



ORGANISATION MONDIALE POUR L'ÉDUCATION PRESCOLAIRE
WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL PARA LA EDUCACIÓN PREESCOLAR

ANNUAL REPORT 2007





WORLD PRESIDENT ANNUAL REPORT

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Introduction

As the World President, I had to carry out a lot of activities for OMEP, among them, the input of the scientific research, the research forum, the issue of newsletters, the OMEP web site, promotion of regional events as well as the one held in Mexico City.

Meeting of the Executive; Ghana

At the beginning of the year 2007, accepting an invitation of the Preparatory Committee of Ghana, and pointing out the efforts of the Regional Vice-president for Africa, we held our Executive Meeting in that country, and we also had the opportunity to participate in a seminar on “the right of the children to an education of quality”. A numerous delegation from other countries of the African continent also participated, especially from Nigeria, and I think that for the members of the executive this activity contributed to give us the strength to continue fighting to reach the objectives of OMEP. There is still a lot to do. We also have the pride that Ghana was accepted as a national Committee in the OMEP World Assembly.

The 50 years of Ghana Independence was celebrated and this is an example of how the accent is put between the present and future of their people.

World Congress; México

The development of the XXV OMEP World Congress, as well as the World Assembly could be carried out in an appropriate way respecting our constitution,

due to the effort and generosity of the Mexican Committee, represented by Aidé Dávila, accompanied by Amalia, Verónica and Ely.

American Organization of State, OAS

During the year 2007 we opened new participation spaces. One of them was at the OAS, where all the State members attended with their representatives (34) of the early childhood education. The subject was also the education from birth to three years, which consequently has been in the OMEP work program. We took that opportunity to distribute among all the attendants an explanatory document of the OMEP work with that age group. We were invited to that activity as a civil society organization.

Experts Workshop; University of Gothenburg, Sweden

OMEP was also invited by the University of Gothenburg to participate in a shop with experts from all over the world, on “The role of the early childhood education in a sustainable society”. Other OMEP members also attended; Chize Izumi (Japan); Abimbola Are (Nigeria).

Vital Didonet (Brazil) was also invited to this discussion so outstanding for the humankind future, I believe there are a lot of facts showing us that the early childhood education is going through a great moment and that our organization is getting more sense as a referent, with an accrued capital of 60 years long.



Fifth Ministers of Education Meeting, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

Another event to which I had the honour of being invited in representation of OMEP was the V Ministers of Education Meeting, held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. The subject was “The hemispheric commitment for the early childhood education” (27 countries attended).

Meeting of the Consultive Group on Early Childhood, Chile

The meeting of the Consultive group on early childhood was held in Santiago, Chile, and among the discussed topics there was the effect of the climate change and how we can ensure the right of the children to live in an inhabitable world.

An appropriate world for each child; United Nations, New York

And lastly, OMEP attended the special meeting of the United Nations where was revised the following up of the plan “An appropriate world for each child”, this was held in New York, on December 2007. At that opportunity I spoke as part of the panel organized by Nurper Ulkuer from UNICEF New York, together with Louise Zimanyi of the consulting group for the early childhood, Pia Rebello from Yale University, and Peter Laugham from the Van Leer Foundation.

Taking advantage of our stay in New York, we coordinated some actions with the UNICEF representative, manifesting the interest in developing actions in the African continent. Nurper also supported the finance of the program to help the victims of the tsunami in Asia. (In the year 2006-2007).

Secretary of the Organization; Universidad Central de Chile

The work of the secretary of this organization is an arduous one, which would have been impossible to carry out without the support of the Universidad Central, and certainly of the secretaries Ana María Labra and Soledad Donoso, as well as Flavia Livacic, for quite some time. My gratefulness for all of them for ever.

Acknowledgments

Finally, I want to thank everyone who gave me their support and strength to carry out this beautiful task of leading the organization for six years.

Ingrid Pramling was elected democratically to take over this position for three years, I am proud that an academic researcher well-known all over the world could continue with the work of OMEP.

“The early childhood education has found its seat, but there is still a lot to do”.

Thank you all and every one of you. Our challenge is to continue leading the issue of the early childhood all over the world

Santiago Chile, March, 2008



WORDS FROM THE REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT FOR AFRICA

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“Children are our future. What happens to children from the very earliest years affects their development and the development of our society and our world.”

Africa faces many obstacles in its effort to improve early childhood education especially in the rural areas, such as lack of resources, inequitable access to services, absence or insufficiency of mechanisms to ensure quality in training early childhood personnel. However, it is gratifying to note that African Governments are increasing their efforts to mobilize private, voluntary and community-based partners to promote and strengthen early childhood education. The determination to ensure child-survival through policies that promote child-health, immunization, and nutrition and child stimulation is still strongly in action.

OMEP activities in the African region

OMEP National Committees in the African Region have good collaboration with their Government officials, and UNICEF in the area of early childhood education.

The OMEP Egyptian committee published quarterly magazine for parents and educators of pre-school children. The members also organize talks and interviews on Radio and Television on programmes directed to the communities and families.

In *Nigeria, Egypt and Ghana*, some Universities and Colleges of Education run full term training courses for early childhood educators.

Some groups of people also engage in consultancy services in the training and re-

training of personnel for early childhood education.

Workshops and seminars are organized in countries like *Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Egypt, Republic of Congo, Mauritius and South Africa* for nursery educators on various topics such as: Children’s art as a tool for learning; Music as a tool for teaching and learning in the early childhood centre; Pre-reading and Number readiness; Preparation and Preservation of teaching aids; Making of toys from locally available materials; Use of educative toys and Didactic materials in the centre; Child’s rights and how to fulfil this rights in the early years of development; Child to Child approach in the learning process and development of young children.

- *Visitations:* As the Regional Vice president for Africa, I attended the conferences and workshops organized in Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia.
- I also visited Cotonou, Republic of Benin to establish an OMEP Preparatory Committee in that country.
- *Result of the visitations:* A van containing children’s books, toys, crayons, paintbrushes, paints, pencils, duplicating papers, etc. donated to OMEP Liberian National Committee was officially launched, it will be used as a Mobile Library.
- We are optimistic that improved attention to children in Africa through the efforts and policies of African Governments will be more intensified.

We pray that an end will be put to the political unrest and war situations in some of our African countries so that the children will be able to live in peace.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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Class work by the national committee

1. Elaboration of the organic frame of a Network of Teachers and Professionals of early childhood

During a tripartite meeting between the Ministry of Education, OMEP / RDC and UNICEF, an official report was made according to which the activities of early childhood in RDC are made in a unsystematic manner. For this reason, she asked OMEP / RDC to work out the organic frame (statutes, regulations, working schedule) of a network to be created in order to improve the situation.

2. Inventory of Associations and ONG of small childhood in RDC

OMEP / RDC undertook, at the request of the UNICEF / RDC, an inventory of Associations and ONG working in the field of early childhood in RDC. Because of lack of means to cover all territory of RDC, inventory concerned the city province of Kinshasa. At the end of this inventory, it takes out again that the city province of Kinshasa count twenty big Associations and ONG of early childhood

3. Official launching in the office of OMEP / RDC of the national Network of early childhood

The Ministry of State education, OMEP / RDC, with the help of the UNICEF / RDC, goes about things in launching of a network of small childhood denominated « Network of Teachers and professionals de la babies Enfance Congolaises » (REPPEC in acronym). This ceremony is undertaken in the office of OMEP / RDC, with the cooperation of the delegates of the government, of UNICEF, ONG and Associations, journalists, etc. The ceremony

was piloted by OMEP / RDC. A sample of small children were present at the ceremony. Three members of the OMEP / RDC were elected by the Assembly of ONG and Associations to the assemble in the management committee of Network. These are:

- Mr. CHARLES TSHIMANGA BAKANKANA, assistant secretary of OMEP / RDC, elected representative national Secretary of Network.
- MRS LÉONIE KUANGU KINKELA, national secretary of the OMEP, elected representative of the commissions Network.
- Mrs. GLADYS LUTETE, treasurer of the OMEP, elected representative of the national Treasurer of Network.
- Participation in Seminary Child to Child exchanges.

OMEP / RDC participated in the seminary of exchange of information on approach 'Child to Child' organized by Plan Awakening and Development of the Pre-schooler of the Ministry of State education in collaboration with the UNICEF / RDC.



EGYPT

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1. In the Field of Training

The following Kinds of training programmes were conducted during 2007:

Training of teachers and families of children with special needs especially those suffering from:

- Mental retardation.
- Learning difficulties.
- Deaf Children.
- Language and speech disorders.

Six Such training programmes were conducted during 2007, training about 40 teachers and 30 parents in each program.

Training of Graduates from the Psychology and Sociology departments who are not yet working both in the field of children with special needs and in the field of Early Education to help the get practical experience and jobs

- Ten such training programs were conducted during 2007 training about hundred graduates in each.

2. In the Field of Parental Guidance

A Large number of Parental Guidance programs were conducted to help parents Care, socialize and develop their young children from birth to school age. Guidance was done in group form and was conducted daily.

3. In the Field of Organizing Seminars and Symposia

A Number of Seminars and Symposia were arranged for all those interested and working in the area of Early childhood and early

Education as well as parents. These seminars and symposia cover the following topics:

- Standards for Quality in Early Education programmes.
- Standards of Quality in Early Education Organizations.
- Standards of Quality in the Qualification of Kindergarten Teachers.
- Child Abuse in Egypt.
- Female Abuse in the Arab Counties especially abuse of young girls.
- Child's Rights during Early years and how to fulfil these rights.

4. In the Field of Publication

The quarterly Magazine issued for parents and teachers of preschool children in 2001 is still published quartly and sent to all these institutions. This magazine covers all topics useful to parental and teacher guidance and re-education on how to care, educate, teach, socialize and develop preschool children.

5. Using Media

Many talks and interviews were carried out, by many of members of Egyptian. Committee of OMEP in the Egyptian Radio and T.V. Many of them were also guests in many of the programmes directed at the community and families for guiding them about, healthy parental practices and developing young children.

Many of these talks and interviews aimed at raising public awareness about early Education as well as about the different aspects and issues concerning children with special Needs.



GHANA

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At the national level the focus was on the implementation of the early childhood policy which has been approved by the government. Several new public early childhood centres have been established. In addition several new educators have been employed to fill the existing vacancies in the early childhood centres. What is very necessary now is the training of the newly recruited educators.

The activities of OMEP GHANA for 2007 mainly centred on its inauguration and the Annual Conference. The Annual Conference was held from 14th - 17th November 2007. The Africa Vice President and President of Liberia OMEP were in attendance.

The theme of the Conference was Children's right to quality education: Early Childhood Concerns in Ghana. Some of the topics discussed were: Training needs in the early childhood Sector, Children's art as a tool for learning, Music as a tool for teaching and learning in the early childhood centre with emphasis on Ghanaian game music. The theme paper was delivered by the UNICEF Programme Officer on Education. The Denmark President of OMEP delivered the paper on music.

The opening ceremony was delivered by the General Secretary of the Ghana National Association of Teachers; Irene Duncan Adanusa (Mrs).

The Inauguration of the OMEP Ghana Chapter was performed by the President of the OMEP Denmark.

It is envisaged that in 2008 OMEP GHANA will focus on the concept of the Toy Library. There have been initial discussions on this with the OMEP Denmark and it is hoped that one such libraries would be established in the only Children's hospital in Ghana in Accra.

Also we hope to organize a major in-service training for the members on the Children's Art as a tool for Teaching and learning in early childhood centres. This will be a follow-up of the discussions on the topic during the Annual Conference

Conclusions

OMEP GHANA has made a good start and it is hoped that the enthusiasm will continue.



LIBERIA

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With hearts filled with joy and thanksgiving, we extend our sincere thanks and appreciations to you.

We are very pleased and excited about this privilege and opportunity to serve and care for our children. As you may be aware, OMEP Liberia committee was established in 1999 to cater to the Educational needs of children. Since its establishment, OMEP-LIBERIA Committee has trained teachers, caregivers in displaced camps and refugee camps. OMEP works with Preschools, new birth to 8 year old, train teachers and make sure the learning environment is conducive for children. But the civil war left the country completely brain drained, the infrastructure ruined and OMEP too completely out of funds.



Liberia is now stable and stands in its rebuilding. Preschool education is a top priority. Now that peace has returned to our country we believe it is time to invest in the children for a sustainable development. To help re-build this war torn country, we must prioritize the children, who are the leaders of tomorrow.

We have a great task here in Liberia. There are children as old as fifteen years who have

never entered the classroom. There was no foundation. Many of the children living in the interior of Liberia have no access to education. They and their parents spent the rest of their times moving between the farms and the villages.

We count it a joy to work and develop our children. Our prayer and desire is that we may reach every child in Liberia. Our young children are the real issue. They are to be developed in such a way that the future, the real future that we all dream about would come about. The sustainability of any society lies in the young children. There can be no sustainability without a quality early childhood education.

2007 Activities

The first task we had at hand this year was to re-establish and re-organize OMEP-Liberia. An active board and administrative staff were put in place.



We assessed four counties with regard to Early Childhood Education. We realized that many of the towns were burnt down during the civil crisis. Many people have just returned from displaced and refugee camps and trying to re-establish their lives. Many of



the towns have no school and/or facilities for school.

OMEP-Liberia re-applied for accreditation to the Ministry of Education, Republic of Liberia. A personal letter has been sent to the Minister for approval. What we want is to take over the early Childhood Education in the country.



We secure a temporary office space in the Sinkor district of Monrovia.

Presently, Ghana has offered to assist in the training of Pre-school teachers for Liberia.

The Vice regional President for Africa should be visiting Liberia to help set up the mobile Library

OMEP-Liberia president is expected in the country December 29, 2007 from USA. She comes along with a team for a workshop for teachers. She has been trying to get materials for the Mobil library and a resources centre.

Conferences

OMEP-Liberia was represented at the regional conference in April 2007 hosted by the preparatory committee of OMEP-Ghana.

Sis. Hawa Kamara attended the conference held at Gothenburg University, Sweden, May 2-4, 2007 on the theme: Early Childhood Education for a Sustainable Development.

OMEP-Liberia was represented at World Assembly in Mexico by our president Malia Harris.

We also made a representation at the inauguration of OMEP-Ghana and conference in Accra, Ghana, November 14-19, 2007.

These conferences were of great benefit to OMEP-Liberia and the children of Liberia.

Future Challenges

Our great challenge next year is to reach rural communities, giving awareness to schools, teachers and parents about OMEP and the importance of Early Childhood Education. The bad road condition and limited financial resources pose a challenge to our work. There is a need of a vehicle (four wheel drive pick up or jeep).



Poor health condition for the children. We wish to include teaching on community health. The Community Health Education (CHE) program will be our primary means of contact. The primary objective is to see improvements in the overall health of the communities in which the program is running. Incidences of malaria, malnutrition, dysentery and other common illness should decline along with child mortality rates. As the Community Health Educators (CHEs) are taught preventive health measures, they will in turn go out and teach their community to mobilize their communities to utilize local resources to carry out community development projects. These



projects might include spring protection, simple latrines, dish racks, or kitchen gardens.

We planned to have three children centres with libraries and play grounds in three major cities in the countries.



MAURITIUS

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L'OMEP (L'Organisation Mondiale pour L'Education Préscolaire) Mauritian branch has been set up in 1972 by an Act of Parliament (the supreme law making body in Mauritius) with the main objective of promoting early childhood education throughout the island and providing training facilities to teachers in this sector.

It is the first non-government organisation to devote itself to the development, protection and education of young children in Mauritius. Amongst its numerous achievements over the last thirty three years are:

- Training over 1600 Mauritian teachers in the modern methods of pre-primary education;
- Opening approximately one hundred pre-primary schools of a good standard around the island;
- Making parents, local authorities and the general public aware of the various aspects of child development through debates, conferences, symposiums, exhibitions and the media;
- Organising seminars, debates, shows and recreative events for parents and children in towns and villages. Producing TV and radio programmes for the young ones;
- Establishing a close co-operation between the Mauritian Committee and other pre-school organisations in the Indian Ocean Region, especially with OMEP in Reunion Island and with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources;
- Participating in all activities organised by the Pre-primary Section of the Ministry of Education;
- Giving assistance to existing pre-primary schools in under privileged areas;
- Organising refresher courses and seminars for practising teachers across the country;

Organising sensitisation programmes for parents regarding problems on early childhood education and child rearing, leisure and creative work for children such as music, art and theatre;

- Some 500 pre-primary schools are affiliated with OMEP.

L'OMEP branch in Mauritius is a member of the World Organisation of Early Childhood Education. It has been operating, since the year 1980, on a lease land belonging to the Municipality of Curepipe which is located behind the town hall of the said Municipality.

The organisation has also been carrying out an extensive program of upgrading some of the pre-primary schools found in the most deprived areas of the island by developing the infrastructure of these schools and providing them with equipment and school materials.

A more detailed account of the activities of the Centre is given below:

Regular Courses offered by OMEP (Mauritius)

- 50 teachers / trainee teachers completed their courses in preschool pedagogy during the year 2006/2007.
- 8 workshops with the collaboration of lecturers from Reunion University were organised for the intention of OMEP trainers, Ministry of Education and other NGOs. 80 persons benefited from this training.



Last year we celebrated the 35th Anniversary of the launching of the Mauritian branch of OMEP (1972 - 2007).

- To mark the above event 5 children manifestations were organized in different regions of the country – these included plays, dances, music etc.
- In the same context the play Beauty and the Beast was staged for children of Rodrigues Island (a sister island of Mauritius) by a school affiliated to OMEP.

Press & Other Media

Regular articles and interviews in the local press and other mass media to sensitise parents and the public at large on various aspects of E.C.D.

Collaboration with Ministry of Education, Local Authorities and NGOs

OMEP collaborates regularly with Ministry of Education and other Government institutions and NGOs in activities related to children.

Participation of OMEP in the training of teacher/trainees attending the Mauritius Institute of Education.



NIGERIA

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1. Most relevant activities Conducted by the National Committee

Meetings

- The National Executive met 4 times while we had 2 Council Meetings involving State Chapter Presidents and their Secretaries during which reports were given, activities for the year discussed and the way forward deliberated upon.

Invitations, Attendances and Collaborations

- Nigeria Girls Education Initiative (NGEI) Good Practices Collation Meeting – GEP – 9th July, 2007 at United Nations (UN) House, Abuja.
- National Forum for Dissemination of Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Policy and Minimum Standard to Stakeholders held at Rockview Hotel, Abuja on 8th October 2007.
- Federal Government of Nigeria FGN/UNICEF Basic Education Programme Review and Planning Meeting 21st – 23rd November 2007 at Rockview Hotel, Abuja.

National Conference & Workshop

- OMEP Nigeria National Conference/Workshop with the THEME: “The Right to Quality Education for Children in the Second Millennium” 6th – 9th November 2007 was held at Women Multipurpose Centre, Kaduna. 300 participants were present with Papers delivered on:
 - Quality Education and the Teacher
 - Quality Control Intervention In Education

- The Role of OMEP Towards the Challenges Facing Pre-school Education in Nigeria.
- Enlightenment on and Distribution of Minimum Standard Document and the 1st National Policy on Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD).

Copies of these very important documents were donated to OMEP Nigeria by UNICEF Abuja. Education Specialist Mrs. Valentina Solarin did the presentation for dissemination to stakeholders.

- Workshop on Communication Skill – Pre-reading & Pre-mathematics.
- Preparation & Preservation of Teaching Aids.
- Making of Toys were not left out.

During the Opening Ceremony 5 State Governors, the Wife of the host State Governor and other dignitaries were Awarded for their immense contributions to the wholesome development of the Nigerian Child while Mrs. V. O. Bilewu, Vice President, OMEP Africa Region and Alhaji Isaq Sa’I, Honourary World Council Member were present to give their well appreciated quality support to the huge success recorded.

The whole Annual outing was rounded off with visits to some schools including the OMEP School, Rigasa, Kaduna. It was established in 1996 by the Kaduna State Chapter now with 400 children on the roll. The school is OMEP Nigeria’s Success Story.



2. Regional & International Conferences & Workshops

- 3rd OMEP Africa Regional Conference 2nd – 5th April 2007, held at Villa Cisneros Resort Ltd, Sogakope with the Theme: “Children’s Right to Quality Education”.
- OMEP Nigeria had 76 members in attendance and participation. This huge attendance was to encourage OMEP Ghana that was then a Preparatory Committee.
- At the African Regional Meeting, OMEP Nigeria was moved to host the 2010 OMEP World Congress and International Seminar.

International Workshop

“The Role of Early Childhood Education for A Sustainable Society” 2nd – 4th May 2007 in Goteborg (GOTHENBURG), Sweden. OMEP Nigeria President – Mrs. Abimbola ARE was given a personal invitation to participate by the coordinator of the workshop- Prof. Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson. The workshop was really international in nature and highly educative. It was a hug success.

XXV World OMEP Congress in Mexico City Mexico, 16th – 20th July 2007 with the Theme: “*The Children’s Right To Education At The Beginning Of The Third Millennium*”.

OMEP Nigeria President was present and she participated fully.

During the Assembly Meeting OMEP Nigeria was given the honour to host the 2009 OMEP World Assembly and World Seminar and the President on behalf of the National Committee accepted the honourable task. And by the grace of God we shall have a wonderful hosting, while we solicit for co-operations from the World Executive and all the National Committees.

Programme of activities will be officially presented at the World Assembly to be held

in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada, August 6th – 8th 2008.

3. Most Relevant Activities Conducted at the States Chapter Level

Different workshops were organized with the following Themes:

- “Teachers in the Provision of Quality Education and Care for the Young Children”.
- “Promoting Study and Research Related to “Pre-School and Primary Education”.
- “The Learning Environment of the Child”
- OMEP Children’s Day was celebrated in the different Chapters.
- Election of New Executive Members.
- Formation of Welfare Committee and follow-up of members.

Social and Welfare Visits to:

- The Needy in the Orphanage for abandoned babies and support for pregnant teenagers.
- General Hospital – Children’s Ward.
- OMEP Elders: The purpose is to let them know that they are still acknowledged and appreciated as OMEP members.

Membership Drive

The State Chapters are now 12 instead of the 9 we had last year. This is encouraging.

4. Most urgent challenges to faced by OMEP Nigeria in 2008

Future Meetings

- Participation in the 2008 World OMEP Seminar “Nurturing Peace Together with Children” 4th – 8th August 2008 in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. Plus celebration of 60th year of OMEP World, 50th of OMEP Canada and 400th Quebec City’s Anniversary.
- OMEP Nigeria’s hosting of 2009 World Assembly and World Seminar in August 2009.



