

国際的観点から見た就学前教育

The Issue of Preschool Education from an International Perspective

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ドイツの就学前教育, フレーベル幼稚園, 保護者先導
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ABSTRACT

本稿は、「女性の社会進出」と「海外からの労働者の移入」によって変化しつつあるドイツの就学前教育の現状を、三鷹とドイツのデュイスバーグで働く女性として子育てをしてきた筆者の経験を踏まえて報告するものである。

19世紀半ば、フレデリック・フレーベルが旧東ドイツに設立した幼稚園は、単に「就学前の児童をケアする」という役割だけでなく、隣接する地域社会の発展に寄与するという面も持ち合わせた地域社会型施設であった。フレーベルにとって幼稚園とは、子供の個性の育成の場であるとともに、地域社会生活の訓練の場としての意味合いも大きかったのである。こうしたフレーベルの教育理念は現在の就学前教育にも受け継がれているが、社会が変容するにつれ、地域社会と幼稚園との関わりは次第に希薄になっていった。

1980～90年以降、就業形態の変化や女性の社会進出などによって社会体制が大きく変化した。それにもかかわらず幼稚園の形態は以前と同様で、保護者の要望に沿わないことから、現状に即した方向への改善を望む声が高まりつつある。その様な状況の中で現れたのが、「保護者先導」という独特な形態の幼稚園である。地域社会の保護者達によって構成・運営されるこの幼稚園では、保護者の事情に応じて柔軟な受け入れができるように考慮されるなど、地域との関係を重視するフレーベルの理念が活かされている。

また、人口の約9%を移民が占めるドイツでは、外国人児童とその家族の幼稚園への受け入れも課題となっている。移民の増加を考えると、幼稚園はいまや社会的調和の中核をなす。しかしながら、行政側の受け入れ体制は依然として整っていない。文化的な機関としての幼稚園を通じて、外国人児童とその家族、そして地域内のすべての子供を受け入れ、子供がよりよく成長できるような環境と、平等に見なされるような空間を創り出すことが求められている。

I. Introduction

Kindergarten Problems and Issues, considered from an international and perspective, form the focus of my talk. Perhaps more than any other community organization, kindergartens are affected by two major developments in post-industrial economies: the increasing labor force participation of women and the increasing migration of working people. From an international perspective I will highlight the German situation for two reasons: first, the concept Kindergarten originates in Germany, and secondly, I live and work in Germany, and am presently most familiar with problems and issues faced by German Kindergartens.

Until April of last year, I lived, for eight years, here on the ICU campus, in Mitaka-shi. My son was born in Tokyo in April 1997, and from April 1998, he visited the Hachi-no-ko pre-Kindergarten group in Osawa while I continued my working life as a university professor. As a working mother of a pre-school age child, and as such in two foreign "host" countries, I will attempt to blend personal, international and scientific perspective on the issues and problems faced by Kindergartens today.

I begin with a look back in time, to the concept and development of the Kindergarten in Germany.

II. A Brief History of the Fröbelian Kindergarten in Germany

In 1840, 160 years ago, Friedrich Fröbel opened the first Kindergarten on a clearing above the town church in a village in

Thüringen, former East Germany. The 1840s were a time of democratic movements, and the Kindergarten concept was influenced by enlightenment ideas of liberty, rationality and equality. These ideas were suppressed with soon banned as a dangerous political organization. The ban on the Kindergarten was enacted in Prussia in 1851. Fröbel died in 1952.

What was Fröbel's idea of the Kindergarten? Garten is the German work for garden, and as the name implies the idea was to create an environment where young seedlings could grow and thrive. Every child has the potential to develop and thrive, as long as the right environmental conditions are present. Fröbel viewed each child as equally capable, and social cultivation as a natural process which only needed the correct environmental conditions. In its architectural form, the first Kindergarten established by Fröbel; was indeed a garden for children (Garten für Kinder).

