Improving accessibility of early child care in Brussels

The impact of policy measures and coaching on the availability and accessibility of early child care

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Introduction

ECEC IN BELGIUM
0-3 y = child care => welfare
3-6 y = preschool => education

BRUSSELS
Dutch-speaking => authorization Kind en Gezin
French-speaking => => authorization ONE

CHILDCARE
authorized
subsidised child care
⇒ income-related
⇒ organised by non-profit, government, municipality or private partners
Availability of child care

**BRUSSELS**

**TOTAL CHILD CARE COVERAGE = 33%**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opvangstructuren voor kinderen</th>
<th>Aantal plaatsen</th>
<th>Aantal vestigingen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per communautaire instelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONE</td>
<td>8.627</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind en Gezin</td>
<td>7.110</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONE en Kind en Gezin</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per opvangtype</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectief</td>
<td>15.297</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiaal</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totaal</td>
<td>15.917</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bronnen: Kind en Gezin, ONE, berekeningen BISA

**DUTCH-SPEAKING CHILD CARE IN BRUSSELS**

**INCREASE IN SUBSIDISED CHILD CARE PLACES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vrije</td>
<td>1390</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO!</td>
<td>889</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemeentelijk</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zelfstandige inkomensgerelateerde kinderdagverblijven</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diensten voor onthaalouders</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>totaal</strong></td>
<td><strong>2852</strong></td>
<td><strong>3684</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ 832 places with income related contribution
83 =>100 centres
result of a joint effort
Studies on the availability and accessibility of child care in Brussels
University Ghent
(Michel Vandenbroeck)

2005
non-intentional exclusion of
- parents with low levels of education
- ethnic minority parents
- single parents
due to priority to siblings, to those who apply first and to working parents

2010
while level of availability remained
centre directors’ awareness of social priority criteria had changed
resulting in a significant increase in the enrolment of children from vulnerable families (doubled!)
Policy measures: top-down & bottom-up strategy

FLEMISH COMMUNITY (Dutch-speaking)
(1) enlargement of subsidised child care
(2) 20% of capacity of subsidised centres should be reserved for vulnerable families

VGC (BRUSSELS)
(1) investments on infrastructure for enlargement/new centres
(2) priority on expansion for centres that developed a policy of equal access
(3) comprehensive support programme for centre directors
  participation = indicator of equal access policy
Support programme
Centre for Innovation in the Early Years (VBJK)

AIM
- to create a platform on accessibility for centre directors

MEETINGS
- plans for accessibility
- exchange of good practices
- meeting social workers
- introduction for new directors
- courses on diversity for teams

2007: all directors invited, 29 take part
2008: 52 take part
2010: 70 take part
2014: 91 out of 100 centres take part
Accessibility & enrolment = a shared responsibility
Decree on child care (2012)

- Central enrolment registration

- Collaboration between local child care centres

- Priority criteria for subsidised child care centres
  - absolute priority for work
  - 20% priority for single parents, families with low-income, host families, siblings
  - or 30% priority for vulnerable families (combination of low income, single-parent, health or care issues, social or pedagogical issues)
  - Brussels: 55% priority for Dutch speaking parents
Towards central enrolment registration in Brussels

2009-2011 experiment and nota on ‘centralized’ enrolment

2012 non-profit organisation founded

2013 development on-line system for central enrolment registration

April 2014 test-run started in 22 child care centres

December 2014 roll-out & launch website
On-line system: front-end
Base = generally shared terms

- allocation by the centres
  7 months before first day of attendance
- child care centres = first line
  contact point for off-line registration
- procedure for urgent applications
Win - win - win

parents
- simplified research & registration
- equal opportunities
- freedom of choice
- coordinated answers

childcare centers
- shared responsibility
- shared criteria & terminology
- mixed population
- planning tool

authorities
- information on supply and demand
- planning of policy measures (investment in extra places, support programs...)
- facilitated access to target audiences (social policy)
Conclusions & challenges

CONCLUSIONS

• more accessible and social child care
• top-down approach combined with bottom-up works but takes time and is an on-going process
• central enrolment registration procedures are useful but will not solve problems of availability

CHALLENGES

• changes in terms, criteria and procedures put high pressure on child care directors so support is necessary
• evaluation by parents and social workers on accessibility (particularly for vulnerable families)