

Auckland OMEP: Hosting Dr. Ingrid Engdahl OMEP Sweden, 8-10 April 2016

Margaret and Hilary collected Ingrid from the airport and provided a short tiki-tour of some of the significant landmarks, historical sites and coastline of Auckland city. Visits to Unitec Childcare, Collectively Kids and A'oga Fa'a Samoa provided Ingrid with an awareness of the diversity of Auckland's population and ECE services. At each centre, teachers were able to share their passion for education for sustainable development. There are OMEP members on staff at each of these centres. Thank you to those who provided a showcase of educational endeavours for our distinguished visitor.

A longstanding OMEP member Meg Moss provided the MARC childcare centre and its facilities as a venue for a further welcome with a delicious potluck dinner. A small but dedicated audience of 16 listen attentively to Dr. Ingrid Engdahl as she shared the history and processes involved in leading the OMEP Education for Sustainability (ESD) Project (2009-2015). The overall aim of the OMEP project was to enhance awareness of Education for Sustainable Development among young children in ECE settings, OMEP members and the international early childhood community, with a special focus on taking a child-oriented perspective. Research for the project comprised of five phases with data drawn from 28 participating countries (including Aotearoa NZ), involving more than 44,330 children aged from birth to 8 years, as well as 13,225 teachers. The participants came from various early childhood educational contexts.

Ingrid's determination that these projects explore children's views and understandings of sustainability was evident in a research design focussed on gathering children's views. She shared several narratives of children's own everyday experiences in ECE services as they explored and tested their knowledge of the Earth, their local environments and important ideas about environmental issues. Ingrid was able to bring these narratives from the early projects to life, and provide examples of the many ways in which children in differing contexts, engaged with and understood their responsibilities with respect to sustainability.

Questions and discussions within the group indicated the sheer scale and the impact of this research carried out by OMEP members in ECE services around the world. Ingrid's article documenting and discussing the six-year undertaking by OMEP World, has received acknowledgement as one of 100 academic reports and undertakings, most likely to change the world.

Ingrid and her hosts Hilary and Margaret travelled with Nola and Diti to Leigh, and Ingrid was treated to an early morning swim on a king tide at Mathesons' Bay; fortunately Ingrid is a keen swimmer in the summer at her home city of Gothenburg. Ingrid was also able to visit the Matakana farmers' market, the Goat Island Marine Reserve and University of Auckland marine laboratories. Lunch at the Leigh Sawmill Café was followed by a brief trip to Pakari beach. Ingrid returned with Margaret and Hilary to Margaret's home in Maraetai and early on Sunday at Papakura began her bus journey to Wellington. Special thank you to OMEP Auckland members who were able to contribute to hosting Ingrid.