The garden for children should be a place both for individual development and for the building of community. Fröbel emphasized this dual purpose, and I quote:

es muß aber eine doppelte Richtung oder Seite des Menschen ihre lebensvolle, lebendige Einheit und Einigung finden, nämlich die Richtung und Seite nach dem Besonderen, Einzelnen und Selbständigen und nach dem Allgemeinen, Einigen, Gemeinsamen. Dem ersten und der Ausbildung des Ersten entsprechen die besonderen Spielgärtchen der einzelnen Kinder, in welchem jedes Kinde und Kindchen verstattet ist (...) seine Infusionsgärtchen anzulegen und zu

bebauen, also eigenstes, innerstes, stilles, seelenvolles, ungestörtes Gemütsleben und dessen Ausbildung in sinniger Pflanzenpflege. Diese Kindergärten umgibt der allgemeine und allgemeine Garten. Alles gemeinsam in seinen Blüten und Früchten, wie in der Pflege und Arbeit, die er erfordert, eine echte res publica. Also tiefe Begründung der Achtung und Pflege des Gemeinwohles schon im zartesten Kingergemüte: Einigung der gemeinsamen Kräfte und Tätigkeit zu einem einigen, gemeinsamen Werke, im einigenden Gemüte und in sich vollendet...Jede Pflanze ist ein Glied Ganzes. (cited in Berger 1990, pp.11).

For Fröbel the Kindergarten was both a place of individual development and a place of community-building. For this reason, every Kindergarten should have both places where children could play individually and collectively, and where the members of the broader community — mothers and educators — could gather to govern the daily affairs of the garden for children. The Kindergarten was in no way meant to replace the family. In fact, it was to be a model for the family — every family should be a small Kindergarten. Moral education was also part of the pedagogical program of Fröbel's Kindergarten, but unlike the traditional religious and patriarchal organizations of mid-19th century German states, Fröbel believed in the absence of original sin, and the inherent ability of every child, regardless of status or class, to develop into a healthy and contributing citizen.

It was Fröbel's emphasis on the absence of original sin and the pro-equality thrust of his pedagogy which led to the banning of the

Kindergarten, 11 years after its establishment.

I must skip the rest of the history of Fröbel's kindergarten in Germany for time reasons. I wish to highlight several important legacies of this history for the development of the Kindergarten in Germany however. First, the Kindergarten was developed as a community institution, with community input and a responsibility vis a vis its surrounding community. Second, alongside individual growth and development, the Fröbel Kindergarten emphasized social learning and practice for community life. Fröbel's Kindergarten was not a disciplinary or protective institution, and it was not preparation for school. It was preparation for community and social life. Third, from its beginnings, the Kindergarten and pre-school education in general were understood as very important political instruments. For Fröbel it was a place to cultivate the common good. For his critics, it was a place to discipline and control the lower classes, for religious control, or for military socialization. In short, the Kindergarten was and is a very important social institution, and its meaning goes well beyond the care of young children.

III. Changes in Response to Women's Increasing Labor Force Participation

These legacies of the Kindergarten are present in contemporary Germany and have influenced early childhood education throughout the world. Since 1930, the term Kindergarten has been used to describe all forms of pre-school for children between the ages of 3 and 6. All German Kindergarten are state-registered, and this process requires that

they meet certain architectural standards and that they employ qualified educators on their staffs. Kindergarten are approved and licensed at the municipal or town level, and fall into three categories: publically run facilities, church-run facilities and other facilities. In the latter category are Waldorf Kindergarten and increasingly, Kindergarten run by parents' collectives. All Kindertartens must be licensed, and all receive public subsidies. Unlike schools, parents pay a fee for the use of Kindertartens, and the fee is based on a sliding income scale. This means that parents from all social backgrounds are equally likely to be found in public as well as confessional or other Kindergarten.

Acceptance into a Kindergarten is primarily based on one's place of residence. Since 1996, all children in Germany, regardless of citizenship and parent's work participation, have the right to a Kindergarten placement. Attendance remains voluntary however. During the late 90s, the number of children in Kindergarten has been sinking rapidly; a development explained by the declining birthrate. At the same time, the proportion of foreign children attending Kindergarten has increased from about one-fifth in the early 1990s, to nearly one-quarter in the late 1990s.