- Sourcing for partnership and collaborations from Universities, Professional and other faith-based NGOs.
- Soliciting for technical and financial supports from development organizations especially UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, Federal Ministries and Private Entrepreneurs.

5. Numbers of Members

OMEP Nigeria now has 310 members in 12 active State Chapters across the Nation.

Warm regards from OMEP Nigeria.



WORDS FROM THE REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT FOR THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

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There are fifteen member countries in the Asia Pacific Region: Australia, Bangladesh, PR China, Hong Kong China, Indonesia, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Aotearoa New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand.

The region is very diverse including many different ethnicities, cultures, religions, extreme levels of wealth and poverty, political and economic structures, and different family structures. The situations across the region and within individual countries are uneven. In particular poor rural and isolated areas are struggling. In urban areas diversities are increasingly evident within early childhood services and communities.

Individual National President's reports record increasing government interest and support for early childhood education and families. However there is still much to do. At every economic level, mothers are working outside the home and the demand for early childhood programmes is high and continuing to increase. Alongside this is a shortage of training for early childhood teachers across the whole region. Health and safety and what constitutes quality curricula in what situation continues to be a focus.

Currently birth to three year old children is under the administration of social services or health departments in most countries, whereas administration for three to six and seven year old children is under education. "Fact Sheets" to be developed by the region in late 2008 will provide more information on this matter.

The UNICEF-OMEP partnership in the post tsunami projects in Sri Lanka and Indonesia provides evidence of the benefits of multi-leveled support for early childhood development. In Indonesia the foundation project has expanded beyond Banda Aceh to Takengon in Central Aceh with support from government officials. Sri Lanka OMEP's objective to work with provincial councils and local government bodies, to register early childhood programmes and formulate guidelines for registered services, is an important development.

Academic research is strong within the region. The 2007 Asia Pacific Regional conference *Promoting Learning Potentiality for Young Children*, organized by OMEP Thailand and ably lead by Dr Udomluck Kulapichitr, President OMEP Thailand, was a great success. Insight and learning for the many attendees was provided by international key-note speakers and a wealth of robust research papers from across the region.

Eight countries attended the Annual Asia Pacific Regional meeting, also held in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting provided an opportunity for sharing, relationship building and decisions were made in regard the "Fact Sheets" to be developed in 2008.

The 2008 September special edition of the International Journal: *Innovations and Policy change in Early Childhood in the Asia Pacific Region*, coordinated by Professor Nirmala Rao (University of Hong Kong) and Dr Emma Pearson (Macquarie University), will be a major contribution to the region.



I wish all member countries well for 2008 and thank everyone for their commitment to early childhood education and the work of OMEP in 2007.



AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

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Membership

I am pleased to present the OMEP Aotearoa/New Zealand Annual Report for 2007. Contact details for the National President and Secretary are listed at the bottom of this report. OMEP membership in New Zealand currently stands at 79 individual members and 17 group members. It is heartening to note the slight increase in membership figures. It is important that all OMEP members throughout New Zealand actively work to increase membership and to promote the aims and objectives of OMEP within New Zealand. OMEP in New Zealand comprises five regional chapters – Auckland, Manawatu, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago. These Chapters actively work to implement the aims and objectives of OMEP in their regions, as well as nationally, and internationally.

Regional

Chapters throughout New Zealand have been active in promoting the aims and objectives of OMEP. A few of the highlights from Chapters include:

Auckland Chapter have designed and printed a delightful set of cards depicting infants and toddlers with links to Te Whaariki, the early childhood curriculum. These cards were on sale at the Early Childhood Convention for \$10 for a set of ten cards. This was valuable in giving OMEP a presence at the Convention.

Wellington Chapter have had a range of interesting speakers at meetings (Anne Meade, Margaret Benner, and Doreen Launder) and were privileged to recently host a group of OMEP members from

Japan. This proved to be a worthwhile exchange of views and information.

The Canterbury Chapter hosted a successful seminar day with the theme: Weaving sustainability: People, places and things. Speakers included: Dr Mere Skerrett – preservation/sustainability of identity, through language and culture; Tony Watkins, Karaka Bay, environmental design; Tony Moore, Christchurch City Council, on waste management. Next year they plan to hold a series of events highlighting research.

Otago Chapter hosted an evening to support the development of collaborative relationships between early childhood centres and various community groups as a means of helping ensure the wellbeing of children and their families. Otago Chapter also have an informal relationship with an early childhood centre in Kitwe, Africa. They supported this centre with the provision of furniture.

National

2007 saw a continuation of the system where OMEP executive members are geographically spread throughout New Zealand. We have therefore continued to use electronic means to conduct OMEP business with the University of Otago Blackboard site being used to host meetings, to discuss topics, and to display correspondence/documents. This system is not without its frustrations but does allow us the luxury to operate with minimal day to day running costs which, with the small OMEP membership, is crucial for our operations. Operating online requires a concerted commitment from executive members to the use of the technology.



We have held monthly ‘online’ meetings, and had a face to face meeting at the Early Childhood Convention in Rotorua for executive members able to attend. Face to face meetings are always valuable. Unfortunately, the reality of meeting in this way on a regular basis cannot be justified due to the costs involved. It was decided that it could be valuable to have some online meetings specifically designated to a particular topic. The first of these meetings was held at the end of October where we discussed the aims and objectives of OMEP and our vision for the future.

We have been working to develop closer links with countries in the Pacific Region. We were saddened earlier in the year to hear of the devastation of early childhood centres in the Solomon Islands due to the tsunami. After discussions with early childhood people in the Solomons, it was agreed to send some children’s books.

Vision/Challenges

Communication is an ongoing issue for us in Aotearoa/New Zealand. We are aware that, as an executive, we need to work on improving communication with and between regional chapters. We are also aware that the OMEP Aotearoa/New Zealand newsletter is a valuable means of communication. Unfortunately, this year we have not had an executive member who has been able to commit to writing the newsletter and subsequently fewer newsletters than we would like have been written and disseminated. We have therefore decided to add the appointment of a Newsletter Person to the positions to be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

Conducting OMEP business through electronic means also brings about a challenge in ensuring that OMEP in New Zealand continues to move forward, and that the aims and objectives of OMEP are kept at the forefront of our work here. At our OMEP Aotearoa Annual General

Meeting to be held on 8 December, we intend to discuss the aims and objectives as set out in our Constitution and to seek the views of members as to what they see as important goals for OMEP in Aotearoa/New Zealand. We also hope to take a more political role during 2008, by ensuring that OMEP makes submissions to Government on issues that affect the wellbeing of young children and their families in New Zealand.

We have recently written to our Minister of Education asking for a review of ratios for children in early childhood education settings in New Zealand. We believe this is a very important issue that needs to be addressed. We will also discuss this issue at our Annual General Meeting with the view to taking further action once we have feedback from OMEP members throughout New Zealand.

We are very pleased to report that a long-standing member of OMEP, Di Dunkin, has agreed to write the history of OMEP in Aotearoa/New Zealand so we look forward to that.

E-Research Forum

As an outcome of the international play project, a research initiative has been established with OMEP International. The e-research forum (www.omep.org-net) was set up and designed through Victoria University of Wellington and is hosted by OMEP International. OMEP members throughout the world are strongly encouraged to participate on this forum.



AUSTRALIA

Sue Lancaster

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Membership

For the period July 2006 to June 2007, OMEP Australia had a total of 175 members in the following categories:

- Life Members – 4
- Individual memberships – 138
- Organisational memberships – 33

Organisational structure

OMEP Australia is a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Company is managed by a Board of Directors who are elected by the members of State Chapters (not all states have Chapters due to small membership in some states) for a three-year term. A President (or Chairperson) nominated and elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting for a three-year term heads the Board. An executive committee (Secretariat) in the State where the President resides supports the President in the day-to-day tasks of running the organisation. The Board of Directors comes together face-to-face twice yearly and meets via teleconference at other times throughout the year, at least bi-monthly.

OMEP Australia currently has five Directors including the President. The Secretariat consists of the President of OMEP Australia, a Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Other tasks that may require additional support throughout the years include publications (newsletter/AGM Report convenor) and website development.

Board Members January to October 2007

President: Ms Sue Harper OAM (resigned May 2007 replaced by Ms Sue Lancaster)

Directors: Ms Sue Lancaster (Victoria), Ms Marilyn Webb (South Australia), Ms Tina Elsegood (Western Australia), Ms Diane Duvall (New South Wales) Ms Shayne Collins (Victoria).

New Board members elected October 2007 at the Annual General Meeting

President: Mr Trevor Feder- South Australia

Directors: Dr Dawn Butterworth (Western Australia), Ms Shayne Collins (Victoria), Ms Diane Duvall (New South Wales), Ms Marilyn Webb (South Australia).

Activities

Governance

The Board of Directors and Executive have worked hard this year to develop policies and procedures to enable OMEP Australia to operate with clear guidelines and expectations. The Board is proud that it now has an extensive Policy Manual following these endeavours. The Board continued with its task of constitutional review and the opportunity to apply for, and receive more readily, grants from philanthropic organisations to support our projects and activities.

Deserts and the Outback

In South Australia, the chapter has supported several projects to assist children living in outback regions of the state. Metropolitan schools and children's centres assisted by fundraising for backpacks to carry library books for the Anangu Pitjantjatjara children at Mimili School and the chapter also provided \$2000 to Mimili to help bring groups of children to Adelaide, to



discover something of the world beyond the desert.

Support for outback children continued with a clothes collection, especially of jumpers for the cool desert nights. The chapter also organised an exhibition of children's work relating to the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. The work exhibited highlighted both life in the desert and ways of keeping the rest of the earth from becoming desert.

In Western Australia, beanies and environmental materials were donated to Indigenous schools located in the Gibson Desert. Also in the Australian Capital Territory, a small group of members collected warm clothing for babies, children and women to be sent to the Women's Centre in Titjikala in the Northern Territory. Here the baby clothes were given directly to families for their new babies, other items are sold at a nominal cost and income generated used to benefit the community. This small team also harnessed the goodwill of other sectors in the community, particularly children from after school care groups and preschool centres who made cards and wrote letters to the children in the Northern Territory – it is hoped that the centres will keep these links flowing providing ongoing dialogue across the two communities.

Community Participation and Indigenous Children's Engagement

The Mini Ball Project, launched in the far north west of Victoria taught young children ball skills and the basics of basketball. Parents were encouraged to join in the activity, so they could help their children further develop their skills at home. There were many great outcomes from this project, the involvement of indigenous and non-indigenous children and parents participating together, opportunity the project gave to children who had not been successful in a sport before and the engagement and support provided by the wider community as word about the project spread.

Also in Victoria, members met to hear about and discuss innovative early childhood programs and discuss future projects such as the Care Bag Project initiated in 2006 where backpacks were provided and filled with overnight essentials for children placed in emergency Foster Care. Members also met at social functions to raise funds for future projects.

Children's Art

Since the World Congress in 2004, the Children's Art collected specifically for this event has travelled across Victoria and displayed in several regional galleries, accompanied by a wonderful catalogue with information about the pieces, the mediums used by the children and information about children's express their growth and experience through art. During 2007, this exhibition was displayed at the Edith Cowan University of Western Australia.

Support in times of need

In Western Australia, the ongoing School Starter Kit Project provided 300 school starter kits to needy children commencing Year 1 of primary school in 2007. These kits contained items, such as pencils and crayons, to enable the children to participate in school programs. As well, fifty 'Refugee Welcoming Kits' were handed out to needy refugee families attending the Princess Margaret Hospital Clinic, along with clothing and household items.

Publications

During the past 12-24 months Joan Waters, Life Member of OMEP Australia and Past/Regional Vice President Asia Pacific Region, has been researching, seeking past memories and photographs from members of OMEP Australia and preparing the publication *Sowing Seeds of Peace*. This book is a History of OMEP Australia from its beginning to the end of the World Congress in Melbourne in 2004, describing attendances and proceedings at World and Regional Congresses and involvement of



members in projects and activities advocating and supporting education and care for young children.

An official launch of the book took place at the Annual General Meeting in October 2007 with an address by Gillian Beddington, OMEP International Life Member and member of OMEP Australia. Copies of this publication are available on order by request through OMEP Australia: www.omepaustralia.com.au.

Joan Waters' second edition of *A New Challenge: Helping in Kindergarten* has also been distributed widely, in New South Wales and Victoria during 2007, from the Lady Gowrie Centres as part of professional development sessions. Proceeds from sales of this book support OMEP Australia projects.

Key challenges

Australia is a large country with areas of high and areas of sparse population density. Our main challenge is to increase our membership to support the long-term future of the organisation in Australia.



BANGLADESH

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OMEP National Committee of Bangladesh was formed in April 1993 under the leadership of the late, Susanta Adhikari, the then the Executive Director of the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), a national level non government organization involved in the development sphere for the under privileged section of population. At the very inception of the OMEP-Bangladesh, Rev. Dr. Bokko Tsuchiama, then Vice President of OMEP Asia Pacific region was the main instigator for its evolution and started its work on the Early Childhood Education programme through some networking NGOs who were also implementing 'non formal school programmes for the early childhood education'. Over the years, till 2003 OMEP, Bangladesh used to receive some financial support for running its few early childhood education centres from Dr. Bokko. From 2004 its programme and support in the field continued to reduce due to lack of funds and limited our activity to a minimum scale. However, we tried to share our problems with our Asia Pacific regional office through correspondence. Now let me share our limited scale of involvement for the year 2007 below:

1. During the year 2007, the OMEP National Committee continued to promote and run the Early Childhood Education centres in rural areas through three networking NGOs within the limited resources. We were supporting 17 non formal centres for children's education, where enrollment of children were 629. The centres used to run 4 hours a day in the morning session, six days a week. The centres are run by the local volunteer teachers (mostly girl teachers) having

training on guiding and leading the centres by the respective NGOs. In Bangladesh the children are often deprived of their rights and scope for education. The main three activities OMEP, Bangladesh co-sponsored in the field of education and children care are:

- i. Supporting 17 Non-formal Children's education Centres through 3 networks of local NGOs which created scope and opportunity for about 629 poor children, the majority are girls.
- ii. Supporting of 17 Nutritional Assessment centres attached with the above centres for the malnourished children of Adivasis (Aborigine People) by providing High Protein Biscuits within those organizational capacities.
- iii. Facilitating mother's education programme on child care (once a week) for 3 months in a batch attached with these centres.

As a policy of OMEP-Bangladesh, we continue our support to the above programmes at least for two years with a view to sustaining the programmes by the NGOs concerned after two years of time. The main objective of these programmes/activities is to establish educational rights of the children, specially of girls, who are most deprived among the deprived section. This programme also strives to achieve a sense of responsibility among the poor parents who still do not feel the importance education for their children. The right to education is the basic right of a human being, which is often neglected in our society, particularly among the disadvantaged section. Our challenge is to



create an urge for this scope through strong motivation among the parents with whom we work.

2. The National Committee of OMEP-Bangladesh is based in Dhaka but sponsors its programmes mostly in rural areas. The Committee itself does not implement any such programmes directly but works in close cooperation and collaboration with 3 local level NGOs working in Bangladesh and committed for people centered development.

3. As part of government policy, primary education is compulsory for all children in Bangladesh. But most of the parents from the poor and ethnic communities cannot send their children to free primary school because of their poverty. Sometimes parents are very reluctant for their children to have education.

OMEP National Committee here takes a stand to motivate the parents and inspired them to allow their children to have education. In this respect, a series of meetings were organized, aimed at building positive attitudes to children's education. Of course, children's education in Bangladesh is a great challenge. We cannot face this challenge alone. Only through joint efforts of both the government and NGOs. We are taking initiative to face this challenge.

4. OMEP - Bangladesh National Committee at present is facing financial crisis, and has difficulty in mobilizing funds, with which to continue its childhood education programme, while we have great demands and urge for further working together in this sector.



CHINA

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In China, all the members of the China Early Childhood Education Research Association (CECERA) are automatically members of China OMEP. The current number of members is about 8300. The leadership of OMEP China is composed of: One president, 3 vice presidents and one secretary.

The most important activities carried out in the 2007 year

The Year 2007 has witnessed further progress for the OMEP China Committee. The mission for OMEP China Committee is to promote academic research on early childhood education and to enhance communication and cooperation among early childhood professionals, as well as to make a full use of international and domestic resources to promote the reform and development of early childhood education, especially to support the development of early childhood education in western China. OMEP Committee has held some key activities.

1. Workshop on research proposal writing

One task was to provide workshops for members on how to write a research funding proposal. The workshop was much welcomed by Chinese early childhood practitioners, who benefited from the training on research proposal writing: 163 proposals were approved by China Early Childhood Research Association after revisions. At present, all projects have been carried out. With good guidance and support from the organization, the research enthusiasm of preschool practitioners was strongly stirred up.

2. Institute on early childhood teacher's professional development

An institute on teachers' professional development was held in September 2007 in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. About 300 from 19 provinces participated in the workshop. The institute was composed of three topics:

1. Theoretical framework on adult learning and ECE teacher development;
2. Mentorship: supporting on-going teachers' development;
3. Observation and documentation of children's learning.

Experts from United States as well as from China were invited to give keynote speeches and facilitate the workshop. The institute also arranged the time for small group discussion on current problems or difficulties in preschool teachers' professional development. The workshop was particularly welcomed by the participants, with an interactive and participatory style of work. The institute introduced some new ideas as well as some new ways of improving kindergarten teachers' professional development.

3. Support for preschool education in the Western China

In 2007, OMEP China committee paid more attention to the ECE development in western China and made it the key task to support the development of preschool education in western China. We continued to provide opportunities for the communication and learning between the teachers from the east coast and western China. The teachers from the east coast went to the classroom in the western provinces to demonstrate how to work with



children in some educational activities. Other ways of providing support include lectures and workshops. The teachers from the Western China were invited to visit classrooms in the east coast and exchange ideas with the teachers there. Financial support was provided for such trips from provincial early childhood education communities. These efforts have increased the mutual understanding and support of teachers from the East and the West and thus have improved early childhood education in the West. For example, in June 2007, a voluntary teacher group was organized and went to the West. This activity was co-organized by OMEP China and Early Childhood Education Association of Hubei Province. The group was composed of 13 members who are early childhood teachers from Hubei province. They spent 11 days in Gansu and Qinghai provinces.

4. Forum on early childhood education in the Western China

In September 2007, the Fourth OMEP China sponsored a Forum on Early Childhood Education in Western China in Lanzhou, Gansu. Over 420 participated in the conference; they were from 22 provinces. The theme of the forum was how to create a supportive environment for children's learning and development. Lectures, and seminars were provided, and the participants also visited local early childhood programmes. Discussions focused on how to use local natural resources, in-service training and teacher professional development for the teachers in the western China; and effective cooperation between home and early childhood programs.

5. Continuing cooperation with OMEP Hong Kong committee

The cooperation between OMEP China committee and Hong Kong committee has been a long established. In 2007, the cooperation focused on further

communication between teachers and teachers' training.

For an example, In July, 2007, Professor Ma Yinian, vice president of OMEP China, attended the 'Closing Ceremony on China's Current Development', representing Professor Pang Lijuan president. She also lead 9 children from kindergartens in Lanzhou to perform children's dances such as 'the little Mula shaking ghee', taking part in the graduation ceremony of the Victoria Kindergarten. In the meanwhile, she also discussed with the Victoria Kindergarten staff plans for teachers' communication and mutual learning. This activity has promoted communication of preschool education in these two areas.

In April, 2007, with the support of the OMEP Hong Kong, OMEP China organized a study group to go to Hong Kong. The group was composed of 10 preschool teachers from 7 western provinces and autonomous regions: Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai, Chongqing and Guangxi. During the visit, mainland preschool teachers visited early childhood programs in Hong Kong, they exchanged ideas with their Hong Kong colleagues. They were also invited by OMEP Hong Kong to provide a workshop on Chinese Culture and Arts to 70 Hong Kong preschool teachers. Their efforts received a warm welcome from Hong Kong teachers.

6. The National Contest for Teacher-made Toys and Teaching Aids

In order to improve the quality of early childhood education in China and implement several national guidelines in early childhood education, several organizations such as The Research Institute for Teaching Equipment of Ministry of Education, Children's Department of the National Women Union and Chinese ECE Research Association have decided to jointly hold the national display and evaluating activity of good teacher-made toys and teaching aids. The purpose of the contest:

demonstrating teacher-made toys and teaching aids that reflect new educational ideas; encourage teachers to make the toys that adapt to children's interest and needs; distribute the research outcomes in the creation of toys and teaching aids; encourage teachers to make toys to foster children's creativity and hands on abilities; encourage the initiative and creativity of preschool teachers in designing self-made toys and teaching aids and their application in teaching activities; continue and advance our good tradition in teacher-made toys and teaching aids in early childhood programmes and finally be able to improve preschool education in China. The China ECE Research Association will set up an expert panel, which will be in charge of relevant evaluation.

7. Information distribution and international communication

The website of the China ECE Research Association (www.cnsece.com) has been improved in this year. Information on OMEP conferences and activities has been distributed on the website. Related information has also been distributed in *the Journal of Child Education* and *the Journal of Early Childhood Education*. This will help educators in preschool education become quickly acquainted with OMEP and the current development in foreign preschool education and activities organized by OMEP Chinese National Committee.

We also tried to maintained regular contact with OMEP headquarter and Asia-Pacific regional committee and fulfil all tasks assigned by the headquarter.

Attached are some pictures taken from The Institute of Teacher Professional Development.





HONG KONG

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1. Most relevant activities conducted at national level

Annual General Meeting

The 14th Annual General Meeting of OMEP-HK was held on 30 November 06. Eight members of the Executive Committee (Dr Hazel Lam, Dr Nirmala Rao, Ms Maggie Koong, Ms Cinda Chan, Mrs Bessie Pang, Professor Chien Chu Ying, Ms Dora Ho, Ms Lilian Chow) have completed their terms this year and their seats were open for election. Since the number of vacancies was equal to the number of nominees, the chairperson proposed that the nominees be duly elected en bloc.

School visits

Two school visits were planned for the members by our Programme Sub-Committee. The visits were organized in November 2006. There were more than fifty of our members participating in these visits and they were happy to be given such precious opportunity to share their experience with the teachers / peers in Canadian International School on 13th November 2006 and Ying Wa Primary School on 15th November 2006. They joined the visits and gained enjoyable, rewarding experience by sharing with the school principals. There were 30 places allocated for each visit.

Newsletter

Our newsletter will be completed and distributed to all members before December 07.

