



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

Newsletter # 3 September, 2014

Nga mihi mahana kī a koutou katoa. Greetings to you all. We hope you are enjoying the spring weather and the approach of summer.

The 66th OMEP World Assembly of OMEP was held at the School of Education, University College, Cork, Ireland on 1st and 2nd July. The World Assembly was followed by a conference on 3rd, 4th and 5th July at the same venue.

Aotearoa/New Zealand was represented by Diti Hill (National President), Fiona Ellis and Julia Sullivan (Otago Chapter), Lia de Vocht and Glynne Mackey (Christchurch Chapter) also attended. Claire Maclachlan (Massey University) attended the OMEP conference.

See attachment for Diti's full report on the two day Assembly.

Lia says: "I was absolutely thrilled with my 'first time' experience of an OMEP World Assembly".

Fiona Ellis writes:

"Julia Sullivan and I both enjoyed our time at the OMEP World Assembly in Ireland in July. It was very rewarding to see the work of OMEP at the international level and to see the important place it holds in the world today, and how OMEP advocates for young children worldwide. OMEP is the biggest and oldest NGO (non-governmental organization). It has links to UNICEF, UNESCO, and the UN, and is in fact only the 11th non-governmental organization to gain consultative status with the United Nations. Something that, as OMEP members, Julia and I felt very proud of. There were 28 countries present at the meeting and approximately 41 different countries at the conference. This included participants from the five OMEP regions –

Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, North America and Caribbean, and South America. This mix of participants is both enriching and rewarding. It was also interesting to hear how the various OMEP projects (ESD, Wash etc) were being implemented in diverse settings".

What has National Executive been up to?

1. Job Descriptions and Policies: We have now completed updating and signing off almost all of the Job Descriptions and Policies. These will be presented at the Annual General Meeting in November where they will be reviewed again and signed off as correct and up to date as at December 2014. Please note: Job Descriptions and Policies plus other key OMEP documents are in Drop Box. All Chapter presidents have access to Drop Box. Please notify Hilary Alach of changes to the presidency with upcoming AGMs:

hilarya@ihug.co.nz

2. PRC4ECCE/Pacific Region Committee for Early Childhood Care and Education: this UNICEF-established committee was granted Preparatory Status as an OMEP 'country' at the World Assembly.

Diti Hill (as President of OMEP Aotearoa/New Zealand) has accepted the invitation from UNICEF's Wendy Rich-Orloff to join the PRC4ECCE meeting to be held in Nadi, September 21-26. Hilary and Diti drafted an interim Constitution for OMEP Pacific Island Nations prior to the World Assembly. Diti will now assist the Pacific Island committee to re-write the OMEP Constitution while she is in Fiji.

She will also look at any other issues that arise as a result of PRC4ECCE becoming an OMEP entity and will welcome suggestions for ways in which OMEP Aotearoa can support OMEP Pacific Island Nations. Diti hopes that she can forge active relationships between OMEP members in the Pacific and Pacific Island ECE settings here in Aotearoa/NZ as part of OMEP Aotearoa's aims and goals for 2015. Fundraising to help with teacher exchanges will be considered

for 2015. Diti is very appreciative of UNICEF funding for all accommodation and meals in Fiji.

3. A letter has been sent on behalf of OMEP Aotearoa NZ to the World President of OMEP regarding the plight of children in war torn areas of the world. A copy has also been sent to the Prime Minister, John Keys. The letter states:

Kia ora Maggie,

I am writing to you as president of OMEP Aotearoa New Zealand. At a recent executive committee meeting there was unanimous agreement over the appalling state of affairs right now in Palestine, Iraq and Syria. We invite you to respond to the world-wide crisis of children in all, but especially these, war-torn parts of the world.

We know that World OMEP (Organisation Mondiale Pour l-Education Prescolaire) has the rights and wellbeing of our very youngest citizens at its heart. While we acknowledge that there are multiple and complex background factors to the plight of very young children in war-torn countries, we feel that the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child must prevail and that everything must be done by member countries to ensure that the effects of adult-induced atrocities on children are contained, if not minimised and addressed. We feel that children's rights, as specified and agreed to by the signatories of UNCROC, must be upheld in every part of the world. We also feel strongly that families in these areas must know that the rest of the world cares in the context of human understanding and empathy that forms the basis of the work of the United Nations.

With an expression of caring in mind, we invite you to send a message to all member countries of OMEP reminding them of OMEP's commitment to UNCROC at this time. We would like you to invite member countries throughout the world to send messages to their leaders asking them to act in the face of whole generations of children, over an increasingly large part of the world, growing into adulthood without human rights and without experiencing basic human values such as empathy. The effects of ignoring such children now will be global and long-lasting.

As Aotearoa New Zealand is a signatory to UNCROC, I am copying this email to our Prime Minister, John Key.