Table 1 Kindergarten population and % Non-German national children in Kindergarten

	1996 school year	1997 school year	1998 school year
Number of children in Kindergarten	82,400	75,700	69,200
Percent foreign children in Kindergarten	24.2	24.4	24.6

In Germany, the half-day Kindergarten and the split-day Kindergarten remain the dominant forms. In the half-day Kindergarten, children remain in the morning, and return home for the day at lunchtime. In the split-day Kindergarten, children go home for lunch, and return for several hours in the afternoon again. Both models assume that mothers (or fathers) are home preparing lunch (the major meal of the day in Germany).

With the increasing labor force participation of women in the 1980s and 1990s in Germany, new forms of Kindergarten service have developed. The most popular in many communities is the Kindergarten which remains open until 2 o'clock in the afternoon and serves lunch to the children. Part-time work is a popular work option for German women. The growing popularity of part-time work for German men, and new laws which will give every worker the right to work part-time on demand, promise to secure this Kindergarten form as the most popular one for fathers too, as they adjust their working hours to take more responsibility for family life.

In the 1990s, the increase in the number of full-time working women, and preferences for longer part-time hours (30 hours per week) have put pressures on local governments and other organizations running Kindergarten to make full-day service more widely available. In most cases, this means converting split-day Kindergarten into full-day Kindergarten by providing a lunch-time meal.

At present the demand for longer Kindergarten schedules is a major change facing German Kindertartens and their communities. In the German state of North Rhein Westfalia where I live, a concept of the

community-oriented Kindergarten has been developed which emphasizes the flexibility of opening hours and forms of early child care in response to parents' changing working schedules. The basic idea is that each Kindergarten should encompass three different forms of service:

- 1) Care for pre-Kindergarten children in age-homogeneous groups (for dual-working families, and for easing the transition to Kindergarten for 2 year olds),
- 2) Regular Kindergarten with different schedule options (half-day, short-day and full-day) and with mixed age groups of children between 3 and 6,
- 3) Care for school age children of working parents. (The latter because the elementary school day in Germany rarely lasts beyond 1:30 in the afternoon, causing a gap in the care of school-age children of working parents.)

The integration of all forms of pre-school child care into Kindergarten also would provide children with a degree of continuity as they go on from pre- to regular to post-Kindergarten, all within the same facility.

The Kindergarten which my son now attends is struggling with the local city government to establish exactly such a facility. Because of the declining population of 3-to 6 year olds, (the birth rate is declining in Germany), the local city has a strong interest in converting a number of Kindergarten slots into slots for younger children. Despite the growing demand of dual-earner couples for expanding slots for 1 and 2 year olds, the local city is refusing at present to undertake more than a gradual conversion of Kindergarten slots into young child care slots. This situation is push-

ing parents into quasi-illegal practices, such as hiring undocumented home childcare personnel, or forming so-called "play groups" which actually engage in childcare. Before my child became 3, and eligible for entering Kindergarten, I joined a so-called "play group." In this group, my child received care from 8:30 am until 1:30 in the afternoon, including a warm lunch. I turned to this option only after exhausting all other possible options, including registering for one of the very few publically available slots for children under 3, and searching for a home care worker.

I expect the same trouble in locating after-school care in three years when my son begins elementary school. In my local community, the longest school day is until 1:30 in the afternoon, almost three hours less than Kindergarten. To meet the need of working parents like myself, my Kindergarten hopes to be allowed to expand itself from a regular, to a pre-and post-Kindergarten facility as well. In case negotiations with the local government do not succeed, I have already registered my son with another after-school-care facility (Hort), three years prior to needing it.

IV. Parental Participation in Kindergartens

Weak local community responsiveness to the changing needs of dual-earner families, as well as the wish of many parents to become more actively involved in the daily affairs of their children's Kindergarten, have made parental participation an important community issue in Germany. In the early 1990s, in many local communities, parents' councils (Elternräte) were formed to lobby for

increased codetermination and participation rights of parents in Kindergarten. The movement argued that the regulations and forms of Kindergarten available in Germany were no longer in line with the needs of parents. Reforms of the regulations in the 1990s included for the following provision: “comprehensive forms of parental participation are possible and should be strived for.” The law fell far short of the demands of Elternräte for full participation rights.