Public Policy

In responding to the discussion at the meeting with EMB [is renamed as Education Bureau (EDB)] on April 2006, a working group with 4 OMEP EXCO members Dr. Hazel Lam (Chairperson), Ms Maggie Koong, Mrs Sanly Tsang and Miss Gloria Leung were formed in Oct 2006 to draft a proposed list of School facilities and related packages to support the preschools in Hong Kong for facilitating young children's learning and preschool teachers' teaching to provide equal quality learning environment for young children to enhance their holistic development. Apart from learning and teaching materials for structuring stimulated learning environment, related staff development programme were also proposed by the OMEP working group. The proposed list of school facilities which was famed according to children's developmental needs, was submitted to EDB in December 2006. It had been adopted by EDB as reference on the internet for preschools in Hong Kong.

For enhancing the review on the current regulations with the consideration of protection and care for young children, OMEP was consulted by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department on the Age Limit on Children Prohibited to Enter Changing Rooms of the Opposite Sex at Pubic Swimming Pools from Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). In responding to the consultation, a letter was sent to LCSD in November 2006, OMEP – HK basis the view that children aged eight years or under accompanied by relative or nurse will be allowed to enter the changing room of the opposite sex.



On behalf of OMEP-HK, Hazel Lam, President of OMEP-HK and Gloria Leung, Convener of Public Policy attended a Panel meeting at LEGCO on Education on 13th November 2006. A position paper and the views of the World Organization for Early Childhood Education - Hong Kong as detailed in “Financial assistance for pre-primary service providers and parents of children receiving pre-primary services” were presented. OMEP-HK welcomed the initiative of the government to subsidize early childhood education. We proposed that the government should review the salary framework for pre-primary teachers in the light of the new requirements; establish a steering committee to monitor the implementation of the Scheme; and formulate long-term policies and strategies to enhance the quality of early childhood education, including the establishment of funds to support parent and community education.

On 21st November 2006 the meeting of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (the Scheme) as detailed in the information paper entitled “New Initiatives in Pre-primary Education” provided by the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) on 14 November 2006. On behalf of OMEP-HK, the president welcome proposed modifications to the Scheme to benefit more parents. It was proposed that the government should collaborate with the pre-primary sector to formulate salary scales for pre-primary principals and teachers and monitor the implementation of such scales by kindergartens after the Scheme had come into effect.

International Relation

To provide opportunities for members to exchange with practitioners from China, OMEP-HK continues to sponsor and conduct the 10-day “North West China - Hong Kong Exchange Programme” for the teachers from North West China from 19th to 28th April 2007. Through activities like school visits, lectures and academic

exchange seminars, participants on both sides of the border exchanged their experience and views on early childhood education.

The president of OMEP – HK had attended the World congress in Norway. News related to Asia Pacific Region were exchanged at the meeting and also circulated to members of OMEP – HK.

A paper on “How much Hong Kong children know that their culture and national identity” was presented by Hazel Lam at OMEP – World congress. Another paper on “Teacher participation in curriculum and pedagogical decision in Hong Kong pre-schools”: “Identifying the Problems and Possibility” was presented by Dora Ho, one of the OMEP-HK EXCO members.

In order to show our concern to OMEP-China, we had donated HKD\$3000 to the OMEP-China to support their national conference held in Lanzhou on 12th -15th September 07.

Project Research

Subsequent to our Early Childhood National Education Project started in November 2005, an editorial board was established in December 2006 to compile and to develop a National Education teaching kit. The kit, which was a result of the Editorial Board members’ (Mrs Chu Tang Lai Kuen, Ms Maggie Koong, Dr. Hazel Lam, Ms Lam Po Wan and Ms Ho Yi Ki) efforts, was successfully published and sent to 200 participating schools in July 2007.

In order to enhance preschool teachers’ professionalism in developing National Education curriculum for young children and to provide opportunities for them to share their experience in developing and implementing National Education curriculum in preschool settings, we successfully applied for funding for an Extended National Education Project in December 2006. We were grateful to ‘The Association for Celebration of Reunification



of Hong Kong' in funding HK\$241,500.00 for the extended project. The Extended National Project included a series of Chinese Cultural Art Workshops, an Exhibition and Children's Performance. The Chinese Cultural Art Workshops conducted by 10 visiting tutors from North West China were held on 21st April 2007. There were about 140 teachers participating in the cultural activities. After attending the Early Childhood Chinese Poem Teaching seminar, the participants attended different workshops, including Chinese Folk Dance, Tie-dyeing, Chinese Paper Cutting and Shadow Play, according to their preferences.

Four outstanding schools which participated in the Chinese Poem Reading Activity were invited as our performing guests at "Loving our country, Celebrating the Reunion, Welcoming Olympic Champion" children's performance, which was part of the Extended National Education Project. The exhibition and children's performance took place in the Jockey Club Auditorium (JCA), the Hong Kong Polytechnic University on 8th July 2007. It was our privilege to have Hon. Mrs. Fan Hsu Lai-tai, Rita, GBS, JP and Dr. Chan Ka Ki, Catherine to be our guests of honour at our closing ceremony of the Early Childhood National Education Project.

2. Challenges to be met in 2008

OMEP- Hong Kong will co-organize with the Hong Kong Institute of Education for our 7th OMEP (Hong Kong) International Conference, which will be held from 22nd to 24th May 2007. The theme is 'Catalysts for Changes in Early Childhood Practice'. The call for poster started on 31st August 2007. Please visit our website (www.omep.hk) or the conference website (www.omepconference.ied.edu.hk) for details.

A web-page of OMEP-HK is now completed. The address is: www.omep.hk.

Specifics to be outlined in the World Report

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Executive Committee members, Nirmala Rao, Zimmerman, Dorothy Jane, Betty Lo, Maggie Koong, Cinda Chan, Gloria Leung Chi Kin, Amy Lee, Margaret Wong, Bessie Pang, Veronica Wong, Sanly Tsang, Chien Cho Ying, Dora Ho, Lilian Chow, for their dedication, hard work, and support.

I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to those who have helped in organizing various programmes, events and activities mentioned above.



INDONESIA

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Number of OMEP Members

Regarding the condition in Indonesia, OMEP Indonesia has to be supported by other organizations and institutions as key members. The members of these organizations are recognized as OMEP Indonesia members. The nucleus members are: The Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (University of Education/Teacher's College) Bandung, The School /Academy of Social Workers, Association of Kindergartens Teachers, Association of Teachers, Women's Organization for Family Education & Welfare (Wanita KOSGORO) in West Java. We have also personal members as Educationists, Psychologists, Pharmacists, Medical Doctors, Nutritionists, nurses, social workers and other professions. We could not give the exact number of the people who are members, but through the nucleus/key members we could communicate and cooperate with their members in other provinces and islands.

The most important activities carried out at a regional level in 2007 are:

- a. Programs for rescuing children from disasters like earthquake, floods, landslides and soil erosion
- b. Fundraising to continue our program in founding ECEC project in rural areas
- c. Complete the OMEP Tsunami project by founding an ECEC pilot project in Takengon, Central Aceh

The most important activities carried out at national level in 2007

Meetings, Conferences with the Government Officials from The Department of Education, The Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Health, to enhance the ECEC for 0-3 years and to establish and definite the constitution of ECEC in Indonesia.



JAPAN

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1. Most relevant activities conducted at national level

Conferences and Meetings

- On March 21, the Japanese National Committee held the General Assembly.
- On the occasion of the General Assembly, we organized a lecture meeting, open to the public, entitled “A Report from an National Council of Education on Reforming a Curriculum of Kindergarten”.
- On May 20, during the 60th National Congress of the Japan Society of Research on Early Childhood Care and Education, the Japanese National Committee organized an International Forum and invited Ms. Doreen Launder, the Vice President of OMEP Asia Pacific Region, who kindly gave a lecture entitled “Te Whaariki, Early Childhood Curriculum: Capturing socio-cultural teaching and learning in meaning-making stories” and enlightened the Japanese audience about the importance on understanding of socio-cultural theory and practices.

Publications

- News-letter

The OMEP NEWS in Japanese were published twice a year in May and in November by the Japanese National Committee and distributed to its 200 Individual Members, 14 Cooperating Organizations and its related persons or associations.

- Fact Sheets

Fact Sheets on Early Childhood Care and Education in Japan No.8 was published in July. The title of it is “The Current Issues and Challenges of Family Support in Japan”.

- Translation of IJEC

We have tried to translate the IJEC into Japanese. This is just for a service to the National Members of OMEP. This time, we have translated 10 articles from Vol.36 and 37.

Web Page

OMEP Japan's web page – <http://wwwsoc.nii.ac.jp/omepjpn/> has been renewed day by day, enriched with the latest news on the activities of OMEP and the information about ECEC in the world. But it is written in Japanese. It is unfortunately limited to a Japanese audience.

New Articles of Association

- We have reformed the Articles of Association of the Japanese National Committee of OMEP.
- We have translated the New Articles of Association of World OMEP into Japanese.

2. Participation in the OMEP World Assembly and the Asia-Pacific Region Annual Meeting

- In July, twenty two members attended the 25th OMEP World Congress in Mexico City.
- In November, we sent two members to the OMEP Asia-Pacific Regional meeting at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand.



3. Activities carried out in our country at the regional level

- In February, OMEP-JP supported the Exhibition of Children's Art Works (aged 3-8 years) which had produced by the collaboration between the University of Melbourne's Early Learning Centre and the Association of Private Nursery Schools in Kyoto City.

4. Projects to be undertaken in 2008

- The year of 2008 is the 40th Anniversary of the Japanese National Committee. We are going to hold some special meeting for this.
- We are going to make a picture book for children on "the Rights of Child". We have set up a team for this project.

5. Membership

We have 200 individual members who are composed of 130 university teachers and 70 preschool teachers at kindergartens or day care centres. We also have 14 group members comprising a large number of people, namely Associations related to Kindergartens and Day-Care Centres, Academic Societies of Research on ECCE, etc. Individual membership has been declining gradually.

Japanese Committee is organized by:

- President (1), Vice-president (2), Secretary general (1), Treasurer (1) etc.
- General assembly (to be held once a year)
- Council meeting (to be held three times a year and attended by 20 council members).
- Executive meeting (to be convened by the National President, at least once a year)





KOREA

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The number of OMEP members

The OMEP Korean National Committee is currently composed as follows. The number in the () indicates the number of persons in each of the positions.

- National President (1)
- Vice-president (2)
- Auditor (1)
- National Secretary (1)
- Members in the board of directors (12)

Affiliated groups (10 groups – each has different number of members)

- Samsung Welfare Foundation (300 members)
- The Korean Society for Early Childhood Education (2,364 members)
- The Korean Association for Childhood Education International (1,100 members)
- The Korean Association for the Education of Young Children (495 members)
- The Korean Association of Buddhist Early Childhood Education (300 members)
- The Korean Association of Won Buddhist Early Childhood Education (300 members)
- The Korean Association of Christian Early Childhood Education (250 members)
- The Korean College Professors Association of Early Childhood Education (540 members)
- The Korean Association of Catholic Early Childhood Education (312 members)
- Korea Kindergarten Association (3,830 members)

All the members of the affiliated groups are also members of the OMEP Korean

National Committee. Most of the group members are professors, directors, and teachers of young children.

The most important activities conducted at a regional level in 2007

1. The Annual Conferences of the Korean Society for Early Childhood Education (KSECE): March 24, 2007 & October 27, 2007

The Korean Society for Early Childhood Education, one of the major affiliated groups of the OMEP Korean National Committee, held the annual Spring conference in March with the theme “Future Perspectives on Early Childhood Education and Care in Korea.” About 30 oral presentations and 35 poster presentations were made. Many members of the OMEP Korean National Committee participated and presented their studies.

The Autumn conference of the KSECE was held in October with the theme “The Collaborations among Early Childhood Education Practitioners, Researchers, and Policy makers.” The keynote speaker was Prof. Yong-Lin Moon at Seoul National University. Many presentations were made including 41 oral presentations and 36 poster presentations. About 1,300 members participated.

2. The 15th International Conference of Samsung Welfare Foundation: May 22-23, 2007

Samsung Welfare Foundation, an affiliated group of the OMEP Korean National Committee, held its 15th international conference. The theme of the conference was “Competent Children, Growing up in Healthy Environment.” Main speakers were



Prof. Sarah Watamura (Univ. of Denver, USA), Prof. Yoichi Sakakihara (Ochanomizu University, Japan), Prof. Yong-Lin Moon (Seoul National Univ.), and Prof. Kyung-Ja Park (Yonsei Univ. Board member of the OMEP Korean National Committee). About 840 people participated including professors, childcare centre directors, and staff at childcare information centres.

Samsung Welfare foundation also presented awards to exemplary childcare centres on September 13, 2007. About 270 childcare centre teachers participated in the ceremony, and 36 childcare centres won awards.

3. The Workshop for Early Childhood Education Teachers by the Korean Association for the Education of Young Children: July 7, 2007

The Korean Association for the Education of Young Children, an affiliated group of the OMEP Korean National Committee, carried out the 42nd annual workshop for early childhood education teachers with the theme “Building relationships for effective class management.” The participants were 523 teachers of young children and directors of early childhood education centres.

4. The Seminar and Workshop for Early Childhood Education Teachers by the Korean Association for the Childhood Education International: February 24 & June 30, 2007

The Korean Association for the Childhood Education International, an affiliated group of the OMEP Korean National Committee, carried out the Spring Seminar in February for early childhood education teachers and pre-service teachers with the theme “The Practices and Future Directions of Early Childhood Music Education.” The speaker was Prof. Jin-Young Kim at the City Univ. of New York, College of Staten Island. The participants were 120 teachers of young children and pre-service teachers.

In addition, the Summer Workshop for teachers was held in June with the topic of “Facilitating Early Childhood Teachers’

Social Studies Teaching Strategies.” The speaker was Prof. Young-Hee Jang at Sungshin Women’s University. The participants were 189 teachers of young children, pre-service teachers, and professors.

5. The Conference and Seminar for College Professors of Early Childhood Education Held by the Korean College Professors Association of Early Childhood Education: June 14-16, 2007

The Korean College Professors Association of Early Childhood Education, an affiliated group of the OMEP Korean National Committee, held the Conference and Seminar in June for college professors of early childhood education with the theme “The Current Practices and Prospects of Integrated Approach in Early Childhood Education.” The Conference and Seminar was carried out in Bucheon College in Kyunggi-Do, and 350 college professors of early childhood education participated in the full seminar sessions that lasted for 3 days and 2 nights.

The most important activities carried out in our country at a national level in 2007

1. The 5th Annual Parent Workshop by OMEP Korean National Committee: May 19, 2007

The OMEP Korean National Committee held its 5th annual workshop for parents and teachers on May 19, 2007. The theme of the workshop was “Nature and Our Children: Space, Music, and Movement,” which emphasized the value of healthy space, appropriate rhythm and movement for young children.

The speakers were Prof. Dong-Eun Noh (Chung-Ang University), Mr. Yoon-Ha Lee (Director of the Ecological Architecture Centre), and Prof. Won-Ho Sohn (Myung-Ji College). Prof. Noh introduced Korean traditional rhythm appropriate for young children. Mr. Lee talked about how to build



ecological early childhood education buildings in which children can stay healthy. Prof. Sohn introduced physical movements appropriate for young children. About 500 parents and educators participated.



2. Participation in the 25th OMEP World Assembly and Congress in Mexico City, Mexico: July 16-20, 2007

The national president Dr. Young-Ok Kim and the vice-president Dr. Soon-Lye Lee and about 20 members of OMEP Korean National Committee participated in the 25th OMEP World Assembly and Congress in Mexico City, Mexico. About 10 research presentations were made by the members of OMEP Korea at the conference including the presentations by Dr. Haekyung Hong and Dr. Hwa Youn Park who are on the board of directors of OMEP Korea.



3. Participation in the OMEP Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting and International Conference in Bangkok, Thailand: November 21-24, 2007

The national vice-president Dr. Dong-Ju Shin and 11 members of OMEP Korean National Committee participated in the 2007 OMEP International Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand. Dr. Dong-Ju Shin participated in the panel meeting “Situation Analysis of Learning Potentiality for Young Children in Asia Pacific Region” as a panel member. About 7 research presentations were made by the members of the OMEP Korean National Committee at the conference.





MALAYSIA

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Early Childhood Development, Care and Education in Malaysia have made leaps and bounds in the last few years. There is increasing awareness of the importance of Early Childhood Education among the people of Malaysia, rural as well as urban, rich and poor.

Our government highlighted the care and education of our young children in many areas of governance. Among the many programmes that emphasized safety and health, there was also increase in funding for both ministries, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Women, Children and Family. The 1984 Child Care Act (308 Act) refers to all ECCE programmes for children under age 4. The Education Act (1996) has included pre-school education as part of the national school system. All kindergartens (3+ to 5+ years old) have to follow curriculum guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education. Even the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development has been given more funds to carry out educational and care projects for children and their families in the rural poor areas.

In 2007, our honourable Deputy Prime Minister Dato Najib Tun Razak launched a pioneer early childhood education project under the "Pusat Anak Permata Negara" programme, whose objective is to provide affordable and quality early childhood care and education programmes for children under 4 years in all over Malaysia. The Pusat Anak Permata Negara programme is pioneered by a group of women professionals led by Deputy Prime Minister, Dato Najib's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, who is also the patron of "Yayasan Harapan Kanak-Kanak Malaysia" (The Foundation of Malaysian Children's Hope

For The Future)?? The programme stresses on fun learning for children and their achievements are measured in terms of their personality, skills in communicating in Malay Language and English, ability to look after themselves and their physical health. Malaysia in 2007 played host to World Forum, founded by child care professionals all over the world, initiative by Child Care Exchange Magazine (US). The response to this conference was overwhelming. A newly-founded non-governmental organization, National Association of Early Childhood Care and Education of Malaysia set up an organizing committee that showcased our Malaysian Early Childhood Education to the world.

This year, there are many child care chains mushrooming in all parts of the country. The demand for day-care centres, nursery schools and kindergartens is still rising. As Malaysian families become more mobile, they search for a familiar name in early childhood education to which they can select for their children. Many small-scale neighbourhood kindergartens and nursery schools found themselves competing with larger scale programmes. Despite the increased number of public and private colleges offering diploma and degree programmes in Early Childhood Care and Education, we still experienced shortage of trained early childhood teachers and childcare providers.



PAKISTAN

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The National Committee of OMEP Pakistan salutes the past OMEP World President: Selma Simonstein and congratulates the new OMEP World President: Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson. We hope that your leadership of OMEP will run smoothly and, also, that you have success in supporting the countries of the world. Congratulations, also, to The New World Executive Committee and to the present Vice President of Asia-Pacific: Doreen Launder. We thank them for their support of OMEP Pakistan. The National Committee of OMEP-Pakistan continues to promote and encourage the Early Childhood Education Centres through eleven persons concerned with these organizations, who are also members of the OMEP Pakistan Executive Committee. They are committed and dedicated towards the cause of children's education and care. Our plan is to establish 60-80 Children's Education Centres and Teacher Training Centres with the support of local and international organizations. These will create scope and opportunity for about 4,000 poor children, the majority are girls. We always try to participate in professional conferences and organize the local and national conferences in Pakistan as an advantage to all concerned. The National Committee of OMEP-Pakistan is based in Karachi, but it sponsors programmes mostly in rural areas. The Committee itself does not implement any such programmes directly, but works in close co-operation and collaboration with committees for the development of alternative peoples' centres. Moreover, the national committee of OMEP keeps a good relationship with The World President & Committee, Vice President of the Asia - Pacific region and OMEP members from other countries.

Most relevant activities conducted at regional level

The National Committee sponsors the local activities, which are based on traditional values regarding the modern system of education and care.

- Our members at the regions/provinces concentrate their activities on recovery programmes for children who are victims of child abuse, malnutrition and poverty. This is made possible by the support of international organizations.
- Local associations organize their activities according to the needs in early childhood education and care in their own regions, with their own way of life.
- The National Committee issues certificates to the institution for the teaching of early childhood education in Pakistan.

Most urgent challenges to be faced by OMEP in 2008

We have prepared a draft plan for year 2008. Major activities are:

- Training/Workshop/Seminars.
- Exploration of partnerships to initiate child programmes.
- Technical support.
- Form 8-10 local committees.
- OMEP meetings - National Committees and Local Committees.
- Participation in the World programmes and other regional programmes.
- To establish OMEP Schools and Training Centres with the support of OMEP members if possible.
- To host 2009 Asian regional meeting in Pakistan the detail information send later



Specifics to be outlined in the World Report

As a Government policy, primary education is compulsory for all children in Pakistan. But most of the parents from the poor and ethnic communities cannot send their children to free primary school because of their poverty. Sometimes some parents are very reluctant to send their children to school. The National Committee of OMEP-Pakistan aims to motivate parents and inspire them to get their children educated.



SINGAPORE

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Membership as of 30th June 2007: Corporate:
8 Individual: 80

Executive committee

7 executive meetings were held over this period. As there was a change in the executive committee at the end of 2006, frequent meetings had to be held to consolidate the working process of the committee.

Local activities

School Visits

On April 17 members visited The Canadian International School.

On August 2, members visited Pathlight, a government-aided school for special needs. These visits continue to keep members informed of the different early childhood settings available in Singapore as well as to promote exchange of information among members. These visits are for members only.

Members' meetings

Members' Meetings are organised for members to meet regularly for dialogue on professional development, networking and for addressing members' needs. The first members' meeting was held on March 27. Dr Seng Seok Hoon from the National Technological University was our guest for the evening. She spoke to us on the topic, "Intelligence can be taught and learned: the Feuerstein Way"

The second members' meeting was held on July 11. Our guest for the evening was Mrs Loke Har T'shin, from the Ministry of Education's preschool Unit. She shared

information on the successful usage in Singapore of a preschool developmental assessment tool.

Action Research in Singapore

An editorial committee was set-up to select interesting action research projects by Singapore early childhood educators to be electronically published and made available on Singapore OMEP's website. The committee hopes that OMEP will be the platform for addressing not just mainstream issues but other less popular but nevertheless vital ones as well.

2007 Annual General Meeting

OMEP's study on "Play and Learning in Early Childhood Settings: International Perspectives" was presented at the Annual General meeting in August. Members were encouraged to purchase the publication to raise funds for World OMEP.

New Website: <http://www.omep-sgp.org>

A new, more user-friendly website was developed to encourage greater awareness of Singapore OMEP's activities, to promote more efficient communication among members, and to promote OMEP's aims and objectives.

Professional partnerships

1. National Childcare seminar

OMEP Singapore was an organising partner of the *Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) Childcare Seminar*, held on September 4, 2007. The President and Vice-president of Singapore OMEP presented at a session entitled, "Children as



Researchers: Meeting Children's Natural Curiosity Needs".

