

Book Review

Book Authors: June O’Sullivan and Mona Sakr **Book Title:** Social Leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care: An Introduction **Year of Publication:** 2022 **Publisher:** Bloomsbury Publishing London, Great Britain MQI Printers **Book Pages:** 176 **ISBN:** 9781350212145 **Price:** £81.00 (hardcover)

Reviewer: Özge Karaevli, Ministry of National Education, Türkiye, Turkey

Social Leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care

This volume studies a novel model of leadership in early childhood education (ECEC) entitled “Social Leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care (SLECEC)”. O’Sullivan, CEO of the London Early Years Foundation, and Sakr, Senior Lecturer in Education and Early Childhood at Middlesex University London, UK, are the authors of the volume. They attempt to fulfill four aims. To begin, the authors clarify why they require a new model of ECEC leadership that emphasizes social purpose in leading. Next, the authors briefly outline the model of social leadership. Then, they discuss how the social leadership model emerged and how it has been processed over time. Lastly, O’Sullivan and Sakr present a review of the major chapters in this volume, which are structured around the six points of the SLECEC model.

This volume is founded on the idea that there is a need for a leadership paradigm that prioritizes social purpose. According to O’Sullivan and Sakr, whereas the social objective of ECEC is widely acknowledged and welcomed, the reality of the sector throughout the world is fragmentation, which is a barrier to properly understanding and implementing ECEC systematically and comprehensively across the globe. They also assert that the fragmentation of the ECEC sector in the UK, the authors' home country, is the outcome of the government's lack of planning and persistent under-investment, resulting in a mixed economy provider setup that serves people most vulnerable to disadvantage and poverty. In addition, the authors claim by referencing Mori’s (2020) research that due to a lack of knowledge among parents about the importance of the early years to a child's well-being and development, the destructive ECEC policies have gone unchecked for a long time. O’Sullivan and Sakr note that In the United Kingdom, ECEC is provided through a high ratio of private provision, as well as philanthropic, social business, community, and state-funded organizations. While some of these enterprises are able to create substantial profits that are controversially funneled to shareholders, the authors underline that many are financially insecure and struggle to make ends meet year after year. They also support their assertion by referencing a recent survey by the Early Years Alliance (2020) that found 25% of private nurseries in the UK were concerned about surviving a pandemic. That’s why; this volume argues that in a sector dominated by complexity, fragmentation and precarity, social purpose must be brought to the heart of ECEC.

The volume is organized so that each major chapter delves into one of the six components of ECEC social leadership. In the first chapter, the authors analyze the relationships between ECEC and social purpose, as well as the many forms of social purpose and what it means to advance ECEC via a commitment to social purpose in practice. O’Sullivan and Sakr define social leadership in ECEC as a leadership with a social purpose to establish an organizational culture and pedagogical approach that supports a fairer society for children and families, within the context of economic, social, and environmental sustainability and impact. The data in the second chapter reveals that pedagogies and pedagogical leadership are critical to developing an ECEC

that can truly contribute to a more equitable society. The authors discuss the components of a social pedagogy in this chapter, as well as how social leaders perform social pedagogies in their daily work. The third chapter presents what a culture of collaborative innovation looks and feels like, and through examples, reveals the difference that it can make to the work of organizations and their capacity to achieve their intended social purpose. The fourth chapter discusses why leadership development is so important for the future of ECEC and its social purpose and how social leaders show their commitment to leadership capacities of all professionals. The fifth chapter addresses powerful conversations that lead to change and outlines general principles that apply to many forms of these conversations, such as trust, empathy, risk-taking, and challenge. The authors argue in the sixth chapter that sustainability is a core element of SLECEC for preparing children to take on their duties and obligations as accountable global citizens. They advocate that solutions for a flourishing society necessitate a new leadership style that can develop a sustainable mentality that prioritizes economic, social, and environmental well-being.

The emergence of the social leadership model began with the authors' meetings in London Early Years Foundation (LEYF). For this volume, Sakr carried out eighteen interviews with apprentices and managers about the nature of leadership within LEYF. Discussing the findings of the interview, O'Sullivan and Sakr carried out fifteen interviews with leaders in ECEC around the world. These participant ECEC leaders were from Australia, Canada, Iceland, Ireland, England, Malaysia, Scotland, Turkey, and the United States. Analyzing the data, six components were identified to construct the social leadership model in ECEC. According to the authors, these are the qualities of leadership that social leaders focus on and that result in major change. O'Sullivan and Sakr stress that these components are 'drivers' in this sense since they are the locations at which social leaders exert pressure to have the greatest impact.

Finally, the audiences of the volume are ECEC leaders and prospective leaders. While readers will bring varied views and degrees of expertise to debates about leadership in ECEC and making sense of SLECEC, the authors argue that they are writing for individuals eager to reassess their organizational culture and pedagogical approach in ECEC settings.

Correspondence

Özge Karaevli, PhD
The Ministry of National Education
Türkiye, Turkey
Email: ozge.karaevli@gmail.com