The main model of parental participation today is found in a particular form of Kindergarten in Germany: the parent’s initiative (Elterninitiativ). These are Kindertagesstätten which are organized and managed by parents in a local community. As long as a local government recognizes the need for further Kindergarten space, and the facility meets the regulation, Elterninitiativ may also receive a license and become eligible for government subsidies. I am presently part of a parent’s initiative in my local community. We pay our monthly fee to the city, and a small additional fee to cover extra personnel and meal services directly to the Kindergarten. We hire the educators who work in the Kindergarten, and in monthly meetings together with all parents and staff, co-manage all organizational and pedagogical matters.

As a newcomer to my German community, joining the Elterninitiative meant my family was immediately integrated into a range of regular activities with fifteen sets of other parents of Kindergarten age children, all of whom live and work in my local area. This is the only full-day, full-service Kindergarten in my community. My local government has not fully recognized the need for establishing and expanding more such Kindergarten facil-

ities.

The demand for increased parental participation is thus also directed at the governmental level, to make the needs of parents better known. Parent’s demands for more flexible and comprehensive pre-Kindergarten, post-Kindergarten, and a mix of regular Kindergarten options for children and families are increasing in Germany.

V. The Integration of Kindertagesstätten into the Local Community

An increasing demand for participation rights in Kindertagesstätten and the Elterninitiativ alternative cover one dimension of the relationship between Kindertagesstätten and the local community in Germany. In the 1990s, with the development of the “right to a Kindergarten” placement, more and more attention has focused on the Kindergarten as a community organization. In a state-level workshop held in North Rhine Westphalia 1998, where parents, educators and city and state officials gathered to discuss the future of Kindertagesstätten, a proposal was made for a “neighborhood oriented” Kindergarten. Ideally, a Kindergarten should be located within walking distance from home, so that children can develop a connection to and identify with their neighborhood. Walking distance also facilitates the relationship between parents, their children, and members of the “walking distance” community.

Moreover, the viewpoint is that Kindertagesstätten should become public and open spaces, welcoming both their own grown children as well as adult members of the community. In one of the proposals made at the 1998 North

Rhein Westfalia workshop on the issue, Kindergartens were urged to open their spaces after hours for a range of community activities, such as, music or sport classes for children, adult and continuing education, community meetings and meetings of outside associations with members in the community, family gatherings, etc. In the Elterninitiative I belong to in Germany, all parents receive keys to the facility, and are welcome to use the space, after an informal application, in off-hours and on the weekend. A number of parents use the facilities for their children's birthday parties, for example.

In my experience at Hachi-no-ko in Mitaka, such an open community function was also nurtured. The neighboring restaurant, I-no-koto, was a gathering place for parents as well as the community at large. The restaurant and other spaces were also open for NGO meetings. A number of my university colleagues had been to Hachi-no-ko facilities for lunch and NGO meetings. Hachi-no-ko is a local model of an open-community Kindergarten, more developed than the German efforts with which I have become acquainted.

Turning back to Germany ideas about the role and nature of Kindergartens returned in the 1970s to aspects of the original Fröbelian emphases on democracy, and social learning through play. A popular history of the Fröbelian idea published in 1990, the 150th anniversary of the Kindergarten, Quotes Schiller:

Der Mensch ist da Mensch, wo er spielt.
Hoher (und tiefer) Sinn liegt in kind'schem Spiel.

(cited by Berger, 1990, p.30)

(Loose translations: the place of play is the

place of being human / Higher and deeper meaning lies in children's play)

The 1970s were also a time of criticizing the Fröbelian Kindergarten. with criticisms based primarily on new research about child development, and centering on the tendency of Fröbel's play techniques under-challenge the developmental potential of pre-school children. Nonetheless, the connection between Kindergarten life and community life and the valuing of social learning taking place in Kindergartens were seen as positive aspects of Fröbel's legacy, making Kindergartens a favored alternative to family-based upbringing (including for those children who did not "need" to go to Kindergarten because their mothers were devoted to family and household care.) New pre-school pedagogy, emphasizing social learning, mixed age groups, parental involvement, non-authoritarian relations between children and their teachers, and architectural designs which create Kindergarten space as living spaces, are now generalized qualities of German Kindergartens.

Germany, since the 1970s, has become an immigration country. This change, alongside the increasing labor force participation of women, has the most impact on the relationship between Kindergartens and their communities. As we have already seen, nearly a quarter of all Kindergarten children are non-German nationals. Of the 600,000 foreign children aged 6 and under, 87% were born in Germany. At present, 100,000 newborns yearly, or 13% of all new borns are non-German nationals (from January 2000 under a new law, all children born in Germany receive German citizenship). 9% of the total German population is non-German.