2. Nation-wide Book Collection

Through contacts established by MCYS, we were able to organise a book drive for children and teachers at a Nursery in UGANDA.

Challenges for the committee

Despite much hard work from the committee, Singapore Committee of OMEP has still a long way to go in increasing its membership numbers. Fund-raising to keep activities going is a major problem for such a small committee.

Existing alongside other early childhood organisations in Singapore, it realises that in order to distinguish itself from others, it will have to increase the awareness of OMEP's International network and get members more involved in Regional and International work, thereby, developing the organisation in the process.

With regard to local issues, it will work alongside professional partners in ensuring best practices for early childhood care and education in Singapore, especially in the area of multi-culturalism, and addressing diversity in early childhood programmes.



SRI LANKA

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Ms. Joan Waters, Ex- the Asia - Pacific Regional Vice - President visited Sri Lanka to oversee the implementation of the per-school development project funded by OMEP. She was impressed by the rehabilitation of pre-schools, hit by T-sunami December 2004. She observed the activities of children and met with teachers. The pre-schools were located in the Matara district the worst affected, by T-sunami.

Meanwhile, Ms. Waters initiated the grant from UNICEF through OMEP for the training of teachers with a view to enhance their skills. Weekend workshops were conducted by resource persons of the Open University of Sri Lanka. The training program contributed to the enhancement of the quality of education in pre-schools.

The periodic health clinics conducted by doctors and nurses and the regular meals provided with parents' cooperation helped improve the physical development of the children. The OMEP - Sri Lanka was able to persuade the economically stable parents to contribute financially to the up keep of the pre-schools.

A painting exhibition of the children was held in May 2007 in five venues. Prizes were awarded to all the paintings.

The general meeting of OMEP-Sri Lanka was held in June, 2007. A resolution was

unanimously passed, conveying highest appreciation to the world Executive committee of the OMEP for the support given in the critical hour which helped the schools to overcome the constraints.

Every pre-school supported by OMEP organized concerts in December 2006 in which children performed. They provided excellent opportunities for children to express themselves.

OMEP -Sri Lanka executive Committee decided to replicate on an island -wide scale the training programme in collaboration with voluntary organizations. However fund raising for the programme will be a challenging task.

Resource persons skilled in indigenous music and dancing assisted the lecturers.

The executive Committee approved a resolution to request the Provincial Councils and local government bodies to register pre-schools. For this purpose, OMEP - Sri Lanka offered its expertise to them to formulate guidelines for the registration of pre-schools. The executive committee requested the corporate sector to set up pre-schools for the children of the employees or to assist the pre-schools where the majority of employees send their children.



WORDS FROM THE REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT FOR EUROPE

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This report on activities in the European region in 2007 is my first one. I value very much being *elected to the position of Vice-President for Europe with the term of office commencing in January 2007. I wish to thank Mrs. Ulle Grob-Menges, who preceded me in the office, for her work during the two previous terms of office. It is easy to continue in the office, given all that she, and the President of each European national committee accomplished, together with the all other members of OMEP.

Situation in the region

The European region includes 22 OMEP member countries, which in itself implies a great variety in the care and upbringing provided for children from birth to 8 years of age. This variety is due to a number of factors such as the varying economic standards of the individual countries, the differing approaches to care of the youngest children, based on the different welfare state philosophies and principles, and the different traditions and histories of care of families and small children.

From individual Annual Reports

This variability is also clearly reflected by the Annual Reports submitted by Presidents of national committees on developments in their respective countries. The Annual Reports show that individual countries have focused on different activities such as organizing specialized conferences and workshops, influencing national educational policies concerning preschool children, and partly also on research into preschool pedagogy, providing educational support to

professionals working in all kinds of preschool institutions, improving the quality of care for young children in institutions and in the family, support to families with young children, organizing exhibitions, cultural events for children, and raising professional and public awareness of issues concerning care for and education of children from birth to the end of preschool age. There is, nevertheless, one thing all these activities share: they all provide immensely valuable and highly desirable work for the benefit of young children.

Some Annual Reports suggest that national OMEP committees focus not only on topics inherent to their own countries, no matter how important and needed this work is, but are also contributing towards international cooperation, offering help to the international community and other organizations. Such examples can be found e.g. in the reports by the Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, French, Icelandic, Spanish and Swiss national committees. I believe that these activities should be regarded within OMEP as an international organization as especially important.

Activities of the Vice-President

Running for the position of V.P. for Europe, I had proposed 4 priorities I wanted to concentrate on during my term of office. Now, having served in the position for one year, I would like to report on the changes in these areas.

Better communication

In the beginning of January 2007, I sent a letter to all member countries in Europe in



order to inform members of the priorities I have set out for my work for OMEP, I have introduced myself and pointed out some important dates of events to take place around Europe in 2007 (see www.omep-ong.net). In October 2007, I re-established the tradition of European Newsletter distribution, abandoned long ago. Based on up-to-date information including the first findings from the OMEP Archive, I prepared and distributed the autumn issue of the Newsletter. I have been making efforts to communicate through e-mail with all national committees. The number of received Annual Reports for 2007 seems to be one of the positive results of this. We have received 22 reports from the 22 member countries. New presidents had been elected in a number of countries (Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Germany, and UK). It was my pleasure to establish contact with them, too.

During 2007, there were two opportunities for all representatives of European national committees to meet in person: first, at the European conference and meeting in Interlaken, and then at the World Assembly in Mexico City.

European Regional Meeting, Interlaken, Switzerland, 1 June, 2007

The European Regional Meeting was attended by 20 representatives from 10 European countries and Canada. The meeting held as a part of an international conference entitled “Childcare Has a Future”, which was organized by the Swiss Association of Day Care Centres (SKV) on the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary, taking place in Interlaken, Switzerland, from 30th of May to 1st of June 2007. The main organizer was Ulla Grob-Menges and I would like to thank her once more.

European Regional Meeting, Mexico City, Mexico, 16 July, 2007

The meeting was attended by 18 representatives of 10 European countries.

Wider cooperation among National Committees

I believe that the current process of European integration may be a good opportunity to use European resources to the benefit of activities and cooperation of individual European national committees. One good example is the ERASMUS program, enabling participants to sign bilateral contracts between universities in EU member countries. A number of OMEP representatives in Europe have been affiliated with universities. At this moment, for instance, Masaryk University, the university where I work, has bilateral contracts with universities in Stockholm and Riga, and a contract with University of Patras, Greece, the affiliation of the president of the Greek OMEP committee, is being negotiated. All these contracts may become the basis for closer cooperation and exchanges of people from among OMEP representatives. I intend to emphasize this opportunity repeatedly when communicating with other European national committees.

Another example is the European project Grundtvig, which is focused on adult education. This project has enabled close cooperation on a specific topic connected with preschool education among Greek, Czech, Polish and Slovak OMEP national committees.

OMEP International Archive

Activities in the International OMEP Archive in the Comenius Museum in Prague have been very successful – mainly thanks to the sum of US\$ 1,000 allocated to the Archive by OMEP. The Czech OMEP committee and the director of the Museum have signed an official contract of cooperation. The first result is a comprehensive list of all materials available in the Archive. Another result is an exhibition organized on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of OMEP, to be presented at European Regional Meeting in Bratislava



and at World Assembly in Quebec. It will be necessary to discuss how to administer the Archive in the future, and, most importantly, how to expand it so that continuity of OMEP historical records can be guaranteed.

New OMEP members

European region has 22 members, Romania as preparatory committee has been removed last year (2006) in Tromsø. At the moment we do not have any preparatory Committee. I have initiated negotiations with several potential new members, asking some current member countries for help in this respect. I

am trying to push the matter forward, but the acquisition of new membership is a long-term matter, likely to bring results only gradually and, therefore, cooperation with the current national committees and other organizations, in this respect, is essential.

I would like to express my gratitude to national OMEP committee Presidents and members for all they have done for OMEP to the benefit of young children in 2007, thank them for their cooperation and express my hopes for a good collaboration in the coming year, too.



BULGARIA

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1. Most relevant activities conducted by the National Committee

Participation in Meetings, seminars, conferences

National Conference with international participation on the theme: “Danubes countries- Gardens of peace for children: European tradition and perspectives in education”, 29- 30 June 2007 in Russe City. The organization and conduction were very significance- Achievement of the Regional Committee of Russe.

- The representatives of Romania responded to the invitation, accompanied by a report delivered by Anka Dumitresku. Best greetings and wishes are forwarded by the President of Slovakia - Monika Minova, as well as the desire for further international cooperation is expressed.
- 125 years of Preschool Education in Bulgarian – traditions and perspective on such themes is organized in Svishtov and in all regional Committees of OMEP during last year.
- The theme on “Adults and children - Children and adults” was met with big interest during the international conference organized by the association “Elisaveta Klark and Penka Kasabova “in Bulgaria and USA- Chicago; Sofia University “Saint Kliment Ohridski”, OMEP BG, Union of Bulgarian Scientists and others in Sofia City .
- Educational practices and initiatives on the theme “Bulgarian children – Citizens of Europe “are organized in all regional committees of the Bulgarian National Committee – OMEP.

2. Main Activities of the Regional Committees of Bg. OMEP

Conferences

Conference of RC. OMEP – Vratza: ” Child and the Kindergarten in the 21st. Century – actual aspects of the pedagogical interactivity and administration of the kindergarten “ organized several teachers, lecturers of the Universities with members of OMEP from the whole country.

The Eighth International Practical Conference is organized in Sandanski under the Subject: “Modern Tendencies in Pre-school Education” (RC Sliven, Sofia, Bourgas etc.).

A seminar is organized on the theme “Diagnostics of Children from the preparatory group for school in the kindergarten joined with personnel from the Ministry of Education” (RC. Karjali, Vidin, Vratza Varna).

A Forum with International Participation on the theme “European Dimensions in Education” is held with different Regional Committees in Stara Zagora, Bourgas, Shumen, Sliven, Jambol etc.

Discussion on realization of the Programme defending the Rights of Children for safety development and manifestation of their individual potentials (RC.Sofia, Pleven, Shumen, Varna, Russe.

Courses, Teaching visits and Qualification

Course in German language in Gratz Austria on the theme “Geshtalt Pedagogy as a bridge toward others” – stimulating



competence of the teachers and the Culture of Learning in Europe (RC. Sliven)

Teaching visit by program ARION of the European Commission, administrated by the Ministry of Education and “Sokrat” in Firzen , Germany – on the subject “ The role of the internal and external evaluation of the teaching process (RC.Sliven).

The program of development of Physical Training and Sport in kindergartens (RC. Sliven Stara Zagora, Russe,Vratza

Practical Teaching of teachers working with the preparatory groups, together with the authors of the educational programs (RC.Karjali, Shumen, Vratza, Sofia, Russe, Pleven etc).

Qualification of teachers in the interactivity techniques in constructing and diagnosis, (RC. Pleven, Stara Zagora).

Promotion and increasing the qualification of the pedagogical cadre (RC Sofia, Shumen, Bourgas, Varna,Pleven, Yambol, Karjali, Russe:

- Ecological education of children in kindergarten- a good pedagogical practice:
- Control activities of the director;
- Studying the European Educational Systems;
- Governmental Educational Requirements for pre-school age;
- Ensuring Safety and health conditions for teaching and learning.

Projects

Project “Cultural Heritage and Culture of Peace”, together with the committee of Turkey and Greece continues, hoping to widen the participation with the members of OMEP Danube Countries.

Projects of RC .Sofia, concerning SOKRAT program approved:

- Multiculturalizm and integration – participation of parents;

- Japan Government in support of the Bulgarian educational activities.

Europe in the paintings of their children;

- Physical Training in the kindergarten;
- Active Motor Activity for children physically handicapped;
- Europe in the kindergarten;
- National program for engagement of handicapped people in the kindergarten;
- Social investment fund for handling architecture environment.

Exhibition, Competitions and Celebrations

Traditional charity exhibitions Bazar with drawings and applications of children on the theme “We have means with which we can warm “Our European Home”; Regional Competitions for teachers - creators on the same theme - for Essay, Poems and Drawings (RC Sliven).

Exhibitions – Bazar with “Martenitzi” in kindergartens with charity motives for children at “House- Mother and Child” and with children of different ethnical communities. (RC. Russe, Karjali, Shumen, Bourgas, etc.)

Celebration devoted for Child Day - 1st June on the subject “For children with Love and Care”, (RC Karjali) and ”To Get The Earth Clean”, (RC .Pleven, Sofia , Vidin, Bourgas)

“The world in the prism of Child” and “The European children Fair”- exhibition of child books and drawings.

Musical spectacle: “To Make Europe Stronger” (RC.Sliven).

Participation in the competition of Mutli Media Products in Musical Pedagogical Practice, organized by National Forum “Orpheeva Darba” (Gifted Children), BG. OMEP and partners.



Publications:

Collections from the conferences related to realities and perspective of Pre-school Education and Scientific investigations.

Scientific papers in pedagogical magazine "Preschool Education", "Education", and in Specialized papers of the Ministry of Education and Federation of Bulgarian teachers.

Bulletins of Regional Committees of OMEP.

Educational Means for the Educational Works in the Kindergartens

Representative Materials of the Regional Committees of OMEP.

3. The Most Significant Activities during Year 2008

- 60 Years World Organization – OMEP-initiatives of BG. OMEP
- National Theoretical – practical conference: "Ecology. Culture. Education: Realities in Pre-school Education-Supporting Future for Children", Sofia , June, 2008

- Participation in the National Educational Conference Organized by the Ministry of Education and Partners on the Theme: "Leading Future Children by hands", Lovech, April, 2008.

4. Specifics to be outlined in the World Report

- The Bulgarian National Committee congratulates Prof. Selma Simonstein for her contributions as the President of the World Organization – OMEP.
- The Bulgarian National Committee of OMEP proposed Prof. Ingrid Pramling for a new president of OMEP, as the person who will continue to give the World Organization more prospective.
- Successes to Association of Prof. Milada Rabusikova: the New European President of OMEP.



CZECH REPUBLIC

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Czech national OMEP committee took part and closely cooperated in the Czech Republic and in the area of international activities. These activities mutually blend. The Czech OMEP committee also closely cooperates with other organizations working in the area of pre-school education in the Czech Republic. The committee has representatives in the advisory committee of the Ministry of Education (later see as MŠMT).

1.

OMEP is a member of Grundtvig project – the name of the project “Smooth transfer of children from Kindergarten to Primary school”. We have been working on this project together with Poland, Greece, Slovakia and Ireland. Members of the Czech group comprise Jarmila Kotrbová, Milada Rabušicová, Marie Marxtová, Jana Vaníčková, Eva Šmelová and Jaroslava Břízová. Every meeting triggered further tasks which were then implemented and will be presented in Bratislava in January 2008. The first meeting of the states taking part in the project introducing the programme and aims was held in Poland in November 2006. The first results of the project, which were acquired by means of questionnaires filled in by children and their parents, were presented in Ireland in May. The result of this survey dealing with a smooth transfer of pre-schoolers to primary schools was published on the OMEP web pages.

In May a meeting with Slovak OMEP representatives was held in Prague. The topic of the meeting was “Meeting and new methods of work at Kindergartens”. 30 teachers who arrived from Banská Bystrica visited two Prague Kindergartens /in

Šumavská street and Korycanská street/. OMEP members took part in a discussion about pre-school education in Slovakia.

Regular meetings of the presidium of the Czech OMEP were held. There were three meetings annually as requested by OMEP regulations (3.3., 24.4., 16.10.). The subcommittee meeting was held in connection with GRUNDTVIG project. Members of OMEP committee cooperated with other organizations, schools, Pedagogical Museum of J. A. Komenského in Prague and MŠMT. OMEP Committee members published results of their work in academic magazines such as /Informatorium, Učitelské noviny, Předškolná výchova etc./

2.

A presentation of a modern method of teaching English in Kindergartens proceeded under the auspices of OMEP. 90 teachers from all over of the Czech Republic took part in this presentation. The presentation included introducing pre-schoolers to learning English with a native speaker. The school representatives were informed about teaching English to pre-schoolers. The presentation and meeting was held in Korycanská Kindergarten.

In June an interesting lecture by Eva Šmelová on “Self-assessment in Kindergartens” was held. The content of this lecture was of high interest and was attended by 50 representatives from various kindergartens from the Czech Republic. The lecture presented a method of assessment of our work and a method of assessment within the new Framework Education



Programme (FEP) compulsory for all kindergartens since 2007.

In November a lecture lead by Dr. Voldřich was held. It dealt with the topic of rights and duties of kindergarten directors in the Czech law system. The lecture was attended by 60 representatives. The lecture focused on safety of children and kindergarten employees according to new regulations of Labour Code.

Due to the number of its members OMEP works centrally. The presidium comprises members from various regions from the Czech Republic. The activities of OMEP are then presented and realised in their particular regions. There are no specific regional activities but the committee organizes single activities.

3.

OMEP took part in supplying suggestions for regulations and appendices of School Law adjustment. OMEP members of advisor board of MŠMT resolved comments in connection with pre-school education. They took part in legislation adjustment and they published up to date information from MŠMT on their web pages.

By changing FEP for kindergartens and primary schools we attempt to improve the transfer of children to primary schools. See our work on Grundtvig project.

A great problem of many kindergartens is the number of pupils in a class. The economic reasons lead to surpassing recommended number of pupils.

Vocational organisations in the Czech Republic deal with problems of children between the ages of 0 and 3. The care for children is managed by the Ministry of Health. After the change of maternity leave allowance, which came into force 1/1/2008, a vocational care for children may change too. The result may be a higher number of parents demanding placement of their

children in nurseries. The insufficient number of nurseries in the Czech Republic may lead to the conclusion that the age of starting kindergarten may be lowered. The economic aspect may again cause serious problems. An only half full class of children means insufficient allowance for a schools and teachers.

4.

After entering into an agreement between OMEP and Pedagogical Museum in 2006 about managing an archive in 2006, we added new vital documents to the museum. The OMEP archive is supplemented continuously with information regarding Czech and foreign OMEP activities.

Note

In 2006 new Czech OMEP web pages were launched – www.sweb.cz/omep. They are updated regularly and available for OMEP members at any time informing about news, OMEP activities and current events.

The number of OMEP members increased in 2007 to 130. One of problems includes regular membership payments. It has been previously established that after three years without any payment a membership will expire. It is vital to stipulate this in OMEP regulations. OMEP members comprise mainly teachers. We see an importance to offer the membership to specialists from other areas such as healthcare and others connected with work with children up to the age of 8. OMEP is planning to amend its regulations. One of the suggestions is to create a collective membership.



DENMARK

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We had 10 board meetings.

We participated in the European Regional meeting in Switzerland with 2 board members and in the World Assembly in Mexico with 2 other board members.

Our major activities this year have been the following:

1. We have participated in the cooperation group regarding “The convention of the rights of the child” counting all the major organisations dealing with global children’s issues.

2. We have worked intensely to renew the Danish board and the Danish President, but the agreements collapsed at the last minute, so the Danish board members stay put for another term, while we are watching how the reorganisation of the Danish education system for teachers are implemented.

3. OMEP-DK was invited to join OMEP-Ghana at their first local conference and to take part in their augmentation.

At the member meeting we discussed the possibilities of further cooperation between our committees and intend to start collecting toys from Danish kindergartens and send them to a children’s hospital in Accra. Furthermore we will investigate the possibilities of exchange of pre-school teachers.

4. We have tried to make day-conferences with foreign speakers, but it seems that Danish teachers hesitate to join conferences with foreign speakers.

We will continue our conference-days with local speakers.

5. The board has had discussions about OMEP’s core-issues. We think that our main issue is to hold on to the creative and playing elements of all educational work, which the government seems to neglect in the newest policies on the education system. OMEP will stress this work during our conference days.

We will also continue this discussion with our Nordic colleagues.



FINLAND

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Activities of the committee

The committee had 5 meetings. The main topic was still lobbying for the legislative work: to reform the Day Care Act totally and rename it for the Early Childhood Education and Care Act.

During the year a special theme was 'early interaction' in connection with early childhood education and care (or as we call: daycare) as a preventive method in order to safeguard the welfare of the child. We in Finland emphasize the purpose of daycare to support parents in raising children and to work with homes in promoting the individual and balanced development of children. Daycare (ECEC) combines care and education (=educare) and all children under school age (0-6 year olds) have the unconditional right to daycare.

The committee started a project to publish a book called "Permanence". For many reasons we in Finland have the problem of constantly or often changing staff in daycare. At the same time children can have different kind of changes in their lives. The book will look at the permanency -question from the child's, parents' and personnel's perspective.

The committee followed current issues in ECEC in Finland and worldwide and pushed this information forward.

Important issues in the Finnish ECEC in 2007

The Advisory Board for the Early Childhood Education and Care was set up by the Finnish Government in 2005 and its term ended in 2007. The Board gave out a report highlighting the multidimensional

character and support for the comprehensive development of the wellbeing of the child as a basis for the development of early childhood development and care. The future is envisioned through a number of themes related to development of the quality of early childhood education and care, i.e. the background and present state of services, guidance, staff, research and development, and through anticipation of future developments. The report also encompasses a vision for early childhood education and care prepared by the Advisory Board up to the year 2020.

The Advisory Board proposes revision of the legislation on day care, development of the staff skills and education, development of day care and ECEC services, clarification of the system of guidance, and reinforcing research and development with a view to realization of the vision and development of early childhood education and care" (Alila, Kirsi & Kronqvist Eeva-Liisa. 2008. Early childhood education and care up to 2020. The final report of the Advisory Board for Early Childhood Education and Care. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health).

The vision is important for future development, but it is not enough: Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision can be a nightmare. Vision together with action can change the world, was said (by the programme manager and head of co-ordination unit Elda Moreno from Building a Europe for and with children, a Council of Europe programme) in a meeting concerning the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We really need action for the realization of the vision.



Also research and developmental work (=projects) is lively in ECEC. The problem is how to transfer the results, the good practice into the everyday life in ECEC all over Finland

Urgent challenges

To pick out from the earlier text to a list:

- New legislation
- From theory into practice
- Accessibility of permanent personnel

Specifics to be outlined in the World Report

The Finnish OMEP Committee is a working group in the area of early childhood education and care in the Central Union for Child Welfare, which is an umbrella organization speaking for the best interests of the child, influencing child policy, bringing together different actors and organizations in the field of child welfare, showing responsibility for the development of the field of child welfare.

The Finnish OMEP Committee has 15 members representing administration (Ministry/ state and local level), research and training (university and polytechnics), trade unions, and other organizations working for child and ECEC.

