together several sources of information collected by ISOTIS researchers. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used.

Parent survey

Participants: The ISOTIS parental survey collected data through structured interviews with 3,942 parents from four specific disadvantaged groups across ten European countries with different education systems, welfare regimes and integration policies. To analyse institutional, cultural and ideological mechanisms underlying inequality and discrimination, the four potentially disadvantaged groups included in the study were a Turkish group of immigrant origin, a North African (Maghreb) group of immigrant origin, a Romani group and a low-income native-born group. The choice of these groups was based on considerations of relevance and methodology: (a) The selected immigrant groups are among the largest across Europe, associated with persistent educational disadvantages, and increased risk of social exclusion. (b) These groups have settled in several European countries (and, within countries, in several localities), allowing for comparisons between countries (and localities) that can reveal relations of inequality and experiences of discrimination with national (and local) governance strategies, education policies and models of family support service provision. (c) These groups are especially relevant for current intercultural and interethnic tensions, increasing polarization and segregation in many European countries that is as a major threat to inclusion and equity.

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In each country parents were identified in two sites, selected based on differences in local policy contexts and/or other relevant differences (e.g., economical and/or cultural differences) between the two sites (Broekhuizen, Ereky-Stevens, Wolf, & Moser, 2018; See Table 1 for the distribution of respondents by cultural group and country). The interviews involved parents with children in the 3- to 6-years and 9- to 12-years age range to capture the pre-primary phase and the phase before the transition to secondary school, including the experiences and decisions of parents relating to these phases (see Broekhuizen et al., 2018 for full details of recruitment, the sample and the interview).

Table 1. Distribution of parents completing ISOTIS survey by country and ethnic background

		Total	Maghreb	Romani	Turkish	Native-born
Czech Republic	CZ	481	0	246	0	235
England	EN	479	0	0	293	186
Germany	DE	516	0	0	338	178
Greece	EL	331	0	202	0	129
France	FR	266	266	0	0	0
Italy	IT	543	307	0	0	236
Netherlands	NL	540	293	0	247	0
Norway	NO	65	0	0	65	0
Poland	PL	240	0	0	0	240
Portugal	PT	481	0	242	0	239
		3942	866	690	943	1443

Procedure: Parents were asked about how satisfied they were, with life in general, with life specifically in the country in which they were living, and with their experiences of services designed to offer support for parents, both in the home and in local centres. Responding on a 5-point scale from 1- disagree to 5-agree, questions about parents' satisfaction with life included three questions: I am satisfied with my life; if I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing; and in most ways my life is close to my ideal. Using the same response scale, satisfaction with their country included four questions: I feel at home in [country]; I am satisfied with [country]; I feel happy living in [country]; and I feel accepted in [country].

Parents were not specifically asked about inter-agency services. They were asked about their use of professional services and advice in terms of being visited in their home and visiting a local centre. These covered: the nature and the frequency of home visits and centre visits in the last 6 months. They were asked (yes/no) if any home or centre visits in the last six months had been about four different issues: child health and wellbeing; childrearing or parenting; language use in the home; and education decisions. They were then asked about the frequency of home or centre professional contact in the last six months on the following 5-point scale: 1 – once or twice; 2 – more than twice; 3 – once per month; 4 - 2-3 times per month; 5 – every week. Finally, they were asked how useful home or centre visits and advice had been on the following scale: 1 – not useful, 2 – fairly useful, 3 – useful.

Analysis: Differences in the mean country scores for parents reporting on their well-being and on their use of services have been calculated. Country means for the constructs discussed in this report are presented both as unadjusted means and, given the differing distribution of ethnic groups by country, as means controlling for ethnic group using ANOVA. Associations were calculated using Pearson correlations between well-being and use of services, both at the individual level (N=3,942) and at the country level (N=10). Graphical presentations linking country means with the extent of inter-agency collaboration (the Country Index) are based on standardized Z scores of adjusted means so that they can be compared.

Case Studies of successful inter-agency working

Participants: The goal of the case studies was to investigate examples of successful inter-agency working with a range of disadvantaged groups, e.g., poor families, immigrant families, or Romani

families in Belgium, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, and England. The aim was to identify what is common and what is particular about the cases. Case studies were conducted by ISOTIS in eight European countries, seven of which were also part of the parent survey, to illustrate examples of successful inter-agency working.

Cases were selected if:
- They represented ongoing work/service provision;
- At least three agencies or types of support were involved (e.g., education, social work, childcare);
- The focus was on the younger age range but some cover support for families of children older than eight years of age.

To be defined as successful two or more of the following criteria were required:
- Operational for at least two years;
- Nominated as good by 2-3 practitioners, policy makers or experts;
- Some evaluation indicating promising implementation and/or impact;
- Blogs report client satisfaction;
- Collaboration with a university for evaluation.

Full details of the cases can be found in Barnes et al., 2018.

Procedure: Case studies were designed to address the following questions:
- What does "successful inter-agency working" look like in relation to services for young children and families?
- What contributes to the best implementation of inter-agency working, and does this differ between contexts?
- What processes, at the macro or micro level, facilitate inter-agency working and how can these be fostered?
- What are the barriers to successful inter-agency collaboration and how can they be overcome?

A common protocol was developed based on Yin (1994) so that each case study would have a similar style of data collection and would cover similar themes, but with sufficient flexibility to capture the uniqueness of each case. All case studies were required to include a review of relevant documents and archival records such as evaluation reports and interviews or focus groups with key stakeholders including policy makers, managers, front-line service providers and parents or other service users. Some also included observations.

Analysis: Case summaries included: the stated aims of the work; theoretical underpinnings/logic model; the target population (child age, disadvantaged group, any special characteristics); the extent of integration (e.g. Co-operation, Collaboration, Co-ordination, Merger/integration); the types of support/service offered (for children, for parents, for professionals, for others); the agencies involved; sources of funding; governance; any joint training of professionals; the physical environment including any co-location; and data management/sharing. Cases were collated to identify facilitators for attaining success, any barriers to inter-agency working and any impact of success, for children, families or practitioners

Summaries of the national legislation and policy framework for inter-agency working

Participants: ISOTIS researchers produced summaries of legislation available for nine of the ten countries involved in the parent survey: Czech Republic, England, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Portugal. Full details can be found in Guerra et al., 2019.

Procedure: Summaries included details of: national legislative and regulatory framework about integrated governance to support inclusive education; national authorities responsible for inclusive education and service providers; Staff and financial resources, focusing on qualification and training of professionals relevant to integrated working; and any accountability and monitoring performance of integrated governance.

Analysis:

Following a method that had been used in previous work to describe the degree of decentralization in countries around the world (Ivanya & Shah, 2013), information from the national legislation summaries and responses of service providers, coordinators of services and policy makers (Guerra et al., 2019) was used to create scores for each country to reflect the potential for and openness to inter-agency working, based on four dimensions identified as facilitators of inter-agency working:

- Degree of decentralization in terms of legal authority, responsibility and budget, principle of subsidiarity (a principle of social organization holding that social and political issues should be dealt with at the most immediate (or local) level that is consistent with their resolution);
- Degree of inter-sectoral integration *vs.* segregation (e.g., different funding streams, different salaries and working conditions, different ministries);
- Degree to which the system involves non-governmental charities and active organizations with a social-emancipatory mission *vs.* public institutions;
- Degree of coordination of (bottom-up) power at the local level (power of municipalities or of a dominant sector to stimulate or enforce inter-agency collaboration).

Each of the four dimensions was given a score of -1, 0 or 1 so that the total country score could range from -4 to 4. The basis for making the ratings for each country are summarised in the anonymised Appendix. For the country not included in the service provider and coordinator interviews the ratings are based on discussions with practitioners and parents during a site visit, on responses given by managers and specialists completing the internet survey, and on responses of family support workers participating in the ISOTIS Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) activities. An independently derived less structured preliminary score, based on group discussion between ISOTIS team members and focussing predominantly on the extent of decentralization, was highly correlated with the more structured and detailed method (r .79, p<.001) indicating the reliability of the final country index.

Perspectives of service providers, coordinators and policy makers (N=61)

Participants: Interviews were conducted with service providers, coordinators and policy makers (full details can be found in Guerra et al., 2019). The participating countries were: Czech Republic, England, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Portugal. The criteria to select the participants for interview were:

1. To be national and/or local government representatives, heads of service providers and/or project coordinators (e.g. representatives of relevant ministries, representatives of municipalities, corporations or NGO's);
2. To play a key role at political, strategic and or operational levels, or for example participated in policy decisions, planning and service delivery;
3. To be involved with managing or over-seeing, budgets, and timescales;
4. To be aware of the services provided by a number of different agencies or organizations, aimed at the ISOTIS target groups: low-income native-born, cultural minority with Turkish or North-African immigrant background, and Roma families.

The goal was to recruit three to five participants per country and to target two sites in each participating country but the total was slightly lower although each site had at least one respondent (see Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents to ISOTIS service provider, coordinator and policy maker interviews by country and site (N=61)

	Site 1	N	Site 2	N		Total
Czech Republic	Brno	6	Ústí nad Labem	3		9
England	London	4	Wirral	3		7
Germany	Berlin	5	North Rhine-Westphalia	1		6

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Greece	West Athens	2	West and East Attica	2	3 both	7
Italy	Milan	5	Turin	5		10
Netherlands	Utrecht	3	Rotterdam	3		6
Norway	Drammen	2	Oslo	2		4
Poland	Warsaw	3	Łódź	3		6
Portugal	Lisboa	5	Porto	1		6
						61

The professional position occupied by the participants included manager/director/principal (n=45: 2 of each also civil servants), city councilor (n=4), expert (n=2), civil servant (n=1), special secretary (n=1), and educational activities organizer (n=1). The profession of the participants were: manager/director/coordinator (n=38): 1 of each was also a pre-school teacher, 1 was also a politician; and 1 was also chair), social worker (n=5), teacher (n=4), economist (n=2), pedagogue (n=4); psychologist (n=1), university Professor (n=1), deputy mayor (n=1), municipality official (n=1), administrator (n=1), political scientist/civil servant (n=1), and educational activities organizer (1).

The type of organization where the participants worked comprised public services (n=19), social services (n=10), childcare (n=6), local authority (n=6), education (n=8), community centers (n=4), volunteering programmes or philanthropic organizations (n=2), High Commission for Migration (n=1), and special secretariat - central government (n=1).

The participants' level of education included Doctorate (n=1), Master (n=22), Bachelor (n=11), and upper secondary education (n=2). Working years in the current professional position ranged between one and 30 years, with an estimated average of eight years.

Procedure: Semi-structured recorded interviews were conducted, either face-to-face, by telephone or by Skype. Open-ended questions addressed the following topics:
- Reasons for inter-agency arrangements
- Problems that can be solved through inter-agency working
- Problems that cannot be solved through inter-agency working
- Resilience of inter-agency arrangements in the face of changing circumstances
- Cost-benefice (if efforts and resources to develop and sustain inter-agency collaboration represent good value for money)
- Risks in promoting inter-agency working
- Participant's contributions to promote inter-agency working
- Strategies that policy makers could apply at a state level to initiate collaboration at the local level
- Role of the private or voluntary sectors in inter-agency initiatives.
- Facilitating factors of the development and maintenance of strong inter-agency partnerships
- Barriers that prevent agencies from working more closely together
- Existence of ways to evaluate the impact of inter-agency working
- Importance of the feedback from the services users for the development of inter-agency working
- Relevance of the professionals' background training to the work developed by a multi-agency team
- Aspects of multi-agency partnership working that the participant wished to improve or know more about
- Participant's perception about the inter-agency working in his/her country as an example for other European contexts.