VI. Changes in Response to Labor Migration and Immigration

The integration of foreign children and their families into the German Kindergarten landscape has undergone two major lines of development. These two lines can be described as “bi-cultural” and “multi-cultural” integration efforts.

In the first wave of efforts aimed at integrating foreign migrants, attempts were made to offer bi-cultural Kindergarten experience. Ideally, Kindertartens would include educators with the same cultural and language backgrounds as the students they accepted. This strategy was informed by the belief that many foreigners were likely someday to return to their home countries, meaning their children would need to develop lingual and social competence in both the German and their own home cultures. Bi-cultural Kindertartens are considered today to have been a failure for a number of reasons. First of all, what actually took place in bi-cultural Kindertartens was often the opposite of integration — the segmentation of children into German and foreign sub-groups. Second, little attention was given to the necessity for multi-cultural learning on the part of German children. Foreign children needed to learn about Germany, but German children did not need to bother with foreign cultures. Though perhaps unintended, this was the underlying message of the bi-cultural model. Third, quite a growing population of “guest-worker” or migrant worker children went on to German schools and German jobs, never to return to their home countries, thus counter-ing one of the main assumptions of the bi-cultural model — the assumption that guest

workers would eventually go home.

Germany is now in the phase of developing a multi-cultural model of social integration in Kindertartens. Non-German teachers and bilingual language competence remains an important issue in recruiting Kindergarten educators, especially in communities where foreign populations are concentrated. The goal of multi-cultural Kindergarten programs however, emphasize the cultural learning of young German children as much as striving for the integration of foreign children and their parents. Multi-cultural programs include attempts to celebrate the festivals of all cultures present in the Kindergarten , and to develop cross-cultural knowledge and competencies.

Evaluations of these programs at present point to problems in involving and integration foreign parents into Kindergarten activities, sometimes due to language difficulties, but also due to the dominance of German styles of interacting, community participation and beliefs about childrearing and children’s educational and nutritional needs. It remains the case that foreign parents and children are forced to become more tolerant of German practices, than are German parents and children of foreign manners. Current reforms point to the need for Kindertartens to network with other community and local institutions assisting and supporting foreigners and their families, Kindertartens are just beginning to realize what it means to develop a multi-cultural sensibility on the part of German children and their parents. A wave of violence against foreigners in Germany has awakened a need for more tolerance and cultural learning in Germany, but developments remain at an early stage.

Based on my personal experiences in Mitaka and Duisburg, the entry of my son into Kindergarten was at once my own entry into community life in a foreign land. Through my child, I was able to develop my first contacts to my local community, and beyond my work mates and immediate neighbors, my local community Kindergarten was my most important social contact.

While attending Japanese day-care, my son became the subject of a study by ICU's Suzanne Quey of tri-lingual development in early children. Professor Quey's research results show beyond a doubt, that my son's early Japanese language and social competence were greatly shaped by his communication with the other Japanese children in his day care center. The experience has now been repeated in Germany, where daily Kindergarten life has facilitated my son's German language and social competence. For my son, and for us, his parents, the local Kindergarten has literally been the center of our social integration in the foreign communities where we have lived. In both settings, we also experienced a willingness on the part of educators and parents to engage in multicultural learning, but concrete programs in this direction were generally missing.

My own experience is shaped by the fact that I am a privileged foreigner in the countries I have lived. It is easier for Germans to accept an American than to accept a Turk. It is easier for Japanese to accept an American than to accept a Thai. Certainly I enjoy a degree of cultural capital not enjoyed by the majority of labor migrants or foreign working women in Japan and Germany. The real challenge today of integrating the local community through Kindergartens in cultural terms is not unlike Fröbel's mid-19th century attempt

to bring together children, regardless of class or status. Again, the challenge is to create a space where all children are seen as equals and an environment where all children in a community can develop and thrive, this time regardless of national origin. I know from my experience, that this modest and meaningful step will likewise support the public and working roles of mothers and fathers, and the integration of foreign residents into their local communities.

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