The Finnish OMEP Committee is working for the best interests of the child in ECEC services. Therefore the quality is important. For the quality we need all the expertise we have: administration, research, training and practice.

Members of the Finnish committee have their own networks and own organizations and we believe that our committee members are keys to a larger (but hidden) membership.

The Finnish OMEP Committee is also an expert group working on information, guidance and monitoring level. The aim of the group is to provide information about the Finnish early education and care to international level – and to give international information to the Finnish area in early childhood education and care. World President's newsletters and OMEP web site are good ways to spread international information.



FRANCE

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1. National Committee Activities

1. Pre-K and kindergarten classes visits by Chinese and Irish professionals and Danish students,

2. Improvement of action visibility intensification of links with children associations in France: AGEEM association of pre-k teachers;

a) improvement of the OMEP France journal layout

b) participation in conferences and meetings regarding children:

- In France « No zero in behavior for 3-year old AGEEM (association of pre-k teachers) ; FNAREN etc
- In Europe : Interlaken conference
- In Mexico etc., realisation of projects on the theme of « feed the peace with children » for the Québec seminar

3. Organisation of a national conference providing access to a greater number of professionals to the annual conference intervention of parapsychologist M. Cabrejo on the theme « from talking to reading or how language comes to children »

2. Section activities

a) Training actions in managing children professionals (Ain and Haute Savoie sections)

Organisation of evening conferences and debates broadcasted by press, radio and billboard on diverse themes such as: **Children, parents and sport** » **Children and the law** » Authority, the accompanying for a satisfying sexuality, the child and the family, gardening modes and pre-k » Rhythms of the

child discovery of books by very youngsters help to parenthood the birth etc

b) Creations of discussion forums and support to children education

- Pedagogical cafés:
- Parent cafés (Haute Savoie section)
- Inmate parents cafés (Providing books for inmate kids (Haute Savoie section)
- The week of children's rights
- An exposition: don't cry like a girl (Brest section)

c) International exchange and solidarity actions

- Sponsorship with Romania.
- Help to tziganes children in a Romanian Moldavia village. (Ain section)
- Training day of international solidarity » (Allier section)
- Hosting of a Nigerian kindergarten director as an internship
- Psycho-educative action with Vietna
- Mission in Lebanon in collaboration with layman solidarity
- Participation to Québec project « feed the peace with children » (Paris section)

3. Challenges for OMEP France in 2008;

a) Reinforcing the legibility of OMEP France and foreign actions

- Creation of an OMEP France site
- Great diffusion of the OMEP newsletter

b) Redefining the axles of a national project compatible with the activities of the mondial

- Production of a flyer
- Representation to international conferences and seminars (seminar Interlaken, Mexico, Québec)



c) Leveling of the OMEP France budget through an active seeking of budgetary line susceptible to support engaged actions

- Establishment of contact with French children organizations to obtain support and financing
- Broadcasting of OMEP products cards, counting rhyme books CD etc

b) Active participation to the work of the association active involvement in the scientific spirit development starting at pre-k

c) Participation to the seminar « no zero in behavior for 3-year old »(Issue of risk children discussed in France ; Hosting of 2-year old ; broadcast of a petition against the production of a TV for babies etc

4. Particular situation of your Committee that could be part of the world report

a) Training the pre-k student to become an eco-citizen; educate the pre-k students to selective sorting to become citizens respecting their environment and the long-term development

5. Members

9 sections 160 members



GERMANY

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1. The DNK in 2007: Main Concerns and Activities

Expanding the provision of education and care for the under-threes

As a result of the 12th *Kinder- und Jugendbericht* (Report on children and young people), the past years have seen expert debate on policy issues in Germany focusing increasingly on the intensification and optimisation of the state's efforts to provide education and care in early childhood. Establishing quality-oriented education and care for children tailored to their needs is viewed as one of the most pressing and crucial political projects for the future. From the policy perspective this aim is linked to, on the one hand, improving equal opportunities and children's chances in education and, on the other, facilitating the possibility of parents combining family and work. In passing the Federal Law on extending the provision of day care for children, which entered the statute books on 1 January 2005, the legislator has set out to guarantee places in child care and nursery facilities for 17% of under-threes in western Germany and 39% in eastern German by 2010, representing a nationwide expansion to 230,000 places. In a parallel development, the German Länder's formulation of plans for educational provision in day care facilities has kick-started the process of improving quality in early childhood education and care, though with the initial focus primarily on the three to six year olds.

The expert debate on the quantitative and qualitative expansion in child care provision was given a new momentum when, in early

2007, the Federal Government announced its aim of creating 750,000 child care places by 2013, thereby securing a 35 % care quota for under-threes across Germany as a whole. The rationale for these re-adjusted expansion targets cited, on the one hand, the European Union's 2002 Lisbon Strategy, or Lisbon Process, aimed at a 33% care quota for under-threes and, on the other, a German Youth Institute (DJI) 2006 study on care which put the figure for the existing parental need for child care at 35%. By summer 2007, the Federal Government and Länder negotiation process on financial regulation had reached an administrative agreement smoothing the way to the planned extra expansion. This agreement includes the introduction of a legal right to care provision for all children from the age of one to three throughout Germany, effective as of the 2013/14 kindergarten year.

Since the Federal Government presented its plans to increase care provision for under-threes above the amount stipulated in the law itself, the DNK has given careful consideration to this issue and critically reviewed the process as it evolved, up to the concretisation of the legislator's plans. In so doing, the enormous challenges facing the system of early childhood care provision under state responsibility have become clear. As the Federal Government's 2006 report on the state of the expansion in day care provision for under-threes revealed, simply achieving the 2005 goal of 230,000 places by 2010 will require a significantly greater effort.



The issue of fostering language skills largely dominated the debate on early childhood education in 2007. The PISA results led to heightened educational policy ambitions in school pedagogy to expand their sphere of activity to early childhood. Moreover, the importance of fostering language skills has been further emphasised from the integration policy perspective.

The educational policy argument for anchoring language competence assessment and the targeted promotion of language development in early childhood education in day care facilities is based on the legally enshrined duty of compulsory school attendance, which in turn stipulates that children must demonstrate a standard of sufficient readiness to attend school. The requirements for school admission largely depend on a child's language competence, which is ultimately appealed to as legitimatising mandatory pre-school language competence assessment and remedial measures, as already applied to children of four and over in several German Länder.

The line of the integration policy argument is closely linked with the process of the German government's integration summits initiated in 2006. This was triggered by a public debate that increasingly focused on the social integration problems experienced by young people with a migration background. The National Integration Plan, presented by the German Chancellor during the second integration summit in July 2007, pursues the goal of improving integration courses and securing a solid education via measures including the fostering of language skills in early childhood.

The practice of assessing language competence in early childhood is located in the field of tension between, on the one hand, a test-based and, on the other, an observation-based diagnosis. The practice of fostering language skills in pre-school that may, in some instances, result from a

diagnosis is itself characterised, in turn, by a range of diverse conceptual approaches. In particular, the DNK takes a critical stance on the Federal Government's National Integration Plan chapter entitled *Von Anfang an deutsche Sprache fördern* (Promoting the German language from the start).

2. DNK activities encouraging an "Early Childhood Education" debate on the regional level

Quality in day-care services

Developing childcare programmes in all-day facilities is closely connected with the expansion of day care services. Even if the Federal Government's law provides for future equality between this sphere and institutional pre-school education and care, there is still, as yet, no general consensus on the design of both day care service structure and content and its professional status. Taking expert reflection on the qualitative development perspectives as a basis, the DNK has set itself the goal of helping to drive forward an expansion in day care provision that meets the fundamental child development needs as well as parental requirements. The statement on "Quality in day care provision" was published in early 2008.

The legal right to education and care for under-threes

As things stand, children of three and over in Germany have a legally enshrined right to a kindergarten place. Due consideration was given to the diverse aspects of potentially expanding this legal right to include children from one year onwards. In designing and holding a symposium entitled *Vor drei dabei – Rechtsanspruch auf frühkindliche Erziehung, Bildung und Betreuung für unter Dreijährige?* (Involving the under-threes - A legal right to early childhood education and care for the under-threes?), the Committee presented the key results and insights to a specialist public and helped to drive forward expert debate in this area.



3. Current developments the DNK will be addressing in 2008

Fostering language skills

At present, there is no unified picture of the demands that fostering language skills will place on day care professionals. The DNK's planned workshop on *Sprache – Integration – Bildung* (Language – Integration – Education) is a contribution to the process of establishing general professional consensus on this issue.

Promoting the under-threes

The existing Länder plans and recommendations in this field largely deal with education and care for children from three and over until they enter school. The increased focus on day care provision for under-threes also entails a corresponding need to further develop professional standards that take the specific needs of this age group into account and, in particular, are aligned with the developmental and educational processes in this phase of life. Amongst its other activities here, the DNK is planning a symposium at the 13th German Child and Youth Welfare Congress from 18 – 20 June 2008.

Teaching values

The situation of children and adolescents as perceived by the general public and reflected in the media is increasingly associated with negative qualities: excessive media consumption, poor nutritional awareness, a lack of interest in education, irresponsibility, an absence of public spirit, patterns of interaction characterised by violence, no awareness of norms, etc. Virtually as a reflex, the cry has gone up for educational authorities to place the dissemination of traditional values and virtues more at the heart of their efforts. The upcoming generation finds itself confronting living, learning and working conditions that are becoming significantly more complex. The fundamental social duties include providing assistance towards a self-determined life. But is there nothing more to re-formulating this duty than a mere "hymn to discipline"? Can an early dissemination of values immunize against a multitude of temptations in a landscape of values steadily becoming evermore pluralistic? What are the reasons for the current debate on value-oriented education? What consequences does this have in and on practice? The DNK is planning to address these questions in a panel discussion during the 13th German Child and Youth Welfare Congress.



GREECE

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1.

Inform the three major activities conducted by the National Committee in 2007 (January to December) in all aspects of Early Childhood Education and Care. Include some relevant comments for a broad understanding of the activity scope. (See note at the end).

On 1st to 3rd of June 2007 the 6th National Conference of Greek National Committee of OMEP was held in Patras. Its topic was “Language as medium and subject of learning” and it was organized in collaboration with the Department of Educational Science and Early Childhood Education of University of Patras. The Conference was a great success regarding the sessions (8 invited speakers, 48 research papers), the number of people who attended it (500, professors, teachers, students) as well as the discussions.

On 29 of June to 1 of July 2007 the National Committee of OMEP in Greece conducted a three days meeting of the members in Rethymno, the picturesque city on Crete island, where there is one of the nine of OMEP regional departments. Our members of the department had held a congress there, were members of all OMEP departments in Greece presented the projects they had applied in their classes throughout the former school year. They had the unique opportunity to be together, visit historic places and religious monuments, enjoy natural beauty and members love and company. The proceedings of this meeting were published with the sponsorship of local authorities.

One major priority of National Committee was to publish its scientific journal “Researching the world of child”, which is the only scientific journal for early childhood education in Greece. Now we are ready to publish the 8th volume.

2.

If there are no OMEP regional, departmental or local activities in your country, please inform those ones conducted by the National Committee in regions other than the capital city or have contributed to the education at national level.

The nine OMEP Regional Committees in Greece have conducted many activities in the year. More than one hundred activities all over the country covered a variety of topics, such as: early literacy activities, teacher- parents relationship, early signs of learning disabilities, childhood and cinema, plastic art, integration approach of teaching and project, workshops about art, transition to primary education, etc. These activities were addressed mainly to kindergarten teachers and only a small number to parents or children.

3.

Considering the child care conditions in your country in the educational area, which are the most urgent challenges that OMEP will have to face in 2008, and what activities (areas or work topics) has OMEP planned to face such challenges?

OMEP in Greece will hold its 7th Congress about “Childhood and mass media”, a subject that concern teachers and parents as well. OMEP’s target is always to help



through the education of children and parents to adopt a critical attitude towards mass media and television. We have to face the media power as a competitor to teachers and parents' mission. We have to find out the way to protect children from media influence and help them to cultivate their personality, to research knowledge and reach independent ways of thinking.

4.

Are there specifics to be outlined in the World Report such a problem, new idea or any important matter for the Committee you chair to be satisfied? It will be mentioned in the Report.

The ecological problems will be a permanent worry to the peoples in the world and we have to fight in two parallel ways: one is to change our everyday life taking in mind respect for nature and the other is to form our protest against interferential policies of our countries. The international group of OMEP members, can still cooperate and write some articles or declarations published on internet, newspapers, or special leaflets to inform and raise people's sensitivity, on the base of our children's future.

We must also form our attitude about immigration, taking in mind human rights and logical solutions applicable in the future.

Finally, we – as OMEP members- have to support families as a fundamental legislation which is the only stable environment which can give values to children.



ICELAND

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OMEP in Iceland has been operated for 18 years. When we look back at these years, we can see how much we have achieved, but if we only look at one year at a time, we have only accomplished a little.

Children's park

A big fund, owned by the chamber of commerce supported the Children's park project this year. When we do our grocery-shopping, we pay for the plastic bags we need to bring the goods home and we know the money goes in a fund and will be used to make the environment better. It was both a recognition for the project and very important financial support and brought a lot of attention to the project.

We used the money to buy small trees for planting in the Children's park.

Meetings/conference

OMEP in Iceland has decided on several meetings about education of multi cultural children.

This matter is new in our country, and OMEP Iceland will warmly welcome these children, as new Icelanders.

Three good meetings have occurred.

Comments and view

When the Parliament is on its way to making new laws concerning children or making revision of old laws, they ask for OMEP'S opinion. Last year the Parliament was revising and adding to the "Law of Primary school", and we gave our opinion as always.

Presents/financial aid

OMEP in Iceland supports two children in India.

In cooperation with the Church Aid in Iceland, the children were supported and given opportunities to go to school and they will be taken care of and helped to get an education.

OMEP in Iceland, in cooperation with the Red Cross in Iceland, paid for two Waterholes which will be used by hundreds of children for at least the next 50 years in Africa.

This has been done since 2002.



IRELAND

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OMEP Ireland hosts an Annual Research Conference in April, which is attended by more than 70 delegates and at which 30 papers are presented. Each year we have published the proceedings of the Conference and, we are delighted that, in 2007, we moved from the Conference proceedings to a peer reviewed journal called, *An Leanbh Og* (The Young Child). Vol. 1 has been a great success and Vol 2 will be issued in April, 2008. The 2008 Conference, theme is 'Cherishing Childhood'. We have also published a curriculum for 3-4 year old children, called 'Project E.Y.E' which was developed by practitioners and, a Research Handbook entitled 'Exploring Children's Lives' Ed. by Dr. Rosaleen Murphy.

Our Committee meets monthly and works very hard to promote OMEP nationally among academics, practitioners and, particularly, among the students of Early Years education and care who will be entering the Childcare Profession in the next few years. We are in the process of gathering together the OMEP Ireland archival material, which we hope to house in the University and to which our colleagues and students will have access.



ISRAEL

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Focus: Emphasis on infants and toddlers, their caregivers, parents

1. Major Activities

Established an active Early Childhood Education lobby to enlist the support of Israel's Parliament (Knesset) delegates as well as members of Israeli society in the promotion legislation for the licensing of all early childhood programs and for the supervision of all nursery frameworks.

Prepared and distributed a pamphlet and petition in support of the lobby's aims:

- Promote the support of children with special needs and children in danger
- Coordinate action among all early childhood organizations in Israel
- Develop programs that provide enrichment and advisement for parents

Created an online announcement about the lobby's aims calling for support of the pending law on the supervision of nursery schools. It was signed by 200 education professionals and 900 parents.

Members of the lobby attended parliamentary debates on Children's Rights. They met with the wife of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Alisa Olmert, who expressed support of the goals and actions taken by OMEP Israel.

2. Events in regions other than the capital city

OMEP Conferences in recent years took place in the periphery, (Kiryat Gat, Ashdod Community Centres, Sakhnin Arab Teacher Training College) and had exceptionally large attendance. The subjects dealt with were: Birth to Three; Caregivers; Ways of Working; Styles of Parenting; Improving Educational Frameworks for the Very Young.

3. Challenges for 2008

- OMEP Israel will increase activities with parents by introducing a program for young parents and actively collaborate with Israel's Nat'l Committee for Parents.
- Continue to centre on meeting the needs of infants and toddlers, focusing on licensing and supervision. Towards these ends, OMEP Israel will continue to maintain its lobbying activities that have already had some positive results. The pending law has passed the "first reading" which is one of several steps towards passing legislation in the country.
- Continue to hold conferences and workshops in different regions of the country.

Number of members: 65

▪



LATVIA

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During the period January - December 2007 the National Committee of Latvia has organized two state conferences about the preschool practice in Latvia.

The first – “Development of language and communication skills in preschool ages”, which was organized together with University of Latvia.

Language and communication is one of most important part of general development of preschool age children, that's why participants worked in 5 work shops and plenary. Children's language will have developed rapidly by this stage and they will be able to concentrate for a longer period of time. The main topics were: development language and communication skills through the play, Multilanguage situation and child, book and language development etc. Teachers were very happy to be together and change their experience of practice.

The second state conference - Administration of quality in kindergarten. Participants discussed about the didactics, evaluation, quality of programmes, accreditation of schools.

Teachers were very interested in the workshops, where they have interesting discussions about the curriculum and their own practice in the kindergarten.

Every conference has exhibitions of materials for announced theme.

Number of members: 254



LITHUANIA

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1.

The National Committee of OMEP Lithuania has organized the following activities for educators:

- Development of creative curriculum guides for educators;
- Children's education process observation and research;
- Advancement of children's education – research project preparation and presentation.

The activities begun earlier in the self-expression field are being continued. We arrange practical seminars and publish methodical recommendations about creative curriculum.

We continue work in the field of improving a child's readiness for school and adaptation during the first school year. In cooperation with scientists we organise exhibitions of educators' works.

2.

We have organized a number of seminars on national and regional levels with the following topics discussed:

- "Art in Child's Activities";
- Children's care from birth to three;
- "Children's stories: creativeness and self-expression.

The seminars were attended by the representatives of the Regional Committees.

3.

The Regional Committees get deeper into the following topics:

- Creation of the child development environment with contributions made by parents and children;
- Creation of the methodical guides in sharing the new experience in art-related activities.

4.

In 2008 National Committee of OMEP-Lithuania:

- will collaborate with The Ministry of Education and Science in preparation new children education programs;
- will organize nation wide discussion about the quality of children education;
- in co-operation with other public organisations will take care of the children summer recreation.

We would like to note that the seminars arranged by The National Committee of OMEP-Lithuania represents some interesting trend that can be identified as "Small Pedagogical Discoveries" and that might be noteworthy to be mentioned in the General Report.



NORWAY

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1.

Hosting the 2006 World Assembly included finishing a great number of reports, certificates bank transfers and so on that went on for several months after the event. The committee was pre-occupied with tedious matters and was not able to carry on with new projects. The economic situation did not allow the committee to visit any of the international meetings.

2.

Due to a sudden set-back of health, the board has not yet been able to follow up the contacts established during the Tromsø-meeting to the extent that which we would have wished. Establishing regional activities may follow the Annual Meeting discussion (4).

3.

However, we were happy to congratulate the completing of the Doctoral works of OMEP-member Anne Greve and her theme “Friendship between small Children in Kindergarten and Day Care Centres” in 2007. We believe that her work will contribute to increasing the interest of child care professions.

The great challenge that we mentioned in last year’s report- that kindergarten and Day Care Centres are facing a dramatic lack of trained staff – has not been met. We think that Anne Greve’s work is an important contribution that will bring more competent young people to choose early childhood education and to choose working in early childhood institutions.

4.

The board will propose to the Annual Meeting to analyze and discuss the theme set for the next World Congress of OMEP in Sweden in 2010: “Boys and Girls – Citizens of the World. Gender, Equality and Sustainable Development.” We believe that OMEP Norway can contribute to the programme.

Number of members: 60, including institutions and colleges.



POLAND

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1. Most relevant activities conducted by the National Committee

- The board of national committee had 3 meetings. Unfortunately, the committee members did not participate in OMEP European meeting and in the World Council and Conference in Mexico. Our financial means have been very few lately, because we collect money only from our members so we have tried different models to gain money to be able to participate in the international meetings. The board members participate in trainings how to write projects in order to apply for EU funds.
- The committee was cooperating with directors and teachers of kindergartens and crèches in Poland to help them with their problems.

2. Most relevant activities conducted at regional level

We have five very active regional committees. Some of their activities are :

- lectures on different subjects like “The HCCP system and problems with adopting it in kindergartens”
- conferences: “Early childhood education in new educational reality”, “The child and media – chances and menaces” with lectures about media and emotional child’s development, and “Creation of environment which support child’s development” and also very important conference which presents work of polish crèches in Bialystok “Small child in XXI century.”

- One of the regional committee in Warsaw co-organized international conference “Child’s right to development” .The conference was held in Warsaw on October 4-5 with around 150 participants. We hosted guests from Czech Republic, Slovakia, Holland, Sweden and Norway. The conference participants visited several kindergartens in Warsaw and watched very different activities conducted with Polish children.

3. Most urgent challenges to be faced by OMEP in 2008

- Discussion about how schools are prepared to receive 6-years old children from kindergartens and what they should offer for such young pupils.
- We need to monitor the early childhood education debate.
- Our web-site needs up-dating.

4. Membership

- OMEP Poland currently has a total membership of 580. Sadly, the committee lost members during the last two years. They were thanked for their valuable services.
- Most of members are kindergarten teachers or headmasters, another part of them work at universities, especially Faculty of Education.

Number of members: 580



PORTUGAL

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1. Most relevant activities conducted by the National Committee

“Rolling” Project

Started in January and should last three years, involving gypsy children and young people (and their families) under risk conditions.

Funded by “Escolhas” program and launched by various Ministries, in collaboration with the Association of Preschool Establishments João de Deus, the Amadora City Council, the Council of Parishioners from Falagueira, and CPCJ – Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People under risk conditions.

Program “Ajudar as Crianças a Crescer Saudáveis e Felizes” (Help Children to Grow Healthy and Happy)

For children and young people from various suburbs living in exclusion and marginality conditions, generating violence and hate. It is intended to develop abilities, knowledge, values and attitudes to realize an “exit door” to a healthy life within the society.

Second Golf Tournament “Shot Solidário” was supported by over 30 national and international companies, and attracted a significant number of participants. Funds collected will be used for salaries and administration expenses of this program.