Analysis: Data were collated so that the current state of inter-agency collaboration in each country could be summarised, including reasons for this way of working, any problems it was designed to solve, external factors facilitating or impeding inter-agency working and any evidence of impacts and particularly for better outcomes for children.

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Online Survey of managers of services and specialists in 10 countries (N=132)

Participants An internet survey was conducted with 1,058 professionals. Full details can be found in Slot, Romijn, Cadima, Nata, and Wysłowska, 2018. The majority of respondents worked with children and families in areas where the parent survey had been conducted. The main criterion for selection was that the chosen centres/organizations worked with the ISOTIS target groups: low income native-born, cultural minority with Turkish or Maghreb immigration background, and Roma families. Questions about inter-agency collaboration were answered by a sub-set (N=132) of managers (professionals in charge of leading a team or organisation, such as head teachers, principals, team leaders, (assistant) managers, and team or school coordinators) and specialists (professionals with a specific specialized task within the educational or caregiving setting, such as language teachers, remedial teachers, psychologists, pedagogues, specialized coordinators, and coaches).

The sample included professionals working in different settings, including early education, formal education, child care, after school care or social work. There was an uneven distribution of respondents by country and the distribution of respondents from the different types of setting varied between countries (see Table 3). In particular, all of the respondents from two types of the settings (social work and after school care) came from only four of the 10 countries.

The majority of respondents (82%) were female and their age ranged from 25 to 63 (mean 48.1 years). The majority (95.3%) had educational qualifications at degree level or higher (Secondary education 1.6%, Post-secondary courses 3.1%, Bachelor's degree 51.2%, Master's degree 38.6%, doctoral degree 5.5%). The majority worked in either early education and care (49.2%) or schools (33.3%) with smaller numbers from social work (9.1%) and after school care (6.8%).

Table 3. Managers responding to ISOTIS survey by country and work setting

Country	N	ECEC	School	Social work	After school care	No information
Czech Republic	9	0	9	0	0	0
England	11	6	3	2	0	0
Germany	8	6	0	0	2	0
Greece	24	7	17	0	0	0
France	5	3	0	1	1	0
Italy	7	4	2	0	0	1
Netherlands	25	14	5	6	0	0
Norway	33	23	5	0	5	0
Poland	5	2	2	0	1	0
Portugal	5	0	1	3	0	1
	132	65 (49.2%)	44 (33.3%)	12 (9.1%)	9 (6.8%)	2 (1.5%)

Procedure: Managers and specialists (N=132) were asked to indicate with which of eight types of service they exchanged information or collaborated as follows:
1. Health services, such as infant and toddler health care and doctors
2. (Other) child care services, such as day care or preschool
3. (Other) education services, such as (other) primary schools
4. (Other) social services, such as after-school activities organized by welfare organisations
5. Public services, such as the library
6. Local, community-based organisations/programs, such as homes for the elderly
7. Volunteering programs or philanthropic organisations
8. (Local) law enforcement services such as the police

They rated the extent of their collaboration with each type of local service on a 6-point scale from the 'Levels of Collaboration Survey' scale (Frey et al., 2006) as follows:

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- 0 - Not at all;
- 1 - Little communication, loosely defined roles, all decisions made independently;
- 2 - Exchange of information, somewhat defined roles, all decisions made independently;
- 3 - Frequent communication, sharing of information and resources, defined roles, some shared decision making;
- 4 - Frequent and prioritized communication, sharing of ideas and resources, all members have a vote in decision making;
- 5 -High commitment, frequent communication with mutual trust, consensus on all decisions

Managers and specalists were also asked to rate the importance of their goals of inter-agency collaboration, with 12 options, with responses on a 5-point scale for each potential goal as follows:
1= not at all, 2= very little, 3= somewhat, 4= quite a lot, 5= to a very large degree

- To improve children's outcomes
- To increase equity and access to services
- To reduce discrimination or segregation
- To support multiple needs of families
- To detect pending or emerging problems at an early stage
- To support the relationship between service/professionals and parents
- To enhance continuity of children's experiences
- To learn from other professionals
- To align our work with children and families with other professionals' work
- To discuss the individual development or progress of children
- To have joint professional development, such as courses
- To develop a shared vision of service provision.

Analysis: Mean scores for the extent of collaboration with each agency were calculated, and grouped into low (0 or 1), medium (2 or 3) and high (4 or 5) collaboration. The mean collaboration score was examined in total, by country and by the type of work setting of the respondent. Scores between countries and work settings were compared using ANOVA and post hoc Bonferroni comparisons. It should be noted that, given that all of the respondents from two types work settings (social work and after school care) came from only four of the 10 countries, comparisons by the type of setting may only reflect those particular countries. In addition, given the small sample size in most countries, and variability between countries in the sample size, comparisons presented by country should also be interpreted with caution. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between the rated importance of each goal and the overall collaboration score based on the previous questions. Correlation coefficients were also calculated between the mean scores for collaboration, the importance of each goal and the country score.

RESULTS

NATURE AND EXTENT OF INTER-AGENCY WORKING

From summaries of legislation (N=9) and interviews with service providers, coordinators and policy makers (N=61)

There were several factors common to all countries. All were found to have, at least, references to inter-agency working in different kinds of legislative pieces: Constitution, Act, Decree even if not all had developed a consolidated Act devoted to inter-agency. All countries also had some decentralized responsibilities' (regulated or sub-contracted): vertical and horizontal governance with national, regional and local authorities; and with non-state, private and community actors. In most countries it was commonplace for central government to have a key role, which could be coordinating, monitoring and/or financing. Nevertheless, this was not the case for all. For example, in the German context inter-agency working is mentioned in the national legal framework, but the state plays less of an active role in horizontal coordination at the local level.

All countries had some permanent and/or transitory experiences of inter-agency working. However, in varying degrees, private and non-profit organizations were playing an increasingly important role in the implementation of inclusive education measures and inter-agency provision. There was some funding from state budgets but some countries had more regional or local supplementary governmental organisation (see Table 4) and consequently more regional or local funding and management of services.

Table 4. Number of subnational government structures in the participating countries.

Countries	Municipal level	Intermediate Level	Regional or state level
Czech Republic	6 258	-	14
England (UK)	391	27	3
Germany	11 054	401	16
Greece	325	-	13
Italy	7 960	-	20
Netherlands	380	-	12
Norway	422	-	18
Poland	2478	380	16
Portugal	308	-	2

Source: OECD (2018).

From survey of managers of services for children and families (N=132)

The mean collaboration score for managers of each type of local services is presented in Table 5. For all types of organisation there was a full range of responses from 0 (none) to 5 (a high level of collaboration). The types of other services are sequenced in the table according to the extent of inter-agency collaboration reported. Collaboration was said to be highest with primary schools, early education and care, and health services, each of which had mean responses just above the mid-point of the scale. The extent of collaboration with other services was much lower with mean values of 2.0 or below. The least collaboration (mean 1.4) was reported with volunteer organisations and local community-based programmes, which is perhaps not surprising since they are likely to provide services for a wider age range than those managed by the respondents.

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Table 5. Mean inter-agency collaboration score by the type of local organisation, reported by managers and specialist professionals (N=132)

	Inter-agency collaboration score			
Type of local service/organisation	Min	Max	Mean	SD
(Other) Education services (e.g. primary schools)	0	5	2.9	1.4
(Other) Child care (e.g. day care, preschool)	0	5	2.7	1.4
(Other) Health services (e.g. infant and toddler health care, doctors)	0	5	2.6	1.3
(Other) Social services (e.g. after school programs by welfare organisations)	0	5	2.0	1.5
Public services (e.g. library)	0	5	1.9	1.3
Local law enforcement (e.g. police)	0	5	1.6	1.3
Volunteering organisations and charities	0	5	1.5	1.3
Local community-based programmes (e.g. elderly homes)	0	5	1.4	1.3

The extent to which there was very little or a large amount of collaboration with different types of service across all respondents in presented in Table 6. The greatest amount of high collaboration was with education services in primary schools, followed by early child care and education services. In contrast, although the mean collaboration scale score was similar, strong collaboration with health services such as doctors or community nurses was not so frequently reported. Instead, a moderate level of collaboration such as exchanging information and shared decision making with health services was indicated by more than half of the managers. Moderate collaboration was also indicated with social and welfare services and other services for children such as libraries by close to half the respondents. All remaining services in the community such as law enforcement, volunteer organisations or homes for the elderly had lower mean scores with more than half of the respondents reporting minimal or no collaboration (see Table 6).

Table 6. The extent of low, medium and high collaboration by the type of local organisation, as reported by managers and specialist professionals (N=132)

	Extent of inter-agency collaboration		
Type of local organisation	Low (0-1) (%)	Medium (2-3) (%)	High (4-5) (%)
(Other) Education services in primary schools	16.8	47.3	35.9
(Other) Child care and early education services	20.0	49.2	30.8
(Other) Health services (e.g. community nurses, doctors)	19.4	58.9	21.7
(Other) Social services, after school programs by welfare organisations	37.4	45.1	17.5
Local government services (e.g. library)	40.3	47.3	12.4
Local law enforcement (e.g. police)	52.7	36.4	10.9
Volunteering organisations and charities	56.6	34.1	9.3
Local community-based programmes (e.g. elderly homes)	56.3	33.6	10.1

The extent of inter-agency collaboration was compared for the different work settings of the managers (see Table 7). Overall, there was no significant difference in the total amount of collaboration

reported between managers or specialists from different settings. There was, however, some significant variation depending on the type of agency. The most marked difference was in relation to collaboration with law enforcement, with a significant effect of the work location of managers (see Table 7).

Table 7. Mean collaboration score with organisation by the managers' work setting (N=130)

Type of local organisation	Work setting				F(df 3,124)
	ECEC N=65	School N=44	Social work N=12	After school N=9	
(Other) Education services (e.g. primary schools)	2.6	3.0	3.7	3.0	2.09[(*)]
(Other) Child care (e.g. day care, preschool)	3.0[#]	2.2	2.5	2.6	3.50[*]
(Other) Health services (e.g. infant and toddler health care, doctors)	2.8	2.4	2.7	1.6	2.11[(*)]
(Other) Social services (e.g. after school programs by welfare organisations)	1.6	2.3	2.4	2.8	2.85[*]
Public services (e.g. library)	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.8	n.s.
Local law enforcement (e.g. police)	1.0[##]	2.1	2.1	1.5	8.07[**]
Volunteering organisations and charities	1.3	1.8	1.9	1.3	n.s.
Local community-based programmes (e.g. elderly homes)	1.3	1.8	1.6	0.8	n.s.
Total collaboration score	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.2	n.s.

Significant effect of setting: n.s. not significant, (*) p<.10, * p<.05, **p<.01
Significant setting comparison at p<.05:
ECEC> school
ECEC< school, social work

Comparisons between work settings showed that ECEC managers collaborated significantly less with law enforcement than managers of schools (generally primary school) or social work. There were also significant effects of the type of work setting for collaboration with child care and preschool services and with social or welfare services. There was only one significant post hoc comparison; ECEC managers and specialists reported significantly more collaboration with other child care and preschool services than managers in schools. There were marginally significant differences based on the type of work setting in the extent of collaboration with schools and health services, and no effects of work setting for the remaining services (see Table 7).