Regards
Diti Hill
(National President of OMEP Aotearoa New Zealand)

4. After much discussion and debate over the past months, a letter has been sent to Early Education Federation indicating OMEP's concern for nutrition and the provision of adequate space for physical activity in early childhood settings. Thank you to the Auckland Chapter (specifically to Sophie Foster, Charlotte Robertson and Helen Wrightson) for alerting National Executive to this concern following a Chapter presentation by Claire Maclachlan. Thanks also to Jeanette Clarkson-Phillips for her thoughtful response to the background paper prepared by the Auckland Chapter. The letter asks EEF to discuss and promote the following issues amongst its members:

- That more research be carried out throughout early childhood education services in Aotearoa/NZ on provision for children's physical activity, including teachers' knowledge and awareness of the importance of vigorous physical activity for young children.
- That more research be done on the nutrition of young children within early childhood education services in Aotearoa/NZ.
- That Article 31 of UNCROC be emphasised as a base for any research.

5. Every Child Counts: We urge all members to be aware of what this organisation has planned and/or are planning, both before and after the election. See the website: www.everychildcounts.org.nz Every Child Counts is working closely with the Tick for Kids Campaign- see below.

6. Election Year/Tick for Kids Campaign: Hopefully those Auckland Chapter members who walked down Queen Street had fun while getting the message across! OMEP Aotearoa NZ is a formal supporter of this campaign along with other members of the Early Education Federation. See the Tick for Kids Manual on Drop Box. Most chapters have held Political Forums at which local politicians have been questioned about how their party will support young children and their families. National Executive sent out suggestions to Chapters about ensuring that politicians

understand the importance of early childhood. The Tick for Kids website is: <http://tick4kids.flightdec.com/>

We encourage every OMEP member to **vote** either before 20th September or on Election Day 2014 !

7. The Annual General Meeting of OMEP Aotearoa/New Zealand: to be held in **LEIGH** (north of Auckland) has been brought forward and will now be held on 8th and 9th November, 2014. We have accommodation for members over three locations. Chapters-please note these dates and let Hilary Alach know:

1. who is attending and which days
2. transport requirements
3. accommodation needs

hilarya@ihug.co.nz

8. OMEP Aotearoa History: Hilary Alach is still working on the huge task of researching and writing up the history of OMEP in Aotearoa/NZ. She is writing it up in chronological order and including specific events within chapters while also covering what has happened nationally. Thank you for taking on this task Hilary. When complete, the history will be published and distributed to chapters as well as sent to World OMEP. Watch this space!

News from the Chapters:

Auckland: The Auckland chapter held its Annual General Meeting at Kohia Teachers Centre at 7pm on Thursday 11th September, 2014. Helen Wrightson has served as President for four years but stood down this year. Thanks for all your hard work Helen. Marianne Kayes was elected unopposed to the position of President of Auckland chapter at the AGM.

Auckland is working with National Executive to bring to the attention of early childhood teachers (and those who influence their role), the

importance of physical activity and good nutrition for young children in early childhood settings.

Finally, Auckland is hosting 14 German early childhood teacher educators and professors who are coming to New Zealand in mid-October to experience ECE in Aotearoa NZ. Their trip is jointly organized with Wendy Lee of ELP (Education Leadership Project). The visitors will be given the opportunity to experience Unitec Marae for one night and will be billeted by Auckland members for the rest of their time in Auckland.

Waikato/BOP: Waikato/BOP chapter held an evening with local Politicians on 7th August. Waikato chapter is focused on 'children at risk' for 2014 and continues to hold workshops and discussions about how members can address concerns in this area. Waikato is also working hard at establishing and maintaining their chapter section of the OMEP website.

Wellington: A Chapter report from Wellington has not been received. Deborah Wansbrough from Wellington represents OMEP at Early Education Federation meetings, taking over from Donna Maher.

Canterbury: Many Canterbury members attended a political party pre-election panel facilitated by NZEALS on 28th August. Canterbury will facilitate a one day seminar on 11th October entitled "Learning Cultures". They are hoping for a good attendance. The AGM for Canterbury will be held on the 20th of October.

Glynne Mackey and Lia de Vocht have completed a report for their research on Part 4 of the OMEP Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) project. They hope to present their research at the Early Childhood Convention being held in 2015. Please contact Glynne for a copy of the report:

glynne.mackey@canterbury.ac.nz

Lia de Vocht has been part of a team of people from NCW organizing White

Camelia Day 19th September, when people from all parts of society will gather at the Kate Sheppard National Memorial to celebrate women's suffrage.

Otago: The Otago chapter will be holding their Annual General Meeting on 29th September.

Human Rights –Thanks to Nola Harvey who keeps us informed about Human Rights issues as they relate to OMEP.

Please visit the OMEP World website for further information and links to human rights issues and organisations:

www.worldomep.org

Dates to remember are:

9th September: The Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) launch of the report “Our Children, Our Choice: Priorities for Policy”: at Mt Roskill Kindergarten as well as at Auckland and Wellington venues. Marianne Kayes and Nola Harvey (Auckland Chapter) have contributed to a chapter written by Jenny Ritchie and attended the Auckland launch at the kindergarten. OMEP Aoteroa hopes to make copies of this report available to each chapter.

19th September: September 19th 2014 marks 121 years of women's suffrage in NZ. See Lia's contribution above. **Make sure you vote!**

21st September:
International Day of World Peace.

15th October:
Global Handwashing day (linked to the UNICEF WASH project)
Make certain that you, and the children you are caring for, add soap to hands and make bubbles before washing hands clean, and drying them thoroughly.

20th November:
Universal Children's Day

We hope you have enjoyed the Super Moons.



Diti Hill and Hilary Alach
14th September, 2014.