Project “Kcita” (in suburb de la Cruz Vermelha) has been designed as the continuity for the intervention in project “Ajudar as Crianças a Crescer Saudáveis e Felizes”

Project “Anos Ki Ta Manda – Espaço para Aprender” (Space for Learning)

Its key audience is composed of children and young people from deprived and problematic socio-economic settings, under conditions of vulnerability and/or social exclusion, especially descendants of ethnic migrant minorities.

Intends to promote social integration through development (psycho-pedagogical) programs allowing them to acquire constructive social values for their insertion in the community and the development of their personality in a socially responsible manner.

Various projects have been included in the “Good Practices Map for Sheltering and Integrating Migrants” presented in Lisbon for the International Day of Migrants.

Also are diffused through various mass media (radio stations, TV stations, magazines and others). In February, in the Ministry of Education building some OMEP Portugal activities were displayed, such as “A Rodar” and “Anos Ki Ta Manda”.

General Assembly

Held on 23 January.

Participation in Events

- Seminar “*What Human Rights in a Social Europe?*”, in Foundation Pro-Dignitate (20 & 21 March, in Lisbon).
- Inauguration of OMEP Portugal space in Suburb de la Cruz Vermelha (Lisbon) with the presence of His Royal Highness Dom Duarte de Bragança, Head of the Portuguese Royal House (14 June). In



this space, we have performed various actions as follows:

- Ludic-pedagogical activities; plastic arts workshops (collage, painting, handcraft, sketches), spaces for reading stories, music, films and basic computer skills. If possible, playing outside with equipment available in the suburb.
- Pedagogical aid: support for homework and preparation for assessment tests.
- Promotion of personal and social competences and sensitization in topics such as healthy nutrition, health, and social & racial paradigms. Occasionally, some drama sessions and debate groups.
- OMEP World Assembly and 25th World Congress (July, in Mexico City).
- OIDEI (International Organization for the Education Right and Free Instruction) International Seminar.

Some collaborative activities

- OMEP Portugal established a consortium with Gebalis and the Association of Preschool Establishments João de Deus aimed at working (a 3-year period) on educative, parental and professional competencies for families.
- For “*De Mãos Dadas* project”, a suburb with social problems was selected. Through a consortium between the Association of Preschool Establishments João de Deus and Gebalis, works with children and young people from 3 to 18 will be performed.
- Cooperation with Amadora & Sintra City Councils and CPCJ – Sintra-West for the project “*Ganhar Asas e Voar*”, aimed at parents’ development.
- Association with Gebalis and the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People under risk conditions – CPCJ of Lisboa for giving professional development courses on the promotion and motivation area for teaching various languages and creating a space for providing psycho-social attention.

Subsidy Projects

- OMEP Portugal applied to a subsidy for Children and Young People under risk conditions Program (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) aimed at promoting a better life quality for socially excluded children and young people.

Other Activities

- In Warsaw (Poland), the President received the Alcuin Award 2007 (1 December) for toy libraries project of Preschool Establishments João de Deus, where OMEP is an institutional partner.
- In Christmas Season, toys and clothes were distributed by children from Preschool Establishment João de Deus de Olivais.
- MAGESTIL (a professional school) offered blankets manufactured by its students who were encouraged to continue studies as result of actions performed in 6 de Maio suburb. These students (7) completed a Level II Theoretical-Professional course (equivalent to 9th course, with a professional certificate).

2. Specifics to be outlined in the World Report

We want to express our gratitude to everyone who worked with us to attain the purpose of “promoting better conditions, wellbeing, development and happiness within the family, institutions and society for each child.”



RUSSIA

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I. Most relevant activities conducted by the National Committee

1. As year 2007 was declared in Russian Federation The Year of Child, the following main activities took place:

- As a part of the 13th International exhibition “Mir Detstva 2007” (“World of Childhood”) October 3 – 7 (Expocentre Fairgrounds, Moscow), Russian OMEP Committee organized a conference “Favourable environment for child development: modern forms of family and pre-school educational institutions”; the programme “Moscow Family – Competent Parents” was presented and discussed at the conference developed with the active participation of OMEP Russia members. Conference materials will be sent to the Russian regional OMEP members.
- At present the number of 1,5 - 3 years old children enrolled in kindergartens has increased dramatically. Therefore, a seminar was held: “Pedagogics of an early age” (February). Participants: preschool teachers, teachers of children’s sanatoriums, college and high school teachers and other specialists. Issues discussed: coordinating the work with children of an early age and their physical and mental development, emotional comfort; training of specialists for work with children of an early age.

2. A joint pilot project of the Department of Education (Moscow) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the field of child upbringing and early childhood education “Education in

Moscow: from infancy to school” with active participation of OMEP members has been developed in the following directions: environmental education of preschoolers in modern life, principles of pre-school education in bi-and multilingualism; psychological and pedagogical support for the modern family.

The projects were approved by UNESCO.

3. In 2007 our members wrote and published 3 methodological books for teachers of preschool educational institutions based on new principles of the preschool didactics and for the purpose of full physical and mental development of children:

- “Development lessons for children aged 2-3” (571 pages) edited by L. Paramonova;
- “Development lessons for children aged 6-7” (1015 pp.), edited by L. Paramonova.
- “Models of innovative health-preserving technologies used in the work with children of preschool age” (239 pp.).

All the materials will be sent to Russian regional OMEP members.

4. Special events at the regional level were not organized last year. The representatives of different regions of Russian Federation participated in all above mentioned events OMEP held in Moscow.



II. Most immediate challenges to be faced by OMEP in 2008

1. The development of plans (until 2010) to implement 3 projects (ecology, education in bi-and multilingualism; support for modern family), proposed by OMEP members and approved by UNESCO requires the participation of researchers, practitioners, and Moscow preschool educational institutions.

2. As year 2008 has been declared in Russian Federation The Year of Family, the following main activities will be taken:

- Regional conferences and seminars, contributing to the promotion of the programme “Family – Competent Parents.” Particular attention will be paid to the organization of the integrative and inclusive education for children with disabilities.

- Conference “Early Childhood - a crucial period in normal development of the child” (March), the materials will be sent to regions.
- The preparation of a book for development lessons for children aged 3-4 and 4-5 for publication. The content is based on age characteristics and principles of integration of different kinds of activities.

Number of members: 150



SLOVAKIA

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1. Preschool education in the context of lifelong education

The national conference titled Preschool Education in the Context of Lifelong Education was held on 28 - 29 September 2007. The aim of the conference was to get information about conceptual intentions of preschool education and development of pedagogues' careers in Slovakia in EU context.

The main organizers were OMEP SC, OMEP RS Banská Bystrica-Brezno, Municipal Pedagogic Centre Banská Bystrica, The City of Banská Bystrica, Faculty of Pedagogy Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica, Regional School Office, Banská Bystrica. The conference was held under the patronage of SR Department of Education and Ivan Saktor, Mayor of Banská Bystrica.

Results from the aim and content of the conference:

1. To cooperate at all levels to create and implement important legislative aims in the field of preschool education.
2. To endorse developing competence of children during the course of children education in conditions of Kindergartens.
3. To deepen family, Kindergarten and primary school partnership in the field of preparedness of children for entering primary schools.
4. To arrange management Kindergarten system by qualified preschool education experts.
5. To contribute to expanding and deepening knowledge, skills and attitude through continual education of Kindergarten teachers.

A conference anthology will be published and all participants will get a certificate.

2. Activities carried out in regional sections

OMEP SC concentrates its work into activities that are organised in seven regional sections. These activities can be divided into four fields:

A. Activities aimed to improve educational work in Kindergartens

- *specialized – method seminars on:* Didactic activities, Vocal education as a part of pedagogic communication, Approach to the nursery literature through creative dramatization, Pre-reader literacy in Kindergarten, Creative dramatization in Kindergarten Part 2, A fairy tale as an educational medium, Developing literary literacy in terms of cultured literacy

B. Activities with and for preschool children and towards public

- children's literary creativity performances – Little Preschooler
- *music creativity performances* – Bystrica Nightingale, Brezno Nightingale
- *art and work creativity presentations* - 'The Nicest Toy, Children Christmas Market, Christmas at a Castle
- *literary and music creativity performances* – Children to Children, Schools at a Square, Golden Nightingale
- *motor skills presentations* – Children Olympic Games, Sport Days, Making Snowmen Competition
- stage composition competitions – Movements Pleasure



C. Activities aimed to improve management and further education

- Kindergarten headmistresses club
- attendance at conferences and specialized – method seminars
- panel discussion : Education-prepared transformation
- specialized seminar: Common Europe in issues of preschool education
- attendance of OMEP SC members at the congress Societies for preschool education

D. Friendship and studying activities

- *foreign visits:* in the Czech Republic – Prague, Brno, Ceske Budejovice
- *inland visits:* surroundings of Bratislava

3. Important challenges and activities in 2008

- To carry out OMEP European conference and regional meeting in April 2008
- To take part in the worldwide OMEP Congress in Canada in August 2008
- In October 2008 to plan and carry out OMEP SC Conference with international participation connected with annual membership meeting on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of OMEP SC institution

In 2008 we consider as key and OMEP SC will participate and pursue our aims:

- Commenting Educational Law and additional conceptual material and legislative proposals
- Participating in content reform of school system

- Active partnership with the research team that cooperates in research tasks of State Pedagogic Institution, Department of Education
- Arrangement of cooperation among universities and other institutions in the field of preschool education research
- Examining preparedness of children , Kindergarten teachers and material conditions for prepared content transformation in Kindergarten Curriculum
- Initiating of cooperation with European OMEP committees

There are 450 members registered in OMEP SC and SC is registered as an association. Our members participate actively in establishment of important strategic material concerning preschool education.

In 2007, 17 members participated in:

- Establishment of Professional development of teachers in career system
- Establishment of new preschool education curriculum
- Establishment of method – didactic material: Education in Kindergartens classrooms with children of mixed ages.
- Establishment of a method handbook for parents and Kindergarten teachers: Preschool preparation of children in Kindergarten and family

Four of our members are on a consultative committee of Department of Education and take an important part in approving and passing new conceptions and legislation.

Number of members: 450



SPAIN

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1. Most relevant activities conducted by the National Committee

Elaboration and Distribution of Biannual Newsletter

Including topics of interest and news, sent to OMEP Spain members through its web page (developed by Dr. José Quintanal, a member of the Committee).

Monthly Flyer

We are still developing the Monthly Flyer for parents from Virgin of Europe School (Madrid) on topics such as Education based on Values and other matters of interest for parents of 3-6 years olds.

60th Anniversary of World OMEP

In order to commemorate the 60th OMEP Anniversary, we will foster the initiative and creativity which has identified teachers of this educational level (Preschool Education) in Spain, acknowledging and diffusing “last word” and interesting experiences for educators. Then a competition on experiences in Preschool Education classroom has been arranged. To be published.

Participation in events

OMEP President attended a meeting arranged by *The Children en Madrid* (May) within the framework of “*Let’s Rediscover the Future*” campaign for children affected by armed conflicts. Kim Phuc, a mother today and then Vietnamese girl portrayed in the most famous picture of the war in Vietnam, which was awarded the Pulitzer prize was present. She was a keynote speaker on this topic.

- In this meeting, data were provided on conditions of children in the middle of armed conflicts throughout the world.
- The President took part in a Journey (June) for Preschool Education teachers. OMEP was invited to speak of the Organization (through a complete audiovisual presentation). It was an occasion for exchanging experiences among teachers interested in this teaching field.
- The Education Council of Madrid Community and the General Directorate for the Improvement of Education Quality requested OMEP to give a course (November, in Madrid) on the *construction of mathematical language in Preschool Education* (by OMEP President, Amalia Bayón Álvarez).
- Course by Dr. María Eugenia González Medina on *treatment to attention to diversity, methodological and organizational strategies*, for internship teachers. It covered those types of measures (general, ordinary and specific) which may be implemented at the centers to meet the students educational needs, whose profiles have rapidly changed in recent years: students with special educational needs or requiring educational aid, either because they have no command of the in the host country language or come from other educational systems, or an irregular schooling in their country of origin or for being part of ethnic minorities.
- In March, a group of professors (OMEP Spain members and others from a Japanese University) visited some preschool establishments in Madrid, Virgin of Europe School among them,



realizing the lines for Preschool Education in Spain.

- The President, Amalia Bayón Alvarez, and the Vice President, Dr. María Paz Lebrero Baena, attended the OMEP World Assembly (July, in Mexico City).

Both as well as many members from UNED (E-Learning National Education) participated in the 25th OMEP World Congress (July, in Mexico City) and presented various works.

2. Most relevant activities conducted at regional level

As in past years, OMEP Ponferrada (León) Delegate, María Trinidad Crespo Alvarez, has continued with the publication of a monthly article in Semanario: “El Bierzo 7” – La Tronera” under the theme reflections around education.

3. Most urgent challenges to be met by OMEP in 2008

- Collaboration in UNICEF programs.
- Explore the immigrant children integration to early childhood education, and the quality of Early Childhood Education.

- Rule the development and adequate resolution of a competition on “last word” experiences in the classroom for Preschool Education teachers organized by the OMEP Spain Committee to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Organization. Evaluators will be OMEP Spain members as well as UNED professors.

4. Specifics to be outlined in the World Report

Spain has lost one its greatest Preschool Education drivers *due to the passing away* of Mrs. Aurora Medina de la Fuente (97 years old), founder of OMEP in Spain (on 18 October, in Madrid).

5. Amount of members: 300 people



SWEDEN

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1. The three/four major activities by the Swedish Committee during 2007 are:

The architecture project “Children’s participation in the physical room”. The Swedish National Committee of OMEP and a number of regional committees have got economical support from The Swedish State Inheritance Fund for a two year project named “Children and democracy, children’s participation (voices) and sustainable development”. The intense work has started to involve three to five preschools with different surroundings in each region which are involved in the project. About fifty people are today involved in different ways. The first step in the project is to make an analysis of the physical room –inside as well as outside. Different kinds of methods are going to be tested and the most important focus is the participation of the children in this work – even the youngest ones. This documentation will be reported in April 2008.

World Congress 2010. The Swedish Committee of OMEP has, during the year, worked hard for a coming congress theme: ‘Children citizens in a challenged world’, with special focus on different childhoods, sustainable learning development and gender equity and equal rights. The proposal was successfully accepted since the World Congress of Mexico 2008 decided to give Sweden this privilege to arrange the next world congress. Further more, the congress in Mexico elected the new world president Professor Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson, the former president of Sweden. This resulted in a re-organization in the Swedish National Committee of OMEP for the coming years.

Infections among preschool children. The Board has started work on the need to reduce the infection risk among children in preschools. STRAMA (The Strategy group for Rational use of Antibiotics and reduced Antibiotic resistance) will cooperate with OMEP, and among other things, hand out information to the Swedish preschools. The work has started in one of the regional committees and will be followed up in the other regions.

Inter-professional cooperation within OMEP to include more members to the organization. The most important issue for OMEP right now is to develop the work, making it embrace more professions with interest in children’s upbringing and development. The coming work of OMEP is going to attract more professions when the research project is reported and in the work with the congress. This work has a special focus on young students at the universities to reinsure future memberships in the organization and in the representation of the National Committee of the Swedish OMEP.

2. OMEP Sweden regional committees

The four regional committees have well functioning even if there is problem with the declining memberships. Some of the activities are:

- To work with children’s outdoor environment, both activities for children and with children.
- Lectures on different subjects as Early childhood education as a democratic practice, To meet conflicts – a golden opportunity and finally The new education for preschool teachers.



3. Challenges that OMEP will have to face

Considering the child care conditions in our country in the educational area, the most urgent challenges in 2008 are:

- The preschools in Sweden have during the year 2007 shown good results in different kind of evaluation in contrary to the results from the compulsory school system. This might mean a risk for the continuing need of development work including the research in preschools when all focus and resources are heading to solve the school problems.

- There will be a need to strengthen the pedagogic leadership within both the preschools but also at the community level in a rapid coming situation when there is a lack of graduated teachers choosing to work in preschools.

In December of 2007 the organization have 180 individual members and 28 organization members.



SWITZERLAND

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Scientific commission: The OMEP Swiss section scientific commission met four times in 2007. A document dealing with the delicate issue of the youngster participating attitude and the adult interacting with the youngster was prepared by the commission. M. Léo Barblan finalized these documents. This project was presented during the world congress in Mexico. The Swiss committee also translated the document in three official OMEP languages, which are available for download on the website www.omep-ong.net.

Additionally, the commission is working on the consequences of the introduction of mandatory schooling starting at age 4. An informal meeting with the different actors involved both in Swiss French and Swiss German parts is under preparation for Spring 2008. Moreover, following the theme of the 2008 world congress that will be held in Québec, the members of the commission are working on a manuscript or poster dealing with « Feed the peace with children ». This project is rapidly evolving, thanks to the unique expertise of two commission members.

Swiss OMEP representation: In 2007, the President participated to the centennial celebration of the Montessori schools and the Swiss pre-K associations. For each opportunity, the President was accompanied by a regular OMEP member. In addition, Mrs. Cook participated in meetings with early-childhood partners, particularly to remind them about OMEP and its goals. She was often involved in their meetings and kept updated about the present problems, such as professional title recognition, personnel status, needs of public authorities, and practical needs and limitations). The

Swiss President participated in the OMEP-Europe general assembly, which was presided by Milada Rabusicova. This meeting took place in Interlaken, Switzerland, following the centennial celebration of the Swiss pre-K associations.

In July 2007, Mrs. Cook and M. Barblan travelled to Mexico to participate in the world congress of OMEP. During this meeting, Prof.Dr. Ingrid Pramling was elected World President to replace Mrs. Selma Simonstein, outgoing world President. Also, the members of OMEP-France, OMEP-Canada, and OMEP-Switzerland expressed their wishes to start a game library for African countries in response to a request from the OMEP-Congo committee and the OMEP representative to the UNICEF. Unfortunately, this project could not be conducted since the members of OMEP-France were sick, the members of OMEP-Congo were not present due to a travel visa denial, and the position of the new OMEP representative to the UNICEF not yet filled. We can only hope that this project will be realized in 2008, with the help of the members willing to effectively help the African continent.

Collaboration with the OMEP journal: The committee accepted the task of editing the French manuscripts submitted to the OMEP journal. One manuscript was submitted. The review was sent back to Mrs. Ingrid Pramling, editor of the journal. The review work necessitated three meetings between two members of the committee, in addition to the time necessary to write the review.

Partnership between different OMEP committees: The Swiss OMEP committee was asked by the Nepalese OMEP committee to start a



collaboration. The first act would be the visit of Nepalese representative to Switzerland. The Swiss OMEP committee was very keen to open a collaboration, even though the particular status of OMEP-Nepal, momentarily unattached to OMEP world. Negotiations are currently taking place to bring Nepalese members to Switzerland. Visits of early-childhood facilities and Kindergarten have been organized. It is the hope of the committee that members of OMEP-Nepal could come to Switzerland in 2008. Mr. Anil Ratna Tuladhar and Mrs. Cook are working together in this direction.

Visibility of OMEP-Switzerland: The number of OMEP-Switzerland members varies between 10 and 20 people. It is urgent that OMEP starts a promotion programme to gather more members. It is true that several members are also members of other associations dedicated to early childhood or pre-schooling.

The current President of the International Montessori association, Swiss section, is also an individual member of OMEP-Switzerland. Indeed, there are members of several organisations such as les Maisons Vertes de Dolto, state teachers associations, and pre-K associations. If every member can represent another association, OMEP-Switzerland is a very well-balanced and represented association, but the poor number of members does not suffice to bring financial means to OMEP. Our annual membership is still very high for the few members of us (USD 660). The Internet website is still to be created. The active members lack competency and availability in this regards.



TURKEY

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1. The Most Relevant Activities Conducted by the National Committee:

Meetings:

- We had 12 board meetings, organized official reports, and prepared 6 bulletins for all members.
- We made discussions and round table meetings with other national and international NGO's (like UNICEF, MOCEF) for improving the quality of early childhood education in Turkey.

Conferences & Seminars:

- Informative conferences are being held in the city centres and the suburbs all over the Country. Some of the subjects of the conferences are: "Healthy Behaviours of Parents", "Science Education", "Environmental Education in Early Childhood Period", "Importance of School - Parents Relations", "Communication with Child", "Early Literacy and School Readiness", "Children and TV", "Transition From Preschool To Primary School", "Importance of Play".

- This year, we continued to organise seminars and in-service training for preschool inspectors, principals, and teachers in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education Early Childhood Education Department.
- Parent Schools and in-service training were carried out with the participation of experts for the staff of official and private educational institutions.
- We sent educational materials to the nine different official kindergartens in rural areas.
- We organised a workshop and a conference on approaches and methods on developmental researches in socio-cultural context together with "Ankara University Centre for Research on Child Culture for researchers.

2. Future Activities:

We are organising a big international congress in one of our big city -Trabzon- on "Preschool Education In The Context Of Child, Family, And School" in April 30- May 3, 2008.



THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND (UK)

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New developments

In the four countries of The United Kingdom, this has been another year of challenge for OMEP (UK). Most members are involved in the many changes to the delivery of early childhood education and care, (birth to 5 years) within this complex, multi-ethnic society. These developments arise from the 'Every Child Matters' initiative (2004) and the subsequent Children's Acts, which aim to ensure that all children are given appropriate care and education. Health, social services and education are being integrated with considerable changes to children's programmes, adults' work schedules and to the levels of qualifications and health and safety checks required of all those who work with young children. Alongside these efforts have been the effective innovations of 'Sure Start' and The Primary Strategy: all striving to improve early years' provision.

The aim is to give parents a choice: either to stay at home full-time with their young children, or to work outside the home in part-time or full-time employment. Parents are encouraged to make use of child-care facilities either in state, voluntary or private settings. Costs are means tested, with the least able to pay, given state, financial support. Most settings now offer flexible hours, with extended care facilities from early morning to early evening on week days, with trained play leaders or unit staff in charge. To sustain the required high standards of services in these settings is a further challenge to senior area play-educators, child-care specialists and

inspectors, some of whom are members of OMEP. Many families, however, continue to depend on grandparents for extra child-care. Frequently, it is more convenient, cheaper and more consistent for the child to be with a loving relative, but the importance of such care is often overlooked by professionals.

New qualification

In various ways, members of The OMEP (UK) National Executive Committee (NEC) are involved in managing children's centres, child-care settings and schools. They are planning, running and assessing new degrees and masters' training courses, including the newest: 'The Early Years Professional Status'. There is a level three certificate in the early years foundation stage practice, which is intended for child-minders, classroom assistants and play-leaders, so as to gain a recognizable qualification for the phase (from birth to five years old). It is difficult to gain rigorous standards among students, with such a wide range of initial study experiences. OMEP (UK) has issued a specific UK Update on the perspectives of course-designers, tutors, monitors and students. For all, it is a challenge to achieve such competences, while coping with a job, a family and domestic commitments. The general aim is to improve all provision for young children in the UK, but standards and expectations vary.