In that many of the respondents did not report high levels of any inter-agency working (see Tables 5 and 6), the mid-range responses for all goals of collaboration seem to be high (4 - quite a lot) with mean scores ranging from 3.6 to 4.3 (see Table 8). Goals that focussed on identifying children's problems early, improving outcomes, discussing child progress and enhancing continuity of children's experiences were the most likely to be endorsed, along with goals to support families with multiple needs. Reducing discrimination, developing a shared vision or having joint professional development courses were rated the lowest in importance.

Correlation coefficients between the rated importance of each goal and the overall collaboration score based on the previous questions are presented in Table 8. It is of interest that the goals selected as the most important - detecting pending or emerging problems at an early stage and improving child outcomes – and discussing children's developmental progress, were not significantly associated with the extent of collaboration that was reported overall. All other goals were significantly and positively associated with the extent of collaboration reported, more collaboration being associated with the goal or outcome being described as more important for them.

The importance of goals was compared for managers' work setting (see Table 9). There were few differences depending on the type of setting, except that the managers of after school services reported the highest importance of collaborating to improve child outcomes and managers in schools the lowest. There was also a trend for managers in schools to give less importance to collaboration to discuss children's progress or to learn from other professionals.

Table 8. Mean scores for goals of their inter-agency collaboration (range 1 to 5) (N=132)

Goal	Mean	Correlation with total collaboration
To detect pending or emerging problems at an early stage	4.3	.14
To improve children's outcomes	4.2	.02
To enhance continuity of children's experiences	4.2	.26**
To support the relationship between service/professionals and parents	4.2	.21*
To discuss the individual development or progress of children	4.2	.13
To support multiple needs of families	4.1	.22*
To align our work with children and families with other professionals' work	4.1	.33**
To learn from other professionals	4.0	.24**
To increase equity and access to services	3.9	.30**
To develop shared vision of service provision towards common outcomes	3.9	.28**
To reduce discrimination or segregation	3.7	.24**
To have joint professional development, such as courses	3.6	.25**

Significant correlation coefficient *p<.05 ** p<.01

Table 9. Differences in mean goal of collaboration score by the managers' work setting (N=124)

	Work setting				F(df 3,120)
Goal of collaboration	ECEC N=61	School N=44	Social work N=12	After school N=7	
Detect problems at an early stage	4.4	4.1	4.2	4.4	n.s.
Improve child outcomes	4.4	4.0	4.1	4.7	3.13*
Enhance continuity of children's experiences	4.4	4.0	4.0	4.5	2.49(*)
Support relationship, professionals and parents	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.4	n.s.
Discuss individual progress of children	4.3	3.9	4.2	4.3	2.16(*)
Support multiple needs of families	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	n.s.
Align work with other professionals' work	4.0	4.1	4.2	3.8	n.s.
Learn from other professionals	4.2	3.8	3.8	4.4	2.22(*)
Increase equity and access to services	3.8	4.0	3.8	4.0	n.s.
Develop a shared vision of service provision	3.9	3.9	3.6	3.6	n.s.
Reduce discrimination or segregation	3.6	3.8	3.3	4.0	n.s.
Joint professional development, such as courses	3.7	3.7	3.1	4.0	n.s.

Significant effect of setting: n.s. not significant, (*) p<.10, * p<.05

ISOTIS

FACILITATORS OF CLOSER INTER-AGENCY WORKING
Comparing successful case studies (n=8) and views of service providers, coordinators and policy makers (n=61, n=9 countries)

Seven of the eight successful ISOTIS case studies identified local community (bottom-up) involvement and support, including volunteering, as a feature leading to greater success. It was also almost the most frequent facilitator mentioned by service providers, coordinators and policy makers. Though not as frequent as bottom-up support, the importance of top-down support for service integration was mentioned as a facilitator in most of the case studies. However, the service providers, coordinators and policy makers made it their most important facilitator. They were not necessarily responsible for successful inter-agency services so might have been especially aware of the difference that government support can make to sustaining innovative services.

A bottom-up approach, political top-down support, shared values and commitment to inter-agency, and joint training were identified in more than half of the countries both in the interviews with managers and in the case studies. Bottom-up input in particular was emphasised in all but one of the case studies, and by service providers, coordinators and policy makers in almost all countries (see Tables 10 & 11).

Unsurprisingly, in the successful ISOTIS cases, shared values and commitment to inter-agency working were noted in comments made in relation to almost all of the case studies (See Table 10). Shared values and shared planning were also among the most frequent facilitators of managers and policy makers working in the parent survey areas (see Table 11). Strong leadership was specified as important by most of the case studies, but not so often by service providers, coordinators and policy makers. It was clear from both sources of information that shared values were important, which could be developed through provision of joint training, and both formal and informal meetings. However, managers also indicated that it was important for professionals and their agencies to have clear goals.

Table 10. Most frequent facilitators of successful inter-agency working identified in case studies

Country	BE	EN	EL	IT	NL	NO	PL	PT	
Bottom-up (local) input and support	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	7
Strong, authoritative leadership	x	x	x		x	x	x		6
Shared values, commitment to inter-agency	x		x	x	x		x	x	6
Regular meetings		x		x	x	x	x		5
Political, top down support	x			x	x		x	x	5
Joint training and secondment	x	x			x		x		4
Trust between partners	x	x		x				x	4

Note: BE Belgium; EN=England; EL=Greece; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal. Source: Barnes et al., 2018.

Table 11. Most frequently mentioned facilitating factors of inter-agency working identified by service providers, coordinators and policy makers

	CZ	EN	DE	EL	IT	NL	NO	PL	PT	
Political, top-down support	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	9
Bottom-up approach	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	8
Receptivity of professionals	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
Shared values, commitment to inter-agency	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		7
Shared planning and goals		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		7
Clear agency/professional roles			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
Third sector / NGOs involvement	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	7
Secure funding	x	x	x	x		x		x		6
Organizational, top-down support			x	x		x	x	x	x	6
Professional development	x	x		x	x		x			5
Personal relationships, informal meeting	x		x	x				x	x	5
Evaluation of needs and outcomes	x			x	x		x		x	5
Learning from other professions	x				x		x	x	x	5
Joint training		x		x	x	x	x			5

Note. CZ=Czech Republic; EN=England; DE=Germany; EL=Greece; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal. Source: Guerra et al., 2019

BARRIERS TO CLOSER INTER-AGENCY WORKING

Comparing successful case studies (n=8) and views of service providers, coordinators and policy makers (n=61, n=9 countries)

Reflecting the literature, the most frequently mentioned barrier to success noted in the ISOTIS case studies was insecurity of funding or a reduction in funds (see Table 12). Respondents in the successful case studies highlighted this, aware that their work could be the focus of budget cuts if it was perceived as 'beyond what was necessary'. The additional meetings between staff that helped to ensure good relationships and shared values also required additional funds to give them 'time out' from other duties. Funding uncertainty or reduction was also top of the list of barriers for service providers, coordinators and policy makers, generally in the front-line in the management of budgets and all too aware of what might need to be cut if funds were limited (see Table 13).

Differing policies between agencies, which can also translate to differences in the way that data about children or families are stored or shared, was another main barrier, identified by practitioners in the case studies that were successful and also by the managers and policy makers. This can be supported by bottom-up strategies integrating information on service use but many types of information relating to children's development (e.g. health, educational attainment) are held in nationally organised data systems meaning that there has to be top down involvement in developing data systems that can protect confidentiality but also provide the necessary information for professionals in different agencies such as health, welfare, education and even law enforcement.

Table 12. Most frequently mentioned barriers to inter-agency working identified in case studies

Country	BE	EN	EL	IT	NL	NO	PL	PT	
Funding uncertainty or reduction	x	x	x		x	x		x	6
Different policies, approaches, values between agencies	x	x	x		x	x			5
Different regulations between agencies and professionals	x	x			x	x			4
Restrictions on data/information sharing	x	x		x			x		4
Political climate change	x	x	x						3
Problems recruiting staff/staff turnover		x		x	x				3
Insufficient/poor communication			x	x		x			3
Cultural/language obstacles	x			x	x				3

Note: BE Belgium; EN=England; EL=Greece; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal. Source: Barnes et al., 2018.

Table 13. Most frequently mentioned barriers to inter-agency working identified by service providers, coordinators and policy makers

	CZ	EN	DE	EL	IT	NL	NO	PL	PT	
Funding uncertainty or reduction	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	8
Problems recruiting staff/staff turnover	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	7
Different policies, approaches, regulations, values between agencies and professionals	x	x		x	x	x			x	6
Staff have limited time for meetings/training	x		x		x		x	x	x	6
Political climate change		x		x		x	x	x		5
Some agencies and professionals resistant/Lack of interest/Lack of trust	x		x	x		x		x		5
Insufficient/poor communication	x	x	x		x	x				5

Note. CZ=Czech Republic; EN=England; DE=Germany; EL=Greece; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal. Source: Guerra et al., 2019

IMPACTS OF INTER-AGENCY WORKING

Comparing successful case studies (n=8) and views of service providers, coordinators and policy makers (n=61, n=9 countries)

The service providers, coordinators and policy makers in all countries agreed that they expected service to be coordinated more effectively for families with complex problems, avoiding duplication of effort and allowing more specialized provision (see Table 15) and good coordination was mentioned by respondents in some but not all of the case studies of successful inter-agency working (see Table 14). Service providers, coordinators and policy makers also emphasised the possibility for innovation and enhanced communication between professionals, innovation also mentioned in some case studies. Cultural sensitivity of services was not frequently specified as an expected impact by either group and nor was reducing stigmatization in relation to receipt of certain services, although in the literature these are often put forward as reasons for closer work between services.

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Table 14. Most frequently mentioned impacts for service of increased inter-agency working identified in case studies

Country	BE	EN	EL	IT	NL	NO	PL	PT	
Coordination of services and more effective referrals for complex family problems	x	x		x	x		x		5
Able to react flexibly to gaps in service	x			x	x	x			4
Fills a gap, able to be more innovative			x	x			x		3
More culturally appropriate/sensitive		x			x			x	3
Continuity between ECEC and school		x	x		x				3
Non stigmatizing, more accessible		x			x				2
Efficiency, avoid duplication of services						x	x		2
More focus on prevention					x	x			2
Better and/or more specialized services					x		x		2
Professional development, expanded role		x				x			2

Note: BE Belgium; EN=England; EL=Greece; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal. Source: Barnes et al., 2018.

Table 15. Most frequently mentioned impacts on services of inter-agency working identified by service providers, coordinators and policy makers

	CZ	EN	DE	EL	IT	NL	NO	PL	PT	
Coordination of services and more effective referrals for complex family problems	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	9
Efficiency, avoid duplication of services	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	9
Better and/or more specialized services	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	9
Improved communication between services/professionals	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	7
Fills a gap, able to be more innovative	x		x	x	x		x	x		6
Professional development, expand their role		x		x	x		x	x		5
Improved outreach		x	x	x	x	x				5
Improved communication with families	x		x		x	x		x		5
Able to react flexibly to gaps in service	x			x	x		x			4
Economic benefit/save resources		x			x	x	x			4
Non stigmatizing, more accessible		x	x		x					3
More focus on prevention					x	x	x			3
More culturally appropriate/sensitive			x		x					2
Enhanced staff satisfaction						x		x		2
Focus on evidence-based practice							x	x		2
New services					x			x		2

Note. CZ=Czech Republic; EN=England; DE=Germany; EL=Greece; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal. Source: Guerra et al., 2019

Reflecting the previous literature, perceived impacts of greater inter-agency collaboration for families and children focussed on greater responsiveness of services, able to support families with multiple needs and culturally diverse groups more effectively (see Tables 16 and 17). Again, reflecting the literature, respondents were cautious to ascribe better outcomes for children to inter-agency working, mentioned by only one or two case studies and not at all by service providers, coordinators and policy makers.

