



## Brief

# National Education for Leaders in Early Childhood Education – An Arena for Qualification, Socialization, and Subjectification

Siri Sollied Madsen<sup>1\*</sup>, Hanne Merete Hestvik Kleiven<sup>2</sup>, Sissel Mørreaunet<sup>2</sup>,  
Yngve Antonsen<sup>1</sup> and Betty Steinsvik<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Norway

<sup>2</sup>Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

\*Contact corresponding author: Siri Sollied Madsen, e-mail: [Siri.s.madsen@uit.no](mailto:Siri.s.madsen@uit.no)

To strengthen leaders' competence in early childhood education in Norway, the government introduced a national initiative to educate staff with professional responsibility, administrative responsibility, and personnel responsibility in kindergartens (UiT, 2023). It has been communicated by the Ministry of Education and Research that all leaders in early childhood education should attend this program. Previous evaluation of the study program has shown that participants have been very satisfied and found it to be constructive for their occupational tasks and challenges. The education of leaders is structured through seven physical gatherings over three days, with tasks for the participant to conclude in between sessions over a period of three semesters. The program builds on the idea of border crossing as important for the participants learning outcome. This study qualitatively examines in which way border crossing between work and education contributes to qualification, socialization, and subjectification for leaders in early childhood education. The theoretical framework used in this article is Biesta's (2014) understanding of qualification, socialization, and subjectification as education's three main domains. The study is based on both quantitative and qualitative data and presents an analysis of survey results ( $n = 33$ ), and text analysis of exam papers from two cohorts at UiT The Arctic University of Norway ( $n = 38$ ). The results showed that the participants became more than professionally qualified, they were socialized into a role as a leader during the program. The participants developed subjectification in the form

of autonomy as leaders in relation to the other employees and they felt more equipped to handle tensions, challenges, and tasks associated with their position. The study shows the importance of education promoting socialization and subjectification through the combination of lectures, the crossing between contexts, discussions among peers, as well as workplace-based implementation of intermediate work. The learning outcome explained by the participants seems to be dependent on both the content of the program, and the structure of the program. Both having time for the process, relevant inputs, as well as a structure supporting relations among peers are found to be crucial for the participants development in relation to socialization and subjectification as leaders.

**Keywords:** *early childhood education; leader; national education for leaders; subjectification; qualification; socialization*