New curriculum

During the year, OMEP(UK) members have appraised the draft copies of the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (0-5) guidelines in



England, the published 'Curriculum Framework for Children 3 – 5' in Scotland,' The Curriculum Guidance for Pre-School Education in Northern Ireland' and the, newly launched,' Foundation Phase 3 – 7 in Wales'. All demand high standards of professionalism in work with children and families and an imaginative ways of organising time, space and resources so as to create an attractive and safe play environment. These developments are carefully monitored by internationally renowned researchers. Generally, greater emphasis is place on learning through play, being imaginative, developing effective language and enabling children to pose and solve problems, whilst learning essential social skills. Systematic staff-training courses are held at national, regional and local levels, with heavy demands made on the experienced phase tutors, some of whom are members of OMEP (UK). Additional regional resources are provided for groups of toddlers, up to the age of two years, in the most socially deprived areas. In Wales 'The Flying Start' programmes aim to help parents with very young children to play well together and have fun in attractive outdoors and indoors settings. These are subject to regular monitoring by the newly combined inspectorate. All is new and challenging to those working in the phase.

Links with other UK initiatives

OMEP (UK) officers regularly attend national committee meetings of 'The Early Years Forum, 'The Play Council, 'The Hospital Play Board and 'The Lady Allen of Hurtwood Trust. They have been much involved in developing new courses, in constructively criticising proposed parliamentary measures, and in selecting candidates for grants to pursue projects aimed at enriching the lives of young children.

In March the president attended 'The Early Childhood Forum's Conference in Birmingham entitled: 'Championing Young Children's rights and Entitlements.'

Discussions centred on the implications of the Childcare Act, and on the UK's report to the United Nations on its progress towards adhering to 'The Conventions on The Rights of the Child' (UNCRC), but the UK has failed on articles 22 and 37, concerning the treatment of refugee children. OMEP (UK) continues to co-operate with other groups to overcome this unfairness.

At Church House, Westminster, in March, OMEP(UK)'s president and vice-president attended a government conference on engaging the voluntary and community sectors in delivering services for children and their families within the requirements of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Proposals were promising, now we await outcomes!

The OMEP Manchester, conference attracted two hundred delegates to a most successful day entitled: 'Thinking about thinking: Do we really understand young minds?' There were thought-provoking challenges to a range of participants, working in different settings. We all thank the North West OMEP (UK) group for their vision, diligence and loyal support.

On the 22nd.& 23rd.November at Oxford University Department of Education, early years specialists celebrated ten years since the commencement of the 'Effective Provision of Pre-School Education' longitudinal study of the progress and development of 2500 children in various settings for three and four year olds.

The two-day Round Table and Conference on 'The Early Years Foundation Stage' had renowned speakers: 'The Minister for Children: The Rt.Hon. Beverley Hughes M.P. with Prof. Lillian Katz of 'The University of Illinois, and Prof. Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson of the University of Goteborg, the World President elect of OMEP. 'The OMEP (UK) President attended, and thanks Prof. Kathy Sylva and Prof. Iram Siraj-Blatchford for their rigorous research into developments in early childhood in Britain. The research outcomes



form the basis of much of the new developments.

On 24th.November, Dr. Lillian Katz addressed OMEP (UK)'s delegates on: 'Perspectives of Education: the distinctive roles of parents and children'.

In the afternoon there followed the OMEP(UK)'s Annual General Meeting, at which I retired from the presidency, after four strenuous years, dealing with challenging changes, and frustrating transport difficulties, but if one young child benefits, then it has been worth the effort. Congratulations to Janet Morris on her election as President, her rich and wide experience will benefit OMEP (UK).

World wide links

Four OMEP (UK) delegates attended the European Seminar at Interlaken, Switzerland in May; and three OMEP (UK) delegates attended the twenty fifth World Congress of OMEP in Mexico City on 'Young Children's Right To Education'. The welcome was warm. It was good to co-operate with our OMEP friends from many countries, but sad to realise the plight of African groups, and the need for additional support. OMEP (UK), through its 'Children's Fund', helps causes in Nigeria and Zambia, and receives regular contacts.

Forth coming challenges

- We need to be vigilant in observing how national, regional and local initiatives are attempting to improve the lives of the most deprived children.
- We need to support our present World President: Prof. Selma Simonstein and our newly elected World President: Prof. Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson.

Members

150 individuals, 100 group members.

Diolch i bawb (Welsh); Grateful thanks to all from Dorothy Selleck.



WORDS FROM THE REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT FOR LATIN AMERICA

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Dear colleagues,

As you already know, in last OMEP World Assembly and Congress held in Mexico City, a new Regional Vice President for Latin America was elected: María Victoria Peralta (from Chile), taking over on 1 January 2008.

I wanted to take part in the ceremony held in Santiago city (Chile) and deliver a farewell speech, expressing my gratitude for our joint work oriented to early children in each of our countries, but it was not possible for me to attend to due previous commitments with my family.

Many thanks to all those who cooperated with my endeavors as Regional Vice President for Latin America. Without their support and cooperation it would have not been possible to attain OMEP purposes at regional level. While hugging you closely I ensure you may count on me for continuing with OMEP task... as it is an ongoing one. I will remain as a member of the Colombian Preschool Education Association (ACDEP), i.e., OMEP National Committee, and as Principal of the Center for Superior Psychopedagogical Studies. I will not stop advocating for the child's right to quality and equitable education and care from birth.

During 2007 I was in close contact with OMEP members at regional level and realized the progress achieved in most of them in reference to awareness rising of their corresponding national governments on the relevance to provide education and care from birth to 6, through a timely early education with quality human resources. In most of them, these programs are a sort of

“welfare”. Pedagogical emphasis prevails from 5 years old on, wasting then the most relevant period for neurological development, increasing thus repetition and dropout in the region as well as child abuse through various modalities: working children, prostitution, sex abuse, introduction to drug addiction and physical maltreatment due to family deprived conditions.

Countries were informed on OMEP policies and the importance of clicking on web page www.omep-ong.net to be familiar with different events at international level, so that they may be speakers and implementers in their corresponding countries.

A reason for the absence of a quality early education in the region is the lack of financial resources for paying qualified educators. Based on this, Regional OMEP requested the national governments to legislate on the relevance of Superior Education students internships in those locations where the children are cared by alternative human resources, where their professional support is highly necessary.

This proposal became a reality in Venezuela because of OMEP through the Community Services Act for superior education students, and passed away on 14 September 2005 (an OMEP's attainment). Colombia and other countries are studying a potential solution so that underprivileged boys and girls from the region may enjoy integral and equitable quality education and care which could be certainly translated into financial, social and political benefits in each nation. Colombia has been a guide for those countries where



the Child Act is under development, especially in neighbor countries.

Some activities undertaken in 2007

- The 14th National Congress on Initial Education “Initial Education on Love and Proper Care” was successfully held in Neiva city, Colombia. International speakers were present, such as Dr. Deanna Margini, Prof. of the Child School in Regio Emilia City Council (Italy) and Dr. Diego René Polit Corral. Colombian speakers were Dr. Carlos Julio González (Psychologist, Javeriana University), Dr. Alejandro Acosta Ayerbe (CINDE Regional Director), Dr. Blanca Rocío Bernal and Dr. Pablo Romero Ibáñez. The event was attended by approx. 800 people from various cities.
- Ongoing representative of OMEP National Committee in the “Expedition for Small Children” in Colombia.
- Participated actively throughout the year as OMEP representative with the Colombian Ministry of Education in the arrangements for Children and Young People Act, passed away in the country.
- Consistent encouragement to regional countries which have not joined OMEP yet, so that they may do it in the near future. Likewise National Presidents were reminded to pay annual fees regularly.
- Worked closely with OMEP Mexico Committee in the World Council (July) arrangements.
- Socialization prevailed in both the World Assembly and Congress in Mexico City. National Presidents were also encouraged to attend and vote for the elections of Regional Vice President for Latin America and World President.

- Attended OMEP World Executive, World Assembly and Congress meetings in Mexico City (July). On my returning, I sent a report on the event to all the regional countries so that those National Presidents who were absent due to financial reasons could be informed.
- In Colombia (specifically in Bogotá city), we managed free provision of education and care by the Secretariat of Education in Bogotá to children from 2 (day care, nursery school and transition). We will continue working so that these services are provided from birth.

Finally, may I say that it was a privilege for me being Regional Vice President for Latin America. I am certain that my successor will perform a great job. Her experience and expertise in early childhood matters is renown at international level, and specifically in America.

As I prefer to gather again instead of farewells, let me tell you “so long” with an

Note: As mentioned above, end-December, the second 3-year term of Graciela Rodríguez as OMEP Regional Vice President for Latin America came to a close. Her successor is María Victoria Peralta, from Chile: iidei@ucentral.cl



ARGENTINA

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1. Most relevant activities conducted by the National Committee

Collaboration Agreement with Fundación Telefónica in Argentina

The third consecutive renewal of the agreement with *Fundación Telefónica* to participate in the Child Network site (www.educared.org.ar/infanciaenred) as part of Educared (www.educared.org.ar) was subscribed.

Under the responsibility of the Argentinean Committee, “Dilemas” and “Educrianza” projects were developed.

Dilemas (www.educared.org.ar/infanciaenred/dilemas) invites educators, scholars, researchers and stakeholders to be informed, debate and discuss both old and new ideas on teaching and learning of youngsters under 6, aimed to improve the educational environment. Additionally, from the space “Así lo hacemos” (How we do it), we have continued sharing experiences in the classroom.

Educrianza (www.educared.org.ar/infanciaenred/educrianza) became a web site for the purposes of consultation, exchange and development of adults in charge of children from birth to three, developing topics associated to quality environment for raising and educating children in formal, non-formal and informal settings. Also we have continued sharing literature for children from the “Literary Caressing” space.

From Educrianza site we have arranged four virtual courses, with 150 people each. Some topics were: “Bases for thinking the

psychomotor development in early years”, “From gesture to word”, “Communication in early years”, “Limits in early years”, and “Art & Early childhood... a possible encounter”.

Additionally, within this project framework, we held two conferences with 150 participants each: “Gestures along raising process” and “Initiative in Early Development”.

On the other hand, the Committee (represented by Claudia Alicia Soto) participated in panel “Thoughts on play and education”, arranged by Fundación Telefónica.

“Challenges involved in the coordination of a nursery school”

In 2007, the Committee continued with this project which started in 2006. It is a free space for gathering Nursery School principals and coordinators for the reflection and sharing of strategies for their management.

Through a workshop, and with the coordination of experts, this activity intends to provide tools for the analysis of the Nursery School scope in association to its specific profile. The complexity of the principal’s role in these institutions plus the pedagogical task peculiarities in this level determine the relevance of the coordination role, and anticipate the type of drawbacks to be overcome for its development and improvement.

Topics treated in 2007 were: management, the project itself, work with educators, and work with families. Coordinators of the



project were Lic. Mercedes Mayol Lassalle and Lic. Gabriela Fairstein. Participants: 55 principals.

Monthly Newsletter

We have continued improving the layout, content and periodicity of our newsletter for members and the general community as well, thanks to an agreement with Fundación Pacificar for the e-bulletin design.

Thus we may provide updated information on OMEP activities in Argentina and throughout the world. Subscriptions: 2572.



BRAZIL

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1. Most relevant activities conducted by the National Committee

16th Brazilian Congress on Early Childhood Education (9 – 11 July, in Natal City/RN).

Theme: “Childhood and Citizenship – experience, knowledge and values”, jointly organized by OMEP Brazil and OMEP/BR/Rio Grande do Norte, with the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte.

The event gathered around 1000 professionals related to small children the education and protection: educators, researchers, public policy makers, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, members of Education Councils, Council for the Child and Young People’s Rights from all Brazilian states. Purpose: discuss, analyze and propose effective actions for the education of children from birth to six.

OMEP Brazil President, Prof. Maria Cecília Amendola da Motta, jointly with the participants, reaffirmed those principles oriented to child’s rights advocacy. The document “Childhood and citizenship: child’s rights advocacy” was developed, proposing effective actions for the Education of Children from birth to 6 in Brazil.

1st Brazilian Seminar – OMEP Brazil (November)

Intended to create reflection settings for promoting the definition of competencies and responsibilities for child’s education and the establishment of references for the

development of educative practices oriented to a quality education for small children.

During the event, the National Campaign for the Right to Education in Mato Grosso do Sul State official launching took place, reaffirming the commitment of institutions to guarantee the right to public quality education for all Brazilian boys and girls of all ages, identities and cultures. The event will be held annually and funds collected for registration will go for OMEP Brazil.

Election of OMEP Brazil National Executive Committee (2008-2010)

Considering that Brazil is the largest country (8,511,965 km²) in South America, the third in the Americas and the 5th at world level, OMEP Brazil NEC newly elected members decided a new OMEP structure in the country (similar to World OEMP), creating thus the Regional Vice President position.

NEC newly elected members are the following:

President: Maria Aparecida Salmaze

Regional Vice Presidents:

North Region: Raimunda Lopes Rodrigues Mendes

Northwest Region: Roberto Mauro Gurgel Rocha

Southeast Region: Valdete Tereza da Costa Asevedo

Central West Region: Maria Cecília Amendola da Motta

South Region: Maria Helena Fontoura Lopes dos Santos

Executive Secretary: Maria da Luz Fernandes Perim

Treasurer: Milene Holanda Nantes



Its work proposal is strengthening OMEP in Brazilian States as well as the articulation with public & public entities, and civil society. In those States where OMEP is present, activities are much reduced or discontinued due to financial problems and lack of support.

Participation in OMEP World Assembly and 25th World Congress (Mexico city)

OMEP Brazil was represented by OMEP/BR/MS President, Prof. Maria Aparecida Salmaze, who presented a work. During the World Council, while celebrating OMEP Mexico 25th anniversary, Maria Aparecida Salmaze was awarded a silver coin for OMEP/BR/MS and Prof. Marisa Serrano Education Institute education and care services to children.

Representative in the National Network for Early Childhood

At present, OMEP Brazil takes part of this network, being represented by Prof. Vital Didonet. The Network advocates for child's rights (youngsters up to 6), and the expansion and strengthening of democratic spaces in the Brazilian State without discriminating due to ethno-racial reasons, gender, location, religion and ideas, political orientation, and sexual preferences. Its mission is the promotion, elaboration, upgrading and integration of national policies for children up to 6, monitoring and evaluating its implementation.

The Network consolidates and diffuses information and referrals of topics on this age group, and organizes social mobilization actions for the implementation of its proposals (www.primeirainfancia.org.br).

2. Most relevant activities conducted at regional level

2.1. OMEP/BR/Alagoas

Participation in organized social movements and various activities with governmental and non-governmental entities from Alagoas state.

The Work Plan considers actions oriented to Municipal Associations. An organization period is taking place at present.

It counts on the collaboration of the Education Executive Secretariat of Alagoas State and Maceió Education Municipal Secretariat, and OMEP Brazil understanding and support.

2.2. OMEP/BR/Maranhão

Its most relevant attainment is the approval of the Fund for Basic Education Development and Reward to Education Professionals (FUNDEB), including day cares and other institutions.

OMEP/BR/MA tried and provided counseling to State nucleus providing information and data, respecting their autonomy and supporting their effective consolidation.

2.3. OMEP/BR/Mato Grosso do Sul

a. 18th State Gathering on Preschool Education and 4th OMEP/BR/MS International Seminar (6-9 June in Campo Grande-MS)

Theme of the former was /BR/MS "Ludic activities as a principle for the articulation of preschool education" and for the latter, "Preschool educators: development and identity". Approx. 1000 people participated.

Its purpose was the creation (for teachers and education professionals), some settings for discussion and reflection on child's development, learning & ludic processes, and principles for the construction and development of the educator's identity.

During the 18th Gathering, the book "Playing with Poetry in the Education Circle" (author: Prof. profesora Nelídia Amélia da Silva Ferreira) was launched.

b. Stamp and Postmark for 30-year participation in Mato Grosso do Sul state (10 August)

OMEP/BR/MS was awarded this Brazilian Post Office and Telegraph Companies stamp. These stamps and postmarks reveal



relevant national and international events, including renown entities and persons from various socio-cultural fields.

c. Social Certification GOLD Stamp – Work is everyone's Right

Awarded by Campo Grande City Council through the Municipal Secretariat for Education / Special Education Department, acknowledging corporate social responsibility actions.

d. Civic parade for the 108th anniversary of Campo Grande City Council

On participating, OMEP/BR/MS acknowledges the work of Campo Grande City Council and diffuses its preschool education services in Mato Grosso do Sul.

e. Training to both OMEP/BR/MS members and Education professionals

OMEP/BR/MS encourages them to participate in courses, conferences, study groups, meetings and other events.

g. Representatives in the State Education Council – Education Continuous Forum in Mato Grosso do Sul

Participation in monthly meetings with Education and other groups: Management as well as Basic, Superior, Professional, Special, Indigenous and Distance Education.

h. OMEP/BR/MS Odontological Clinic offers various treatments. People provided assistance in 2007 were 172. Out of them, 100 are OMEP members.

2.4. OMEP/BR/Pará

Its actions just covered counseling services and participation in congresses and seminars.

2.5. OMEP/BR/Rio de Janeiro

Socio-educative projects and updating preschool and distance education courses.

2.6. OMEP/BR/Rio Grande do Sul

The NEC promoted communication by e-mail and invitation to gatherings. The General Assembly (29 June) was just attended by OMEP Uruguiana and Santa Maria representatives. The future path for municipal associations and their drawbacks were discussed, as their actions remain isolated.

2.7. OMEP/BR/BA/Salvador

The annual action plan was elaborated from a very positive perspective, including various possibilities for growth in Salvador. Many actions are still pending.

2.8. OMEP/BR/MT/Cuiabá

A strategic plan was designed, where actions developed are based.

3. Most urgent challenges to be met by OMEP in 2008

Major OMEP challenge in all Brazilian states is understanding the FUNDEB: Fund for Basic (early childhood, elementary and middle) Education Development and Reward to Education Professionals.

Through society involvement, social policies for education would generate transformation. Essence of education is transforming people, revolutionizing systems and capturing new perspectives.

4. Specifics to be outlined in the World Report

OMEPA Brazil has participated in this huge mobilization for the approval and regularization of FUNDEB. The Fund will finance basic education (early childhood, elementary and middle) in the country, being in force up to year 2020. Will provide services to 47 million students.



Intends to reward educators (better salaries). FUNDEB will allow the progressive integration of all children to daycare centers and preschools, and will also include unschooled young people and adults and those one interested in completing their studies. Will guarantee access to all Basic Education levels.





CHILE

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1.

Which are the three more important activities made by the National Committee of their country in 2007 (January to December) in the scope of the care and education of the first childhood? Include commentaries to reflect the reach of these actions.

- The Chilean National Committee has continued working in three areas:
 - (a) Actions in favor of the Education and integral attention of the children of 0 to 8 years, emphasizing particularly the attention of children from 0 to 3. (PROINF)
 - (b) Actions in favor of the quality of the university training of professionals in this educational level, through the work of FODEP
 - (c) Actions in favor of the students of different programs related with infancy and the education of children of 0 a 8 years

Actions of PROINF OMEP: (Professionals of infancy)

The actions in favor of the Education and Integral attention of children have been focused in the development of Talks and Seminars directed to professionals who take care of children in different ways, but mainly educational:

A. Participation in the seminary: Which are the contributions of the Montessori Method today?

Santiago, 1 of August 2007. Hall Events, Central University

B. Participation in Conversational Table: Contributions of the non Governmental programs to Early Childhood Education Auditorium I - Building Vicente Kovacevic II - Central University 19 of October of 2007

C. Seminar in Curicó (Region VII of Chile)

29 y 30 de octubre de 2007

IV ENCUENTRO NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN PARVULARIA
"APORTES DE LAS MODALIDADES CURRICULARES A LA EDUCACIÓN PARVULARIA"

OBJETIVO DEL ENCUENTRO
Generar un espacio de actualización, reflexión y discusión profesional en torno a las modalidades curriculares y sus aportes a la Educación Parvularia.

DESTINATARIOS
Educadores de Parvularia, otros profesionales de la Educación, profesionales afines académicos, educadores de carreras de educación y políticas en general.

ESPECIALISTAS

- Dina Alarcón G. Mg. en Educación de la U. de Chile, Bachelor of Arts en Montessori, USA, miembro honorario vitalicio de OMEP.
- Silvia Lavanchy B. Investigadora y especialista en Educación Parvularia, recibió el premio "Linda Votador".
- Elisver Escudín A. Directora del Centro de Estudios Montessori CEM, Formadora de Guías Montessori.
- Maribel Verdugo B. Mg. en Educación, Docente de "Currículum Personalizado" PUOCH, Unidad de Ed. Parvularia, Mineduc.
- Selma Sáenz-Rodríguez F. Decana de la Facultad de Cs. de la Educación de la U. Central, Presidenta Mundial de OMEP.
- Mariana Carvajal S. Master of Arts in Human Development Pacific Oaks College, California, High Scope Trainer of Trainers.
- Lorena Cerdas D. Mg. en Educación, Directora de Ed. Parvularia de la UCM, Directora del Comité Nacional de OMEP.

INSCRIPCIONES ABIERTAS HASTA LLENAR CUPOS
Para enviar ficha de inscripción en: edup@ucentral.cl o nleyton@ucentral.cl, o personalmente en la Secretaría de Escuela de Educación Parvularia de la UCM.
Dirección Carmen 684, Curicó, teléfono 75-203110.

CONTACTOS
Coordinadora del Encuentro: Prof. María Teresa González M.
Fonos 75-203158, mtgonz@ucentral.cl.
Secretaría de Escuela Sra. Nancy Layton C. Fonos 75-203110, nleyton@ucentral.cl.

LUGAR DEL ENCUENTRO
Centro de Extensión del Campus Nuestra Señora del Carmen, UCMAL Pte 220, Curicó.

D. Tribute to Ms Dina Alarcón (Honorary Member of OMEP and a very important figure in ECE Chile)

E. Talk in Colombia: Veronica Romo: Children in the Adult Violence: a subject of Human rights.

F. Talk Professor Pilar Fort (USA): Articulation: Importance of working with the family and multiculturalism

G. Talk in Curicó: Workshops: Origami, Movement and play, Experiences in OMEP World Seminar in Mexico.



H. Talk on Evaluation and Mediation in ECE: Ester Hernández, Sonia Fuentes and Mónica Manhey

I. Participation in World Assembly OMEP, 2007. CITY OF MEXICO

Actions CAPES OMEP: (Students of university programs related to infancy)

PROJECT Abandonment of Warlike Toys

INTRODUCTION In an extremely violent society like the one we live today, any action that we make to promote a pacific coexistence, is without a doubt excellent.