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Table 16. Most frequently mentioned impacts for families and children of increased inter-agency working identified in case studies

	BE	EN	EL	IT	NL	NO	PL	PT	
More responsive support for families with multiple problems, families more satisfied	x	x		x	x		x		5
Welcoming for culturally diverse families	x	x		x	x				4
Parents only have one place to come, less stress, more accessible	x	x				x			3
Reduced inequalities, more inclusion	x		x					x	3
Reduced family social isolation		x			x				2
Smoother transition from ECEC to school		x	x						2
Access to services independent of legal status	x				x				2
Children - better health and well-being, continuity of monitoring					x		x		2
Children - improved language development					x	x			2

Note: BE Belgium; EN=England; EL=Greece; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal. Source: Barnes et al., 2018.

Table 17. Most frequently mentioned impacts on families and children of inter-agency working identified by service providers, coordinators and policy makers

	CZ	EN	DE	EL	IT	NL	NO	PL	PT	
Families have to contact fewer agencies, less stress, more accessible*		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
More responsive support for families with multiple problems, families more satisfied	x			x	x	x	x		x	6
Reduced inequalities, more inclusion			x	x	x					3
Reduced family social isolation			x		x				x	3
Welcoming culturally diverse families			x		x					2

Note. CZ=Czech Republic; EN=England; DE=Germany; EL=Greece; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal. Source: Guerra et al., 2019

COUNTRY DIFFERENCES IN PARENT WELL-BEING AND USE OF SERVICES (N=3,942)

There were significant differences between countries in the extent to which parents reported satisfaction with life, respondents in the Czech Republic having a lower mean score than all the other countries. Respondents in Poland were the second lowest, lower than all other countries except the Czech Republic. Respondents in Norway and the Netherlands had the highest life satisfaction scores, both unadjusted and taking the ethnic background of respondents into account (see Table 18).

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Table 18. Country means for parental reports of satisfaction with life and satisfaction with country

Country	General life satisfaction (range 1-5)	General life Satisfaction (range 1-5)	Satisfaction, life in country (range 1-5)	Satisfaction, life in country (range 1-5)
	Unadjusted	Adjusted for ethnic group	Unadjusted	Adjusted for ethnic group
CZ	3.06	3.10	4.24	4.13
EN	3.82	3.83	4.45	4.53
DE	3.57	3.57	4.04	4.14
EL	3.65	3.67	4.21	4.09
FR	3.94	3.84	4.22	4.25
IT	3.44	3.44	3.93	3.91
NL	4.05	3.96	4.30	4.41
NO	4.22	4.15	4.37	4.57
PL	3.25	3.39	4.33	4.25
PT	3.81	3.85	4.81	4.69
F value	33.27***	21.02***	35.25***	31.59***
Df	(9, 3913)	(9, 3910)	(9, 3917)	(9, 3914)

Note. CZ=Czech Republic; EN=England; DE=Germany; EL=Greece; FR=France; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal

 ***$p<.001$
Significant post hoc comparisons at $p<.05$ for General satisfaction with life:
CZ< all countries except PL; PL<EN, DE, EL, IT, FR, NL, NO, PT; NO>DE, EL, IT; NL>DE, EL, IT, PT; FR>DE, IT; EN> DE, IT; PT>DE, IT
Significant post hoc comparisons at $p<.05$ for Satisfaction with life in the country:
IT< all countries except DE; PT > all other countries; EN> CZ, DE, EL, FR; PL>DE; NL>DE; CZ>DE

There was a different pattern of country differences when respondents were asked if they were satisfied with life in their particular country. For these questions the respondents in Italy had the lowest mean score, lower than almost all other countries while respondents in Portugal had the highest mean score, followed by those in England, then Norway and the Netherlands (see Table 18).

Country means for use of services, both home visits and centre visits, can be seen in Table 19 (unadjusted) and Table 20 (adjusted for ethnic background). Parents in the Czech Republic reported the greatest number of home visits, with Poland second. The lowest home visits were experienced by parents in Norway, France and Greece. Post-hoc comparisons are not available when covariates have been added to ANOVA tests, but the pattern was similar once parents' ethnic background was taken into account. The Czech Republic was still ranked at the top and Poland second but Norway was higher in the ranking. The average number of home visits was still lowest for Greece and France (see Table 20).

The most centre visits on average were received by parents in Poland, Portugal and Germany, with the lowest in Norway and Greece (see Table 19). These patterns of service use by country remained, for the most part, when analyses took into account the ethnic background of respondents (See Table 20). Parent in Poland and Germany received most centre visits but Portugal was lower, while the mean for parents in England and the Netherlands were higher. Greece and Norway remained with low mean scores.

Table 19. Unadjusted country means of service contact in the last six months

Country	Frequency home visits 0-5	Any of four Types home visit 0-4	Usefulness home visit advice 1-3	Frequency centre visits 0-5	Any of four Types centre visit 0-4	Usefulness centre visit advice 1-3	Frequency home + centre 0-10	Usefulness home + centre 1-3
CZ	.60	.30	2.52	.68	.41	2.64	1.28	2.55
EN	.18	.10	2.40	.71	.46	2.52	.89	2.50
DE	.14	.07	2.68	.82	.49	2.69	.97	2.68
EL	.12	.09	2.37	.31	.18	2.59	.44	2.56
FR	.10	.06	2.55	.37	.26	2.71	.47	2.66
IT	.17	.10	2.52	.73	.47	2.63	.90	2.61
NL	.25	.11	2.67	.53	.34	2.48	.78	2.51
NO	.09	.11	2.00	.20	.17	2.22	.29	2.15
PL	.46	.20	2.59	1.65	.90	2.68	2.11	2.67
PT	.29	.16	2.76	.94	.57	2.84	1.22	2.83
F value	14.30**	13.10**	2.14*	27.74**	27.52**	7.34***	25.61**	7.98***
Df	(9, 3932)	(9, 3932)	(9, 409)	(9, 3932)	(9, 3932)	(9, 1403)	(9, 3932)	(9, 1560)

Note. CZ=Czech Republic; EN=England; DE=Germany; EL=Greece; FR=France; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal

**$p<.01$
Significant post-hoc comparison at $p<.05$:
Frequency home visits: CZ >all countries except PL; PL> EN, DE, EL, FR, IT
Any of 4 types home visit: CZ> all but PL
Usefulness home visits: No significant country differences
Frequency centre visits: PL>all other countries; EL< all countries except FR; NO; NO< DE, IT, PL, PT
Any of 4 types centre visit: PL>all other countries; PT> CZ, EL, FR, NL, NO; DE> EL, FR, NL, NO
Usefulness centre visits:PT>CZ, EN, IT, NL, NO; NL< DE, PL
Frequency home + centre: PL> all other countries; CZ > all except DE, PT; EL< all except Fr, NL, NO
Usefulness home + centre: PT> all except FR, PL

Table 20. Country means of service contact in the last six months, adjusted for ethnic background

Country	Frequency home Visits 0-5	Any of four types home visit 0-4	Usefulness Home visit Advice 1-3	Frequency centre visits 0-5	Any of four Types centre visit 0-4	Usefulness Centre visit advice 1-3	Frequency home + centre 0-10	Usefulness home + centre 1-3
CZ	.57	.29	2.51	.43	.28	2.65	1.00	2.57
EN	.25	.13	2.37	.82	.50	2.50	1.06	2.48
DE	.22	.10	2.64	.96	.54	2.67	1.18	2.66
EL	.10	.09	2.37	.06	.05	2.60	.16	2.57
FR	.06	.04	2.63	.61	.42	2.71	.67	2.65
IT	.11	.07	2.57	.77	.50	2.64	.87	2.62
NL	.30	.13	2.70	.81	.49	2.45	1.11	2.47
NO	.26	.18	1.93	.52	.33	2.17	.78	2.09
PL	.37	.16	2.57	1.42	.77	2.70	1.79	2.70
PT	.25	.15	2.75	.69	.44	2.86	.94	2.85
F value	10.55***	8.87***	2.23*	20.60***	20.46***	5.87***	16.34***	7.47***
Df	9, 3929	9, 3929	9, 406	9, 3929	9, 3929	9, 1400	9, 3929	9,1557

Note. CZ=Czech Republic; EN=England; DE=Germany; EL=Greece; FR=France; IT=Italy; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; PL=Poland; PT=Portugal

***p<.001

COUNTRY DIFFERENCES IN LEVELS OF INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION AS REPORTED BY MANAGERS OF SERVICES (N=132)

The mean level of collaboration by country, as reported in the survey of managers of services and specialist professionals (N=132), was compared between the different countries using ANOVA, though it should be noted that the number of respondents per country was variable, ranging from only five up to 33. Therefore, the country differences can only be viewed as speculative.

There was variability between the countries with respect to which agencies were involved in most the collaboration. Comparisons between countries were based on the mean collaboration scale score (range 0 to 5; see Table 21). The total collaboration averaged across all the agencies did not differ significantly between countries. However, there were significant country effects in collaboration with specific services, namely primary schools, social and welfare services, volunteer programmes and law enforcement (see Table 21).

Given the variability in the sample sizes between countries it is unsurprising that there were, however, few significant post-hoc (Bonferroni) comparisons between specific countries. The most marked were that respondents from England reported the most collaboration with welfare and social services, significantly more than respondents from Greece and Norway. The Norwegian managers reported the least collaboration with volunteer organisations, significantly less that those from England and Italy. Finally, Portuguese respondents reported the most collaboration with law enforcement, significantly more than managers from the Netherlands and Norway (see Table 21).

Table 21. Mean inter-agency collaboration scores (range 0 to 5) with agencies by country

Country	Primary education	Child care	Health	Welfare	Public	Law	Volunteer, charity	Community	Total
CZ	3.0	2.0	1.4	2.6	2.0	2.0	1.4	1.2	2.0
EN	3.5	2.4	2.8	3.3[#]	1.8	1.9	2.5	1.7	2.5
DE	3.6	3.8	2.8	2.5	3.0	1.3	2.0	1.4	2.7
EL	2.5	2.3	2.7	1.4	1.9	1.8	1.8	2.2	2.1
FR	1.8	2.0	2.4	1.2	1.3	1.2	0.8	0.8	1.5
IT	2.1	3.0	3.1	3.2	2.1	2.3	2.7	0.8	2.5
NL	3.6	2.5	3.0	2.3	2.2	1.2	1.3	1.5	2.2
NO	2.5	3.2	2.4	1.4	1.3	1.0	0.8[##]	1.1	1.8
PL	2.2	2.4	1.6	1.2	2.6	2.2	1.6	1.0	1.9
PT	2.8	3.0	2.5	3.2	2.2	3.2[###]	1.6	1.4	2.5
TOTAL	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.4	
F value (df 9, 119)	2.53[*]	1.73[(*)]	1.65	4.16[**]	1.85[(*)]	2.89[**]	2.95[**]	1.40	1.46

CZ = Czech Republic; EN = England; DE = Germany; EL = Greece; FR= France; IT= Italy; NL= Netherlands; NO= Norway; PL= Poland; PT= Portugal

Significant effect of country: (*) $p<.10$, * $p<.05$, **$p<.01$; Significant post-hoc comparison at $p<.05$:
[#] England > Greece and Norway
[##] Norway< England and Italy
[###] Portugal > Netherlands and Norway

The extent to which goals of collaboration were described as being part of the managers' strategy were compared between countries (see Table 22 and 23). There were significant country effects for the goals of inter-agency working being to reduce discrimination and segregation, to learn from other

professions, and to have joint training with other professions.There were marginal county effects for the goals of improving child outcomes and increasing equity and access to services.

Again there were few post hoc significant differences between specific countries. The goal of reducing segregation and discrimination was lowest for the Netherlands, and significantly lower that that reported by managers in England and Greece (see Table 23). Those in the Netherlands were also less likely to decribe goal of learning from other professionals. Respondents in Greece were the least likely to indicate that a goal of inter-agency working was to improve child outcomes, significantly lower than Norwegian respondents (see Table 22).

Table 22. Significant differences in mean scores for goals by country (Anova)

Country	Detect problems early	Improve outcomes	Enhance continuity	Parents/ professional relationships	Discuss child progress	Support multiple needs
CZ	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.4	4.0	4.0
EN	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.5
DE	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.3
EL	4.5	3.8[#]	4.0	4.4	3.9	4.4
FR	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.6	4.0	3.8
IT	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.3	3.9
NL	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.1	4.4	3.9
NO	4.5	4.6	4.3	3.9	4.2	4.0
PL	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.0
PT	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.0
TOTAL	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1
F value (df 9, 119)	1.35	1.83[(*)]	.89	1.01	1.65	.77

CZ Czech Republic; EN England; DE Germany; EL Greece; FR France; IT Italy; NL Netherlands; NO Norway; PL Poland; PT Portugal
Significant effect of country: (*) p<.10; Significant post-hoc comparison at p<.05: [#] Greece<Norway

Table 23. Significant differences in mean scores for goals by country (Anova)

Country	Align with other professions.	Learn from other professions	Increase equity & access	Develop shared vision	Reduce discrimination & segregation	Joint training other professions.
CZ	4.2	3.9	4.2	4.2	3.7	3.6
EN	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.4	3.6
DE	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.1	3.9
EL	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.1
FR	3.6	3.8	3.6	4.0	3.4	2.8
IT	4.1	3.3	3.9	4.0	4.0	2.9
NL	4.2	3.4[#]	3.7	3.6	2.8[##]	3.2
NO	3.8	4.3	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.0
PL	3.8	4.4	4.2	4.6	4.2	3.6
PT	4.4	3.8	4.0	4.4	4.0	3.4
TOTAL	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.6
F value (df 9, 119)	1.08	3.04[**]	1.77[(*)]	1.66	3.52[**]	2.32[*]

CZ Czech Republic; EN England; DE Germany; EL Greece; FR France; IT Italy; NL Netherlands; NO Norway; PL Poland; PT Portugal

Significant effect of country: (*) p=.06, *p<.05, **p<.01; Significant post-hoc comparison at p<.05:
[#] Netherlands<Norway; [##] Netherlands<England, Greece

CATEGORIZATION OF COUNTRIES TO REFLECT POTENTIAL FOR INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

As described in the methods, an effort was made to characterize the legislation and current climate from ten countries involved in the ISOTIS study to reflect the presence of facilitators for inter-agency working and a general 'climate' or 'orientation' at local levels with regard to inter-agency and networking with NGO's. Four well-documented facilitating factors were examined: the degree of decentralization; the degree of inter-sectoral integration; the degree to which the system involves non-governmental charities and organisations with a social mission; and the degree of coordination of (bottom-up) power at the local level.

While looking at Table 24, it is important to note that the ratings do not measure actual interagency working in the country nor focus on specific examples of interagency working that may exist. Rather the ratings represent the governance-policy context, based on information received in 2017 and 2018. However, it should be noted that these ratings are based on information from a small numbers of informants per country, at a specific point in time, and regarding specific urban locations and changes can occur in specific countries, with changes in local or national government. Given these reservations about the data used, the information is presented in an anonymised form so that specific countries cannot be identified. Rather the information is presented as a potential means for policy makers to characterise legislation and services to identify whether their own specific context may be more or less likely to support inter-agency working. In addition, preliminary analyses demonstrate the extent to which ratings correspond with different experiences of practitioners and parents.

Table 24. Anonymised summary of Country Index score calculation method based predominantly on researcher descriptions of legislation in Guerra et al., 2019

		Decentralization		Integrated services, weak sectoral boundaries, integrated funding		Involvement of NGOs, Charities, activist organizations		Leadership (power) at local level, guiding (social) mission	Total
A	1	decentralized (constitutional), systems decentralized, subsidiarity principle	1	several services of different sectors are reported to be highly coordinated	1	strong role of NGOs and church-related charities	1	Networks in both sites are city-wide, supervised and coordinated at municipal level, shared mission to support low-income groups	4
B	0	decentralized, no national frame work, local autonomy by default	-1	mostly education sector	1	NGOs and activist organizations are important	1	education sector, with municipal support, seems pivotal with emancipation vision regarding disadvantaged groups	1
C	0	mixed centralized / decentralized, principle of subsidiarity	0	mixed picture: seems relatively integrated in one city, more from one sector (education) in other site	0	difference between one site (mainly public) and other site (mainly NGOs)	1	local municipality or NGO in lead, with vision	1

D	1	decentralized, high local autonomy	1	traditionally highly integrated, often co-located	0	work seems to be mainly public sector (education, health, social work)	-1	varies and depends on local political context, no standard strong role of municipality, informants are pessimistic	1
E	1	decentralized to states, subsidiarity	-1	country report suggests lack of coordination, different funding streams, overlapping activities	1	strong role for charities (churches)	-1	country report mentions lack of dominant sector and suggest low power at local government level	0
F	1	decentralized governance, centralized funding, two localities	-1	relatively strong intersectoral boundaries, local networks loosely connected, different models (demand-orientation vs. supply/outreach)	0	limited, but somewhat increasing role of NGOs	0	no dominant sector in networks, municipalities do have vision, but little enforcement power	0
G	0	transition to decentralized system, autonomy by default in urban areas	-1	weak networks, coordination is incidental	1	growing role of NGOs, private organizations in all sectors	0	the two areas seem to have power (by default, in transition phase), but to lack a clear mission/vision	0
H	-1	centralized systems	-1	strong intersectoral boundaries due to financing system and centralized governance	0	NGOs are involved to limited extent	0	limited role of municipal level organizations given strong centralization	-2
I	0	mixed: ECEC decentralized but youth care, child protection and family support regional/national	-1	no indication of coordination with ECEC/education, demand-orientation	-1	no indication of role of NGOs	-1	no indication that the local municipality or a dominant organization leads beyond the family centers, no indication of missionary view	-3
J	-1	centralized systems	-1	lack of coordination, no intention, segregated programs for target groups	-1	no strong role for NGOs or charities	-1	local governments are typified as particularly powerless	-4

While the whole range of potential scores was evident (from -4 to 4) only one country was at the optimal level and only one at the bottom of the scale. Four of the ten countries showed at least one positive indicator while three more were overall neutral, with some strengths and other weaknesses, and the remaining three were below that with few or no strengths. The characteristics that was most often coded as -1 was the second column, indicating the extent to which there was reported evidence of weakening of sectoral boundaries and shared funding. The domain where more countries had strength was in the first column, the extent of decentralization of governance.

The relevance of the country index for families

Associations were conducted at the country level (Pearson correlation coefficients) to determine if there was any relationship between country means in parental well-being or service use and the Country Index score, representing the composite including decentralisation of services, inter-agency collaboration and involvement of third sector (NGO) organisations in service provision (see Table 25).

Table 25. Relationships between parent reports of the use of services and their well-being at the country level, and with Country Index (N=10)

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Country Index score	-								
2	4 Types centre visit	.82**	-							
3	Frequency centre visits	.83**	.99**	-						
4	Centre advice useful	.38	.22	.20	-					
5	4 Types home visit	.29	-.09	-.04	-.17	-				
6	Frequency home visits	.53	.17	.22	-.05	.94**	-			
7	Home visits useful	.45	.39	.35	.82**	-.23	.00	-		
8	Frequency home and centre	.90**	.91**	.94**	.16	.30	.54	.30	-	
9	General life satisfaction	-.55	-.11	-.15	-.53	-.37	-.46	-.34	-.29	-
10	Satisfaction in country	-.08	.11	.09	-.25	.20	.14	-.18	.13	.70*

*$p<.05$, **$p<.01$

Significance should be interpreted as only a general indicator with such a small sample but there was virtually no association between satisfaction with living in that particular country and the Country Index score ($r = 0.08$) although there was a negative association for countries higher on the Country Index to have lower general life satisfaction ($r=-.55$; see Table 25). Having a lower general satisfaction with life was also negatively associated with receiving more home visits ($r=-.46$) and with finding centre visits useful ($r=-.53$) (See Table 25).

There was no marked association at the country level between the frequency of home and centre visits ($r=.22$). However, the country index was positively associated with the frequency of home ($r=.53$) and centre ($r=.83$) visits and receiving each of four different types of centre support ($r=.82$), represented in Figure 1. A higher country index, reflecting a greater readiness for inter-agency working, was very closely associated with a higher frequency of home and centre visits ($r =.90$, see Figure 2).
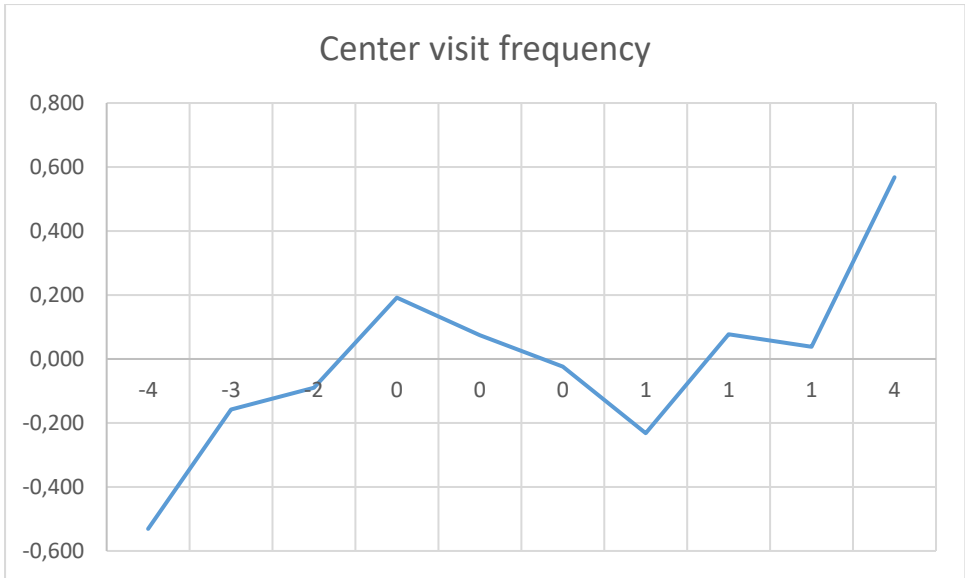
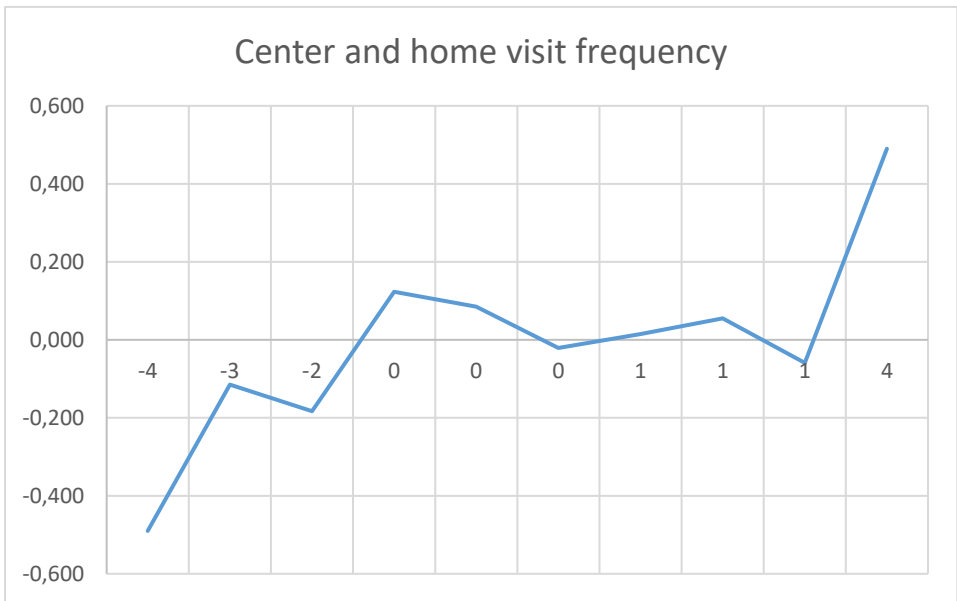Figure 1. Relationship between country Index and frequency of centre visits (r=.83)