Objectives of the Project: Amnesty International has initiated a campaign referred to the promotion of the consciousness related to the armed world in which we live today; on the other hand OMEP Chile, coherent with the objectives of World OMEP, it is always ready to join to any initiative that promotes a culture of peace among children. It is for that reason that the Chilean Committee, decided to add to the efforts for trying to reach the following objectives:

1. To sensitize to the community about the necessity to generate a peace culture in the society
2. To promote between children, children and adults, the understanding of the way of managing conflicts in a pacific way
3. To promote between children, children and adults the fundamental knowledge of certain values, rights and duties
4. To promote between the adults the understanding of our enormous responsibility in relation to the phenomenon of the violence.

On the part of OMEP Chile, it participated Santiago and Curicó



Children in a square in Curicó in Culmination of the Project Abandonment of the Game and Violent Toy. CAPES Curicó

Actions FODEP OMEP: Forum of university teachers of ECE programs

Participation in the research on the Role of the Professional of the ECE. This study has been developed in Chile and Colombia and it is in its final stage. The study investigated in the opinions (the knowledge or declared knowledge) and perceptions (the way people feel and act) that different members of some communities of two Latin American countries declared in relation to the roll that a professional of ECE must fulfil like educator of children from birth to 4 years. The opinion was collected from the families, educational authorities and diverse members of different educational communities and of common people

The following university institutions participated:

Beatriz Zapata O. (Instituto Tecnológico de Antioquia, Colombia), E. Verónica Romo (Universidad Central), Verónica Aedo (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile), Leonor Cerda (Universidad Católica del Maule), Silvia Redón (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso), Patricia Lamig (Universidad Católica Cardenal Raúl Silva H), Verónica Ubilla (Universidad Andrés Bello), Mariluz Cano (Universidad de las Américas), Claudia Ormeño (Universidad Santo Tomás)



COLOMBIA

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Most relevant activities conducted at regional level

OMEP Antioquia Regional Organization

Regional Coordinator: Alejandra Maria Restrepo Restrepo (omepantioquia@gmail.com)

Institutions supported:

- University of San Buenaventura (participation in the Faculty of Education Council).
- Universidad of Antioquia – Faculty of Education, Department of Early Childhood Education.
- Technological Institute of Antioquia.
- ADECROPIA (a Private Education Association).
- Sponsor to over 65 educational institutions, including schools and nursery schools.

Relevant Actions

Participation in the research coordinated by OMEP CHILE “Opinion on the Role of Preschool Education Professionals in some Latin American countries.”

General Coordinator: Verónica Romo (OMEP Chile).

- The project was presented to ADECOPRIA, REDANI and various institutions. University of the Sabana will contribute to “Educative Communities” category, and will develop a timeline (with field work).
- A preliminary version of “Educative Communities” category developed by the Technological Institute of Antioquia representatives as well as a state of

progress report delivered to CODEI was sent to the General Coordinator.

- OMEP Antioquia will coordinate the distribution, application and collection of instruments to the institutions assigned. The Technological Institute of Antioquia will be responsible for data tabulation and analysis. For field work by the Technological Institute, six assistants as well as apprentices will provide support.
- On the other hand, children will be asked their opinion on their preschool educator imaginary.
- In 2008, results of this research will be communicated.

Participation in Network for Childhood in Antioquia (REDANI)

Attended various meetings of the Network Coordination Committee, supporting the construction of public policies for children of Antioquia Region and Colombia.

Jointly with UNICEF, worked in a research on Colombian boys and girls right to participate. For 2008, it is intended to create a network of Antioquian children mainly focused on the right to participate and arrange the Third Gathering on Smiles and Dreams.

Third OMEP Regional Antioquia Festival for Preschoolers, with ADECOPRIA and private companies support

Activities oriented to pedagogical growth and healthy recreation for over 1700 children of strata 1, 2 and 3 were carried out. In parallel, a special journey on oral health sponsored by Colgate took place.

Participation in various gatherings

- “Law on Childhood within the international legislation framework”.



- Seminar “Family-school Relationship”; speech by OMEP Colombia President, Dr. Andrés Gaitán, in the University of Antioquia.
- Special training on accident prevention in nursery schools by Foundation Mariana Novoa.
- 25th National Congress on Pediatrics.
- OMEP Colombia Representative in 25th OMEP World Congress (July, in Mexico City) in absence of Dr. Andrés Gaitán.
- Continue supporting universities and educational institutions with training and updating to childhood educators.
- Start direct support to “Good Start” program by the Medellín City Council through training and OMEP reports.
- Continue promoting recreational and pedagogical events for the benefit of the highest amount possible of children of Antioquia, stressing the work on child’s rights and diffusing these rights to educational communities in Antioquia.

Challenges for 2008

- Completing the joint research with OMEP Chile is a priority.
- Continue participating actively in the construction of public policies for children of Antioquia and Colombia (with REDANI and the Alliance for Colombian Children).



EL SALVADOR

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1. Most relevant activities conducted by the National Committee

- Continue the ongoing training program for Preschool Education teachers.
- Dance and Rhythm Workshop
- Workshop “How to identify and help boys and girls with learning disorders”
- Seminar-Workshop “Emotional Intelligence”.
- Started arrangements for the construction of a Park for Children.
- Started the donation process of a piece of land for a Nursery School in Jucuapa (Department of Usulután).
- Visits to Nursery Schools in various departments of the country for the identification of needs. Poetry recitals for children with poets invited.
- Celebration of the Child’s International Day through parties for children.
- Settlement of a Toy Library in Santo Tomás.

2. Projections for 2008

- Construction of a Park for Children.
- Donation of a piece of land for a Nursery School in Usulután. Inauguration and name: OMEP –MonteZel.



MEXICO

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1. Overall view

We are living a hard time. Financial conditions throughout the world mean less time within the family and a quite non-stimulating daily life. Consequently, children are immersed in a stressed environment added to their marginalization conditions, difficult access to education, health services, and environmental problems which have been causing natural disasters, etc.

Then the involvement of organizations such as OMEP is highly relevant. We must perform a mediator role and promote reflection instances allowing us to identify and detect education and care services needed for small children development.

We have the moral responsibility to advocate for child's rights. Our courage should not decline. We must continue working so that OMEP influence may be a sustained, sustainable and continuous action, bearing in mind that small children deserve our effort.

In Mexico we have sustained with much effort the representation in 18 States of the Mexican Republic: Baja California Norte, Coahuila, Campeche, Durango, Jalisco, Guerrero, Chiapas, Guanajuato, Estado de México, Tlaxcala, Oaxaca, Tabasco, Morelos, Querétaro, Sonora, Veracruz and Yucatán. Sinaloa is a Preparatory Committee.

In 2007, we strive to sustain the social work developed in various locations (isolated communities) of the Mexican Republic, promoting the provision of education and

care services to children, and supporting their development.

Likewise we support educators updating for the promotion of quality education and care to preschoolers all over the country.

Mexico hosted the 25th OMEP World Congress. Before, the World Assembly was held where OMEP Presidents discussed the work undertaken and defined future actions.

We especially acknowledge the solidarity of OMEP Mexico members all over the country, who allowed maintaining OMEP presence at national and international level. We express our gratitude for their effort and commitment to OMEP principles.

2. Most relevant activities conducted by the National Committee

Diffusion activities

Education was focused as a right, not only involving attendance to a school but also the provision of quality education and care in an appropriate environment under the direction of skilled persons while encouraging and involving them in various activities oriented to their development in an essential life period for every human being.

25th OMEP World Congress (18-20 July, in Mexico City)

Theme: "The Child's Right to Education at the beginning of the Third Millennium"

The Congress was the suitable environment for discussing topics such as, Why is education a right?, What policies should be implemented so that it may be universal?, Which is the role of parents at present?, Which postulates should foster current



educative proposals?, Which parameters would define a quality education?, Neuroscience contribution to preschool education development and upgrading, The right to be different, Training to educators, Technology, and Pedagogical resources, among others.

Throughout 3 days, through 5 magisterial conferences, 7 panels, 32 free works, 8 interactive workshops and poster presentations, these topics were discussed with the involvement of experts from various countries. Reflection was encouraged, and discussion led to new ideas which enriched the possibility to react with social responsibility for the child's right to be provided the education required for facing their corresponding challenges.

It was very important sharing with other participants from all continents, realizing that we are not alone in the task of promoting education and care to preschoolers. Participants were handed out a CD including the contents of participations. A huge effort was displayed, injecting blood to OMEP activities throughout the world.

Courses

“Preschooler self-esteem development” - Psic. María Aidé Dávila y Olvera. In Mexicali (Baja California) in *February* (200 people) and in Veracruz (50 people), in *March*.

“The family – developer of limits, values and self-esteem”, Oaxaca (78 people), in *May*.

“Preschool curriculum analysis”, Guanajuato (150 people), in *December*.

Social Work, with children

Mobile Toy Libraries:

Emotional support to children has been provided by OMEP Mexico toy libraries maintained by Delegational Committees in various entities of the country. The Toy Library has become a daily and essential activity for many children from deprived families.

Mexico State

Opened for over 10 years. From 400 to 600 small children participate each week, being the only site for youngsters from Las Huertas town (Naucalpan City Council). It is run by an educator provided by the Education Secretariat, offering thus a more adequate attention. Also the use of space has been enhanced so that children may better interact while playing with various materials.

Morelos

By means of an agreement with the City Council of Cuernavaca, three toy libraries have been arranged in various communities. The project and its operation are monitored by OMEP, and the City Council provides the space and toys. The toy library is run by OMEP Morelos members, working as volunteers in these communities.

Tlaxcala

It is a mobile toy library, visiting various towns during the weekends in order to encourage interaction with various materials in an organized way. Children are provided attention by OMEP members in that State.

Querétaro

The toy library construction in Jaral town with the collaboration of Monterrey City Council and Technological Institute continues. All of them have deployed their efforts, and construction is almost completed.

Oaxaca

The project to implement a toy library in an idle train wagon located in an isolated community has started. Children will play in a site where their development will be encouraged.

Emotional support to preschoolers through various programs

Veracruz

In Coatzacoalcos City, we keep counseling the staff that provides education and care services in the “Porteño Child Shelter Home”. These children must be apart from



their parents (due to maltreatment, abuse or incarceration), requiring then custody and care.

In Xalapa city (Veracruz), counseling is provided to the staff in charge of the attention in “Shelter Home San Felipe de Jesús”.

In both cases, we also develop ludic activities; workshops on handcraft, drama and music, supplementing our counseling activity.

Chiapas

We continue providing counseling to the staff in charge of the attention in Nuevo Zinacantán town, intensifying the process of emotional support to indigenous children displaced by the guerrilla and natural disasters. Likewise we provide support through week-end workshops on games and handcraft.

Mexico State

We continue providing technical assistance to teachers and support to children from 8 indigenous communities in the otomí zone, cooperating with didactic material, clothes and toys required by children attending those schools.

Tlaxcala

We continue providing technical assistance and supporting with didactic and ludic materials the Velasco de Xalostoc community.

Guerrero

Activities encouraging play between parents and children with extraordinary results for the benefit of family integration in Acapulco city.

Research

For two years, we have documented OMEP Mexico research work in 3 entities of the country. The final deliverable should be a publication aimed to share and diffuse some experiences for the benefit of children involved. This year the process is stand-by as

efforts were focused on the arrangements of the 25th OMEP World Congress. We intend to publish it in 2008.

Veracruz

“Education for Peace”

Querétaro

“The child’s right to grow with love”

Guerrero

“Parents and children play”

OMEP Mexico Board of Directors Meeting

Each year, members of Mexican Delegational Committees BODs meet in a Council aimed to discuss progress attained and problems encountered, and propose some solutions. This is a relevant meeting oriented to move us forward. Also we feel accompanied and encouraged to follow the path ahead of us.

Veracruz was the host committee this year. Meeting deliverables are the following:

- In 2008 we will reactivate courses, through workshops on ecology and emotional support to parents and educators.
- Likewise the web page will be defined and updated, being more specific so that it may be useful to everyone.

Attached to the meeting, we have the National Assembly where the report on the work at national level is discussed as well as the financial report. Also the report on the World Council (July, in Mexico City) will be developed.



URUGUAY

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1. Most relevant activities conducted by the National Committee

OMEP Uruguay 50th Anniversary

2007 has been a highly significant year for our National Committee which celebrates its 50th Anniversary (1957-2007). On 19 October, there was a deserved tribute to our founder, Anunciación Mazzella de Bevilacqua, an OMEP Honorary Member. With deep emotion, she gave a message to the audience, encouraging the young generations to continue working on OMEP mission and advocacy of boys and girls rights, specifically to Education.

Mobile Exhibition “The Hundred Children Languages” (15-24 August)

Our committee received this exhibition, which witnesses experiences in Reggio Emilia (Italy) preschool establishments.

Uruguayan educators had the wonderful opportunity to update. Not only could they visit the exhibition but also they attended a series of conferences and roundtables focused on the child, the key role player in a pedagogy where they must perform as listeners. Dr. María Victoria Peralta, our newly elected Regional Vice President for Latin America, was present and delivered two conferences. Also we had the academic support of Vital Didonet (Brazil), a former Vice President for Latin America and a steady OMEP collaborator.

The exhibition was sponsored by UNESCO regional office, represented by Dr. Rosa Blanco and Dr. María Paz Echeverriarza (Uruguay). Thanks to UNESCO, both

educators and other professionals could participate for free in the exhibition and academic event. The infrastructure was ANTEL Communication Company building, a public entity (and sponsor) which displayed leading technology for free to be used by over 2000 educators, psychologists, architects, physicians and parents visiting the exhibition.

Participation in OMEP World Assembly and XXV World Congress (Mexico, 18-20 July)

A national delegation represented our Committee. Works were presented by the Vice President, Laura Camacho, and our collaborator, Ps. Gabriela Etchebehere.

Attendants to World Assembly were educators Frede Cortés, Alicia Martínez and Laura Camacho. It is worthy to note the excellent organization of the event as well as the hospitality of OMEP Mexico Committee members and President, Ps. María Aidé Dávila Olvera. Our congratulations to her!

2. Most relevant activities conducted at regional level

OMEP Uruguay main purpose is continuing its decentralization process. This year regional committees have been strengthened, motivating thus other regions to join the challenge to continue founding Departmental Secretariats.

Each region plans its activities based on their children's and educators' needs. The Secretariats develop a monthly agenda of activities which is uploaded in the web page,



and OMEP members may attend any of them for free.

3. Most urgent challenges to be met by OMEP in 2008

Equity Plan

The government agenda would consider an Equity Plan. One of its essential pillars is widening the attention coverage for boys and girls under three.

Compulsory Education for 4 year olds

Another challenge at country level is moving forward a compulsory education for 4 years olds. Our committee will pay attention to the development of these relevant objectives, while offering its support and critically observing the process evolution.

Ongoing Research Group

OMEP Uruguay has started an ongoing research group. Thus we commit to generate knowledge which would be a contribution to our organization. We expect to share this challenge with the sub-regional committees.

4. Specifics to be outlined in the World Report

We have a great opportunity to strengthen our work at regional level, and will deploy our efforts with much hope.

Before closing our 2007 Report, let us take a moment to express our deep gratitude to Past President Selma Simonstein, who leaded our Organization for two terms with a sustained, enthusiastic and committed work, allowing the consolidation of OMEP as result of her management based on relevant pillars – communication, scientific knowledge and professional orientation, fostering team work within our committees as well as networks with similar organizations.

Undoubtedly, there is a long way ahead. Thus we express our commitment to continue working for the organization with renewed energies, after the 50th anniversary of our National Committee.



WORDS FROM THE REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT FOR NORTH AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

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With very little modification, the reports from North America and the Caribbean could be introduced the same way they were in the 2006 annual report. Indeed, the situation of services offered to young children has not really changed in 2007 and keeps showing great diversity, even inequity, in access and quality.

Systems of education and care are not yet available for all, especially as they still widely depend on the private sector and few Governments from our region are committed to offering universal programs to their young citizens and their families. Diversity is reflected in the quality of programs, and a great deal of attention is given to quality issues in our region.

The growing support in favour of early childhood interventions, seen in recent years, is continuing. The public as well as specialists, not only from the communities directly concerned, but also economists and public policy experts urge the governments to take action. Recent governments with conservative views did not allow much progress. This support did, at least, slow down or stop the forecasted backward movement.

For instance, new programs have been established in some Canadian provinces. This was certainly influenced by some early childhood organizations as well as researchers in the field of early childhood programs. As a whole, in the USA, more children attend programs than in Canada, but very large disparities are still existing. Finally, despite of a relatively improved

situation in Haiti, many challenges are yet to be faced, including communications with our colleagues, which are often interrupted by electricity and telephone cuts.

By reading the reports of National Committees, you will be able to see the dedication and work of each of them, in spite of scarce means and a relatively small membership, which grew somewhat in 2007. I salute the perseverance of our Haiti colleagues who maintain a Committee despite the very hard socioeconomic and political situation in their country and achieve exemplary results. I also congratulate our U.S. colleagues for their tenacity in working for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Children by their country, in a difficult political environment. Finally, let me underscore the numerous projects that have been realized by OMEP-Canada which is preparing to host the World Assembly and welcome all of you to the World Seminar *Nurturing Peace Together with the Children*, in Quebec City, August 2008.



CANADA

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1.

The Committee set up a bilingual web site to disseminate information about OMEP-Canada : www.omep-canada.org

The Canadian Committee presented the situation of early childhood in Canada at the breakfast hosted by the OMEP USA Committee during the annual Conference of the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) in Tampa, Florida.

OMEP-Canada was represented at the World Assembly and Congress in Mexico City, Mexico.

Our Committee was represented at the United Nations DPI/NGO Conference on «Climate change, how it impacts us all» held in New York City.

2.

The OMEP-Canada Board met 4 times and established a Steering Committee for the OMEP World Seminar to be held in its territory in 2008. Three issues of OMEP-Canada's Newsletter were published.

The Canadian Committee presented two workshops at the AECEO (Association of Early Educators Ontario) Conference held in Kingston, Ontario, and a visit was also organised by Children Visiting Prisons (OMEP-Canada member).

In Quebec, the Seminar Steering Committee often meets to prepare this event. OMEP-Canada disseminated information on its activities through publications and activities held by its organization members and

partners: the Association d'éducation préscolaire du Québec (AÉPQ) (Quebec Early Childhood Association) and the Association des services de garde en milieu scolaire du Québec (ASGMS) (Quebec Association of School based Day Care).

3.

OMEP-Canada will host the OMEP World Assembly in Quebec City, August 2008. On this occasion we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Canadian Committee and the 60th of OMEP. The Assembly will be followed by the Seminar on the theme Nurturing Peace Together with Children. This will be an opportunity to give information about the situation of early childhood services in Canada and to think in depth about education for a culture of peace.

4.

Our Committee mourns our former World President, Candide Pineault, who passed away, and thanks all those who expressed their sympathies on this occasion.

5.

87 members, including 4 organizations representing about 2000 members.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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1. Most relevant activities conducted by the OMEP-USNC Committee at national and international levels

Work with National and International Organizations

- Co-sponsored and administered Children's International Film Literacy Festivals (FLF) with National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in Chicago, and at Massachusetts AEYC, and presented 2 papers on ECE technology at World OMEP Conference, Mexico City;
- Co-sponsored national conference with faculty and students of Whittier College, California: Beyond Valuing Diversity: Promoting Equity and Social Justice for Children & Youth in Multicultural Societies;
- Presentations: National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (how local resource and referral agencies can address global ECE issues); Southern Early Childhood Association (educating college students about global ECE & assessing status of children in selected U.S. states); Association for Childhood Education International-ACEI (ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)); and National Association for Regulatory Administration (presenting with Canadian OMEP member on differences between countries that have and have not ratified the CRC).
- Presented at World Forum on ECE, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on international ECE partnerships, on children & poverty, and on ECE advocacy;
- Hosted World OMEP vice-president for North America and the Caribbean and OMEP Canada president at annual breakfast at ACEI conference; hosted World OMEP president-elect as OMEP speaker at NAEYC in Chicago;
- Sponsored international ECE poster session at NAEYC: celebrating Children's Day; presenting a Nepalese project; Sudan; boys' education; Chicago's ECE Trailblazers; Native American mathematics; Native American ECE; using media for children to transform the world; online teaching; ALEX, the Alabama Learning Exchange promoting media literacy; using media in Kenyan orphanages; and children's rights in Norway.
- Represented OMEP-USNC at NAEYC Liaison Breakfast Meeting, Chicago; and at United Nations meetings and conferences in New York on environmental education of children, on Climate Change, and to celebrate the World Fit For Children + Five
- Published briefing about OMEP-USNC for Early Childhood News from around the Globe in NAEYC's Young Children, November 2007.
- Promotes Universal Children's Day, 20 November.

2. USNC Regional Activities

Region I: A member taught in Mali and will start an elementary school in Viet Nam. A member keynoted at the New York AEYC conference on "Children of Chuuk." A member visiting Costa Rica met with students to seek ways to promote and plan for peace. Students at a state university developed posters about the UN CRC. A professor took a group of students to Belfast, Northern Ireland, and helped launch



a book, *From Conflict to Peace Building*, at the World Forum in Kuala Lumpur.

- Regions I, II, III and IV: Members attended the UN World Fit For Children + 5 Conference in New York in December.
- Region III: A memorial service was held in memory of Asa Hilliard III, a professor at Georgia State University in Atlanta, who died while keynoting a conference in Cairo, Egypt.
- Region VII revised the OMEP-USNC membership brochure

3. The most urgent challenges that OMEP will have to face in 2008

- Challenges include adequate national funding for Head Start and other ECE programs; how to implement pre-kindergarten for all programs; and addressing issues pertaining to infants and toddlers, and the fact that the United States has not ratified the CRC.

- OMEP-USNC responses include representation on the Campaign for the U.S. Ratification of the CRC; individual involvement in selected local projects on pre-kindergarten for all; and
- Promoting a Calendar Project that seeks to place 'Universal Children's Day' on November 20 on many calendars.

4.

OMEP-USNC is particularly interested in addressing ways to promote the U.S. ratification of the CRC, and in learning how other countries have implemented the CRC.

5.

As of December 2007, OMEP-USNC has 177 members.



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