Figure 2. Relationship between country Index and frequency of centre and home visits (r=.90)

The relevance of the country index for managers

Associations (Pearson correlation coefficients) were calculated to determine whether the mean country score for total collaboration or mean scores for collaboration with each type of service were linked with the country 'readiness for inter-agency working' index score. Total collaboration as reported by managers and specialists had only a small positive association with the Country Index (r = .25). Only one association between the Index and collaboration with specific agencies approached significance (see Table 26). When the Country Index was higher it somewhat more likely that there was more collaboration reported with public services such as libraries (r =.59) and with law enforcement (r=.45). The only positive association between the Country Index and perceived goals of collaboration that approached significance (r=.61) was between the Index and developing a shared

vision; when the Index was higher the managers were more likely to identify developing a shared vision as a goal of inter-agency working (see Table 27).

Table 26. Associations between country mean inter-agency collaboration with specific services and the Country Index (N=10)

	Collaboration with specific agencies/services providers							
	Primary Education	Child care	Health	Welfare	Public	Law	Volunteer, charity	Community
Association with country index	.14	-.05	-.33	.34	.59$^{(*)}$	.45	.40	-.37

Table 27. Associations between country mean for each goal of inter-agency collaboration and the Country Index (N=10)

	Goal of inter-agency collaboration					
	Detect problems early	Improve outcomes	Enhance continuity	Parents/ professional relationships	Discuss child progress	Support multiple needs
Association with country index	-.19	.27	.01	.08	.27	-.10
	Align with other professions	Learn from other professions	Increase equity and access	Develop shared vision	Reduce segregation	Joint training other professions.
Association with country index	.28	.04	.37	.61$^{(*)}$	.23	-.28

DISCUSSION OF WP6 FINDINGS IN RELATION TO OTHER RESEARCH

This report includes a wealth of evidence indicating that there are likely to be benefits for service users and service providers if agencies work more closely together. This is based on existing theory and research studies including the new ISOTIS findings and innovative work in different European countries. It is notable that the actual levels of collaboration reported by managers of services in an ISOTIS survey were moderate at best and low for collaboration with many agencies. The managers and specialists who responded to the internet survey specified the goals of inter-agency working that largely reflected the literature, with few differences between countries. The fact that the level of inter-agency collaboration in each country was not associated with the stated importance of its goals suggests that they were responding in terms of what they believed should be important, rather than what was actually happening. However, there was a positive indication in that, in the countries receiving a higher score on the ISOTIS index, created to reflect readiness for inter-agency working, there was more collaboration reported with agencies such as NGOs and law enforcement, and local authority services such as libraries. Overall, this is revealing of the basic lack of knowledge of inter-agency working within traditional services and public bodies, including national and local governments. The need for strengthening governance is discussed below.

Education systems and inter-agency working

The respondents in the ISOTIS WP5 survey worked in ECEC, primary schools and social work, the agencies with which collaboration was most likely, and the views expressed were similar, showing little experience or knowledge of inter-agency working. However, using schools as a base for inter-agency working can be very effective, as described in the Our Place initiative described in the introduction. Also, the out-of-school space is an increasingly important field where educational inequalities are reproduced through extra support for learning (remedial programmes, training for exams; Bray, 2011; Buchman et al., 2010; Chapoulie, 2017; Matsuoka, 2018), transmission of cultural capital (Van Hek & Kraaykamp, 2013), and opportunities for broader skill development (Lareau, 2011; Sauerwein et al., 2016). The use of non-formal education and informal cultural activities differs strongly by socioeconomic and ethnic-cultural background, quantitatively (amount) and qualitatively (type and content; Giavrimis et al., 2018; Ireson & Rushforth, 2005; Loyalka & Zakharov, 2016). Higher income parents devote a growing part of their income to non-formal and informal education outside school, increasing the education gap by income (Schneider et al., 2018). Out-of-school non-formal learning is likely to have more impact in systems with part-day school programmes (Rønning, 2011), in tracked secondary education systems, and in systems where subject choice determines the opportunities for tertiary education (Ball, 2010; Zhang & Bray, 2017). Hence, inter-agency working can increase its effectiveness for children's educational outcomes by incorporating learning opportunities for children not only through the formal educational institutions but also through more informal out-of-school support mechanisms that add significantly to what happens in schools. This requires inter-agency working.

Communities and inter-agency working

The WP5 survey of managers of child and family services (e.g. early education, formal education, child care, after school care or social work) and specialist professionals within those services indicated that agencies such as local government, law enforcement or local charities and NGOs with a social mission were not often collaborating with the professionals or the communities surveyed. This limits the wraparound support that can be provided through close inter-agency working and means that children and families with multiple needs – the most likely to face inequalities and discrimination – will need to seek support from a range of different teams and organisations. This will be effectively achieved through integration of formal and informal systems of education and support as discussed above and also requires heeding the views of the communities involved.

However, examples of community involvement with non-formal education exist. Non-formal education is increasingly used in religious communities to preserve the transmission of religious values to children. In immigrant communities, religious informal education has been reported to complement and even partly replace formal education with regard to heritage language reading and writing skills, sciences and mathematics (Elfers & Jansen, 2019). This can result in reducing the common ground between formal and informal systems of education, which has been associated with cultural polarization in classrooms, decreased effectiveness of instruction, and early school leaving (Demir & Pismek, 2018; Gay, 2015; Knowles & Clark, 2018). Altogether there is a clear need for coordination across all forms of support, both non-formal and informal, to safeguard children's wellbeing, learning and integration in society (Zhang & Bray, 2017), to secure a common ground as a key public task of education, and to assure the equality of non-formal and informal education.

Examples can be found where community-based local networks for family involvement and children's access and uptake of education have much to contribute. During the recent economic crisis in Greece at a time that the public education system faced serious problems, new forms of informal solidarity emerged known as 'social tutoring', 'voluntary extra tutoring' or 'solidarity schools' (*koinonika frontistiria*).[1] Unemployed or retired teachers, university students, and currently active teachers who are willing to work extra hours offer their services on a voluntary basis (Kourachanis et al., 2017; Zambeta, 2014). This type of 'institutionalized solidarity' largely draws upon partnerships between state and non-state actors, and is increasingly pursued as a model for public welfare policy (Ascoli & Ranci, 2011; Johnston, 2015). Other evidence points to the role of local community initiatives in stimulating parental involvement (Ressler, 2019), such as the *cités éducatives* in France and the Open Schools programme in Greece.[2] Typically, school premises are turned into meeting places and centres of action where the local community is invited to take part in recreational, cultural, educational and sports activities suitable for people of all ages (Guenaga & Espeso, 2017). This type of community support provides parents with opportunities to feel more comfortable navigating through formal services, can strengthen families' social network, facilitate relationships between families and services, and create a stronger sense of community (Ressler, 2019). Thus, inter-agency working that is based upon community needs can play a major role in the integration of formal and informal support in ways that better ensure children's and parents' well-being.

Cultural perspectives and a community-oriented approach

In the WP5 interviews with managers and specialists, respondents showed little focus on the situation of culturally different groups in that they indicated that reducing discrimination was not perceived as an important goal of inter-agency collaboration. The idea that inter-agency work can promote not only children's academic attainment and family well-being but also more complex issues faced by cultural minority and disadvantaged groups needs to be strengthened. The low importance given to inter-agency working as a means of reducing discrimination or as appropriate support cultural groups is also reflected in the perceived impacts of inter-agency work mentioned by service providers, coordinators and policy makers in report D6.3. In only three of the nine countries was providing non-stigmatising services mentioned while providing more culturally appropriate services was only mentioned in two of the nine countries.

Some of the ISOTIS findings from WP2 interviews with parents revealed distinct differences concerning informal education related to cultures and country. From interviews with parents from Turkish, Maghreb, Roma and non-migrant low-income communities in the 10 ISOTIS countries, different patterns of use of non-formal and informal education and (religious) socialization activities could be distinguished. For children in the 3-5 age range, use of these activities was still very limited or non-existent, but for the older children (9-11 years) there was moderate involvement in a diversity of activities. Figure 3 provides an overview of the out-of-home and out-of-school extracurricular

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[1] https://www.accmr.gr/en/services/service/327.html
[2] https://www.cget.gouv.fr/dossiers/cites-educatives); https://www.athensopenschools.gr

activities of young adolescents as reported by their parents (N = 3948). Turkish immigrant parents in the Netherlands reported to use non-formal religious education for 9- to 11-year-old children much more (64%) than Turkish immigrant parents in England (11%) and Norway (26%). In contrast, non-religious non-formal education focusing on the heritage language was low in the Netherlands and relatively high in England and Norway. Maghreb immigrant parents in the Netherlands reported to use religion-related non-formal education for their children much more (59%) than Maghreb immigrant parents in France (16%) and Italy (39%). The Maghreb-Dutch parents used religion-related education mostly for heritage language support, while in Italy use of separate heritage language support activities was relatively high but not part of religion-related non-formal education.

Patterns of uptake also differed by location within countries. For example, in Greece, Roma parents in a rural area reported overwhelmingly (91%) not using any non-formal or informal education and cultural socialization, while Roma parents in a mixed rural-urban area reported frequent use of non-formal education-related activities (21%), sports (40%) and cultural activities (38%) for their children. In Warsaw, use of religion-related activities by children of low-income families were more often part of a broader set of non-formal school-support activities, sports and general cultural socialization than in Łodź, while overall use of religion-related non-formal education was much higher in Poland than in other countries.
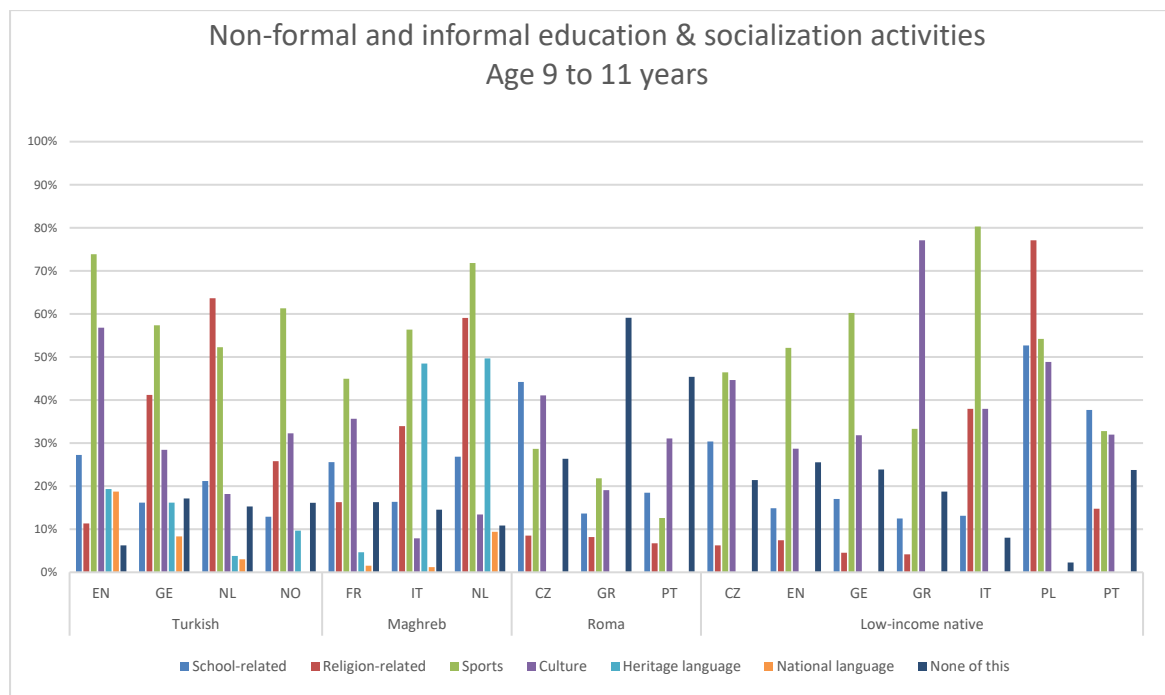

Figure 3: Reported use of extra-curricular activities across groups and countries in Europe, based on interviews with parents (N = 3948).

Strengthening national and local governance

An emerging theme from WP6 work and other research is the need to strengthen awareness and basic knowledge of inter-agency working at all levels of government. The traditional training and experience of those involved in both state and local government does not equip them for dealing with the increasingly complex nature of supporting children and families in increasingly complex societies. For example, the complexity of the nature and causes of early emerging disadvantages requires a concerted, adaptive and multi-systemic approach to support children and families to deal with multiple risks and stressors. Effectively addressing social inequalities requires a concerted and

comprehensive approach that encompasses all components of the services systems, coordinates education through all life-stages, and fine-tunes national policies to the local community. The challenge for national governments is to understand the importance of such approaches and to empower local government to address these issues. The challenge for local government is to effectively coordinate services and optimize their synergy. Where we see decentralized hybrid systems, involving private for-profit and not-for-profit organisations, and civil society initiatives, along with value-driven network coordination, the use of family support services and the satisfaction with these services is higher than in systems with hard sectoral boundaries traditionally existing between public services under centralized control, as the current WP6-study has shown (cf. Head & Alford, 2015). The changing demands with the introduction of these new ways of working may well require national and local governments to recruit expertise from outside government.

Hybrid networks across public, private and voluntary sectors

Inter-agency working may involve decentralized hybrid systems, incorporating private for-profit and not-for-profit organisations, voluntary and civil society initiatives. Such hybrid systems typically include value-driven coordination, and the use of family support services and the satisfaction with these services is higher than in systems with hard sectoral boundaries between public services under centralized control, as the current WP6 results demonstrate (cf. Head & Alford, 2015).

Organizational hybridity offers opportunities to improve the service and to better adapt to complex problems in the local context (Brandsen et al., 2005; Clegg et al., 2016; Robinson, 2016). Hybridization is a process in which multiple roles are in play within an organisation (Skelcher & Smith, 2015). Local network governance can steer these organisation-internal processes towards optimizing the service for local needs by emphasizing the strength of a particular logic (e.g., innovative professionalism) and making values (e.g., equity) prominent, promoting exchange and trust between professionals, and stimulating commitment to a shared mission (Skelcher & Smith, 2015).

Provan and Kenis (2008) distinguish three forms of network governance. *Shared governance* refers to networks in which every organization interacts with every other organization in the network, resulting in a dense web of interactions, based on equality and symmetric power relations, and at the network level in highly decentralized governance *Brokered governance* refers to networks in which organizations interact mainly with a central 'broker' and have limited direct interaction with other organizations. The central broker maybe one of the organizations of the network or an external party. In lead-organization broker networks. The third is the *network administrative organization governance,* or NAO governance, in which a separate external administrative entity (NAO) is governs the network, which could be a government body (e.g., a municipal project manager), a non-profit organization or a contracted for-profit organization.

Each form has strengths and weaknesses. The appropriateness of a particular form depends on four key structural and relational contingencies: mutual trust between organizations in the network, size of the network, goal consensus, and the nature of the collective task. The less densely trust is distributed through the network, the larger the number of participants, the less consensus regarding the goals or mission, and the more complex the collective task, the more brokered network governance will be effective compared to shared governance (Provan & Kenis, 2008). Networks can suffer from several tensions, for instance tensions between efficiency and inclusiveness of decision making, internal and external and accountability, flexibility and stability. NAO governed networks seem the best option to deal with the tensions. Network evolution is likely to proceed from shared governance to brokered networks and from participant governed to NAO governed networks, if networks are successful.

Examples of Inter-agency working involving voluntary, private and public sectors

We can sometimes see hybrid systems that link private, voluntary and public sector organisations into an integrated platform for service delivery. Here we include two examples, one from outside Europe

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and one from inside the EU, of inter-agency working for services for young children and their families that were not available for inclusion in the ISOTIS project, but they illustrate how private, voluntary and public sector organisations can be brought together to deliver inter-agency services that have extra benefit for those living in disadvantaged circumstances.

In Australia, Our Place is a not-for-profit organisation that delivers integrated services to families and children in the state of Victoria in Australia. Our Place is an example of the *network administrative organization* (NAO) model described in the previous section. The services include health, childcare, early education, family support, and schools. The services involved derive partly from voluntary organisations, partly from private organisations and partly from public (state) organisations. For example, the health services and schools are provided by the state, the childcare and early education are often provided by private (for profit) organisations, and the family support is provided by voluntary organisations. Our Place, as a *network administrative organization,* provides the integrating framework to put these services together in a given location to best serve the interests of local families and children. The mission is to reshape the service system and open access to the resources, opportunities and support that all children need in order to learn and develop, and that enables families to achieve their aspirations.

The State of Victoria government has collaborated with Our Place to enable Our Place to deliver integrated services in ten communities. Our Place starts the work with schools to expand the opportunities open to children and families in highly disadvantaged communities. "Education is the key to transforming the life chances of children and creating the conditions for families and communities to flourish." Using the school site as a base, Our Place integrates high quality early learning, effective schooling, health and community services, and adult education, training and employment support in ways that meet the needs and help fulfil the aspirations of the community.

The approach has the following principles:

- The early years set the foundations for lifelong learning, health and wellbeing – so Our Place schools have early learning, playgroups, child health and parenting support on site.
- Education is a key ingredient in children's success – so school principals are supported to create teaching and learning environments that ensure each child receives the support they need to achieve and thrive.
- Parent education and employment can change intergenerational disadvantage – so Our Place provides formal and informal learning opportunities for parents, with links to employment pathways.
- Families in disadvantaged communities often experience challenging life circumstances – so Our Place makes it easier to access effective support services.
- Participation in sport, volunteering and community activities creates belonging and pride for children and families – so Our Place creates opportunities to be involved, join a team, volunteer and contribute.

Collaboration and partnerships are key to successful place-based initiatives – so Our Place provides a team of skilled people, shared space and agile governance, the most important resources for effective implementation. Experience has informed the development of a model for establishing Our Place on school sites, built around five key elements that make a difference to the educational outcomes for children in disadvantaged communities:

1. High quality early learning
2. High quality schooling
3. Wraparound health and wellbeing services
4. Adult education and employment

5. Engagement and enrichment for children and families

Another example of integration across private, voluntary and public sectors can be seen in the Netherlands. In a recent doctoral dissertation linked to ISOTIS (Van der Werf, 2020; see also Leseman & Slot, 2020; Van der Werf et al., 2020), the hybridity of Dutch early childhood education and care (ECEC) system was examined from an organisational-sociological and public administration perspective. The Dutch ECEC system used to consist of two main types of provision, full-day childcare to support parents in combining work and care, and half-day playgroups, later turned into pre-kindergarten programs. These services were, until the 1990s, mainly provided by municipal welfare organizations (e.g. playgroups) and not-for-profit local providers and charities e.g. daycare). To meet the rapidly growing demand for childcare, the childcare market was privatized in 2005 with a new Childcare Act. As part of this integration, all types of provision were entitled to implement the national educational equity policy and thus could apply for extra subsidy if meeting specified criteria. After these reforms, a single, universally accessible, but hybrid system with multiple functions was created, with commercial as well as public goals, and with incentives to reach out to children from disadvantaged families.

In two studies, Mintzberg's (1983) organizational configurations theory was used to examine how ECEC organizations adapted to the hybrid Dutch ECEC system. Characteristics of ECEC organizations such as legal form, profit goal, centre size, type of leadership, professional development, client-centeredness, diversity policy, social mission, networking with other organizations, and other characteristics, were used to identify differing types of organizations. Three configurations of organizational characteristics were identified:
1. traditional not-for-profit, professional-bureaucratic organisations
2. large multi-centre divisionalized for-profit organisations, and
3. engaged mixed for-profit/not-for-profit professional organizations

One third of all organizations exemplified a new organizational configuration, which combined characteristics of both market-driven, professional-bureaucratic and missionary organizations in Mintzberg's terminology. The social-emancipatory mission, with active outreach to disadvantaged parents and embeddedness in local networks with other services, i.e. inter-agency working, was the distinguishing characteristic. This type of inter-agency working was found to be culturally inclusive, serving large proportions of low SES, immigrant and language-minority children, while providing high quality services.

The decisive 'pull factors' for type 3 organizations appear to have been twofold:
1. the opportunity to work as a 'social entrepreneur', with flexibility and client-centeredness; and
2. the local equity policy providing extra subsidy to those that commit to the goals of the equity policy (Van der Werf et al., 2020).

Thus, the fragmented ECEC system in the Netherlands developed into a universally accessible system. The presence of incentives to reach-out to the disadvantaged, and to provide them with high quality services facilitated the emergence of ECEC organizations that are committed to policy goals of equity, culturally inclusive climate and high quality, and they serve large numbers of disadvantaged children. Paradoxically as it may seem, value-based targeted equity policy within a hybrid ECEC system seems to work as an effective regulator to ensure that compensatory extra quality is provided to those who need it most.

Summary of views of professionals
Overall, many of the professionals responding during interviews, either as part of WP6 case studies or in the WP5 survey to represent the current state in the WP2 locations of the ISOTIS parent interviews, expressed positive thoughts about inter-agency working. An understanding was present that some effort was required to establish relationships between agencies and that support (both financial and legislative) from the state level in combination with local, bottom-up input, was required. Where there

were differences in the relative importance of facilitators, only the successful case studies noted the importance of leadership suggesting that the strong leadership may have been one of the reasons why these particular services were successful, but that this style of leading was not commonplace. For some this may come naturally but there may be a need for more training to develop leadership skills that can encompass a range of different agencies and professionals. The staffing requirements that are necessary for inter-agency working are likely to require some different skills and difficulties in staff recruitment were highlighted by the service providers and coordinators. They may have been more aware of efforts to recruit staff to positions that might differ from their previous experiences.

Funding concerns were viewed as the uppermost barrier. This is related to the fact that inter-agency collaborative projects are often innovations, or based on ideas promoted by a particular political policy, which could change following local or national elections. Corporations within communities could play a role to provide some 'safety-net' funding to innovative projects as they are often the most likely to be at risk of funding uncertainty. It is notable that another of the most frequent barriers specified by service providers and coordinators was staff turnover, which can be high when staff know that funding may be cut, meaning that their ongoing employment is vulnerable. Thus, bottom-up support from the local authority combined with support from local businesses can help to ameliorate this concern. In addition, if the staff team is to be well prepared to work closely with other agencies there is likely to be some training required to develop an awareness of the work of other agencies, so keeping a team together is important. It was less often mentioned by successful case studies, many of whom were already providing excellent staff development, but there was awareness that this was an issue in several cases.

In relation to gaining more information about the way that increased inter-agency working might impact on children and families to reduce inequality, there is a need for more investment in thorough evaluation of ongoing projects, to determine if they make a difference. Thus far there are suggestions that this might be the case, such as from some of the successful case studies, but more widespread research evidence is needed. The extent of new evidence concerning inter-agency working is likely to ebb and flow as central governments change in their political leadership and their focus on policy for children and families, particularly the most disadvantaged. However, any innovations should be encouraged to incorporate evaluation to build up the evidence base.   What has been promoted for many decades as a good idea still lacks substantial empirical support.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Macro level: Government

- All the countries studied integrate the principles of subsidiarity and proximity in their policy national legislation. However, more recognition needs to be given to local governance.
- Bottom-up solutions are only feasible when national states permit decentralized initiative, experimentation and local arrangements matching territorial resources and people's needs.
- Keep an awareness that decentralization can lead to fragmentation of the welfare state, which could lead to inequalities between localities, especially in rural areas. So good monitoring of service provision and quality is required.
- National government agencies need to provide top-down support, both political and organizational, ensuring sustained funding and continuity of human resources, and appropriate time and task allocation.
- Local areas need to develop or strengthen a bottom-up approach to facilitate the relevance of services, according to the local needs.
- Support discourse about prevention rather than reparation of risk. This can be reinforced by talking about social policies as a social investment for a society.
- Reinforce the expertise of professionals and institutions involved in coordinating across national and sub-national levels of government in relation to understanding ways to facilitate inter-agency working. This will require developing effective professional development

materials to enable shared understanding of the issues that pertain to closer inter-agency working.
- Develop a cohesive national salary and training structures and comparable working conditions that allow professionals to move between agencies and to develop skills. This will help to address staff turnover as a barrier to successful inter agency working, related in part to the low pay and poor promotional and professional development opportunities for many working in ECEC and family support.
- Local and national governments should consider employing experts in inter-agency working from outside traditional recruitment sources.
- Cross-cutting agencies can avoid the barriers to inter-agency working that currently exist within traditional government departments dealing with health, education, social services, family support etc.

Exo Level: Organizations and professionals
- Include concepts around inter-agency working in training for new professionals working in education, ECEC, social work, health visiting and family support.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities and level of autonomy of different social actors (public, private and non-profit organizations) defining a quality framework to assure equivalent expertise, professionalism and good governance across all agencies and professional groups.
- Develop an organizational culture to promote partnerships and networking.
- Develop integrated multi-agency teams that combine the skills necessary to address multifaceted costumer profiles.
- Invest in horizontal governance with coordinating entities to reduce bureaucracy, enabling faster and tailored solutions for the individual needs
- Increase the provision of support from multiple agencies in centres, providing a range of services such as child care, ECEC, family support, language support and education.
- Promote closer working between law enforcement and agencies working with children and families such as ECEC, education and social work since immigrant families frequently have some involvement with law enforcement in relation to their status.
- Promote a more value drive social mission, often accomplished by inter-agency work that includes NGOs, who may have limited capacity but are likely to be aware of the needs of the local community, in conjunction with a system in place to monitor the quality of services provided by NGOs.
- Promote inter-sectoral communication using digital platforms, email, and other technology since communication cannot always be face to face. This will also reduce the time required to participate in joint meetings, and the resources used to enable face to face meetings between agencies.
- Facilitate the development of a shared comprehensive data system about children and families that can be shared while also complying with increasingly rigorous data protection regulations.
- Re-examine the European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) as they were identified as a reason why agencies cannot effectively share information about children or families.
- Time is needed for innovation. Investment should be made to allow professionals to meet and plan effectively.

Micro level: Parents and families
- Engage parents and families through active outreach to participate in the identification of needs, finding joint solutions and to take part in discussing evaluation findings.
- Involve families more in giving feedback about the utility of the available services so that they can be made more relevant and appropriate. Mechanisms are required so that they can be heard.

FINAL POINTS

- Traditional centralized implementation of social policy is not always working. Social policy needs to be re-interpreted at local and state level.

- Discourse around inequalities should be centred on prevention rather than intervention.

- There is limited evidence about the impact of high-quality inter-agency working. This should be developed – and funded.

- One caveat is that inter-agency working will not provide all the answers for all disadvantaged children or families. It is one of a range of policies that will be necessary to reduce inequalities.

- The second caveat – the ideas presented are based on the ISOTIS localities, parent groups and countries and may not be representative of or suitable for other European countries.

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APPENDIX

Details used to create country index (country identities anonymized)

Country A

- National statutory framework for inter-agency collaboration, **included in the constitution**, legislation should be based on: *"…respect for freedom and justice, cooperation of authorities, social dialogue and on the principle of subsidiarity, strengthening the rights of citizens and their communities."*

- **Strong decentralisation of budgets and responsibilities** to the municipal level, principle of subsidiarity.

- **Large role for NGOs**, including in particular traditional church-related charity organizations that work with public subsidies for the poor.

- City-wide networks **coordinated by the municipality**, universal access, but progressively more intensive support for low-income families.

Country B

- Decentralized since 2000, 'outsourcing' is legally permitted, but a clear national framework to anchor local inter-agency collaboration is lacking – but also no obstacles → policy lacuna offers **space for local governments**.

- Networks of support activities and dominant educational sector.

- **Important role of NGOs and non-profit idealistic organizations** (e.g., after-school tutoring for Roma children) – seen as 'disruptive interventions'.

- Ideological struggles between public education system and NGOs, in particular regarding inclusion and maintenance of heritage language and culture.

Country C

- Partial decentralization and the principle of the **subsidiarity**, which leads to a degree of autonomy at the local level.

- National guidelines for intercultural education and collaboration between education and other sectors (aim: integrated services around education).

- Strong large urban metropoles, different solutions:

    - Site 1: municipality as coordinator of a network of mainly public services, education as the pivot.

    - Site 2: non-profit foundation is coordinator of public, but especially non-profit NGOs, for-profit organizations, charities and volunteers.

- Both: bottom-up with stakeholder involvement.

Country D

- Strong tradition of inter-agency work supported by national legislative frameworks, with high ambitions such as joint training and accreditation of staff.

    - Severe budget cuts and the new conservative administration have killed the **ambitions**.

- Partly centralized (health care, child protection, youth care) and partly decentralized (education, social work, family support).

- Local governments **can but don't have to** strive for collaboration.

"It was noted by several respondents that the changes in national policy had reduced the likelihood of inter-agency working.

Country E

- National legislation has to be translated into federal legislation and then passed through to the local level; emphasis on subsidiarity principle.

    - National frames for child protection and family support, and recently ECEC.

    - Partly central, partly decentral system, with **heterogeneous local networks** where, next to semi-public provision (primary education), many private organizations, like NGOs and charities, are involved.

- There are local networks, formally as well as informally, constituting a heterogeneous hybrid system, involvement of several levels of governance, but a dominant sector or organization, or **stronger local governance is needed**.

"Inter-agency networks are often not planned and coordinated systematically with a long-term perspective, but depend strongly on personal contacts, so that if one person leaves, parts or all of the network breaks off."

Country F

- Strongly decentralized, but at the same time **sectorally strongly segregated** (different funding strategies, different job requirements and salaries, tendency to hyper-specialisation).

- **Contradictory orientations**: education-social mobility *vs*. care-cure, supply- *vs*. demand-orientation.
- Networks with Public Youth Health Care as pivot for 0- to 4-year-olds and Education as pivot for 4- to 18-year-olds.
- Local municipality as 'director' but without power (because of sectoral segregation).

- Universal-progressive system, partly supply-oriented (large outreach) and partly demand-oriented (smaller, more selective outreach). Small, but growing role for NGOs, for-profit sector and activist organizations.

Country G

- Traditionally centralistic and segregated by sector and region (with vertical line-management), but since a few years in **transition to a decentralized system** with governance at the municipal level.

- Inter-agency collaboration is starting.

- Growing role for NGOs and for private (for-profit) organizations in education, health care and social work.

- Two large and strong urban municipalities, but yet **without a clear strategy** and mission.

"No respondent identifies in a clear and consistent way any impacts in their area of the new partnerships. (…) Informality and adaptivity tend to characterize the functioning of partnerships with the private or non-governmental sector."

Country H

- Highly centralized (early) education system; education system under hierarchical national control.

    - Focus on national core values and the principle of secularism

    - Professionals have highest scores on assimilationist beliefs and lowest on implementing multicultural practices in their work.

High degree of sectoral segregation (education, culture sector, health care, social work) and limited role of NGOs (based on survey among professionals

Country I

- The ECEC system is decentralized and universal (supply driven), but other sectors are regionally or nationally governed, in particular Child Protection and Child Welfare are **hybrid** in this regard.

- Universal-progressive support services, but **demand-driven** – co-location of services in local 'Family centers' (in the heart of the city but not specifically in the neighborhoods where families in need are living).

- No role for NGOs, dominant **'clinical' focus** on early detection of developmental disorders, family problems, and child abuse and neglect.

"… it is about parents wanting to find the service in the municipality that is able to help them, regardless of whether that service is called child welfare or low-threshold service (…)"

Country J

- **Strongly centralistic and sector-wise segregated**.

- No (subsidized) role for NGOs, volunteering activities or charities.

- Local networks of public – bureaucratic - services for, on the one hand, children in extreme poverty and, on the other hand, elderly in extreme poverty **('targeted' instead of 'universal').**

- Inter-agency collaboration is rare.

"The centralized system of public administration has contributed to the development of feeble local government institutions."

"The belief in joint action is not common place among institutions and organizations."

ISOTIS

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT TO TACKLE INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY