



OMEP Aotearoa New Zealand

Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire
Organización Mundial para la Educación Preescolar
World Organisation for Early Childhood Education

NEWSLETTER #1, MARCH 2015

Nga mihi ki a koutou katoa. Greetings to you all.

This is OMEP Aotearoa/New Zealand's first newsletter for 2015. As in previous years, there will be three national newsletters: in March, June and September. This year looks set to be a busy and full year!

New committee:

The OMEP National AGM was held on 8 November. The National Executive for 2015 is:

President: Diti Hill
Treasurer: Doreen Launder
Secretary (co-opted): Marianne Kayes
Committee: Margaret Nicholls (International Liaison), Melanie Wong, Charlotte Robertson (Auckland Chapter Liaison), Nola Harvey, Lia de Vocht, Glynne Mackey (Canterbury Chapter Liaison), Margy Taylor (Waikato/BOP Chapter Liaison), Mary Cull (Wellington Chapter Liaison). Deborah Wansbrough (EEFed Liaison) and Hilary Alach (Archives) are *ex officio* members.

Mel has been updating the website and has also set up an OMEP Facebook page. As well, we have a new email address for general enquiries: omepaotearoa@gmail.com

Dropbox:

Key OMEP documents are available on Dropbox, to which all Chapter Presidents have access. This includes copies of important articles and reports. If you have a document you would like to share with other Chapters, Dropbox is the place to do this.

SAVE THE DATE – ENROLMENTS OPEN LATE MARCH

OMEP Asia-Pacific Region Conference, Auckland, November 27-29.

OMEP Aotearoa/NZ is hosting this conference, to be held at Manukau Institute of Technology, North Campus Otara, South Auckland. Registrations open on March 30th. Please alert all members and interested non-members to this event! We have a maximum capacity of 150 people for this small conference; do register early. Further details are on our website, www.omepaotearoa.org.nz/home/omep-asia-pacific-conference-news-2/

Enquiries are welcome to melanie.wong@manukau.ac.nz.

Human Rights:

As an NGO we are continuing to alert our members to key human rights issues, including child poverty, child abuse and neglect, and family violence – Nola Harvey has specific responsibility for liaison. (See the Human Rights Reports on Dropbox and our website for further information and important websites). OMEP Aotearoa provided a submission

commenting on the MSD *Fifth Periodic Report On the Convention on the Rights of the Child on behalf of the people of Aotearoa New Zealand*. Thanks to Nola and Charlotte Robertson, Auckland, and also to Waikato/BoP members, Margaret Stuart and Margaret Hammond for their scholarly contribution to our submission to the MSD.

Children (and families) confronting difficult circumstances or discrimination: Charlotte and Nola are very interested to hear from OMEP members about any source of professional guidance regarding appropriate 'in centre' responses for children who may disclose that they are confronting difficult circumstances or children who appear to be experiencing trauma. For example: Do you have contact with a child with a parent in prison? Where do you go for professional support? (See the CPAG blog <http://www.cpag.org.nz/why-do-we-send-some-of-the-poorest-mothers/> for some critical comment about the neglect and 'punishment' of these families). Do you know of the work of the Pillars? (<http://www.pillars.org.nz/>) You can contact Nola or Charlotte through omepaotearoa@gmail.com .

Tick for Kids – It takes a child to raise a country. tick4kids.org.nz is a movement designed to engage politicians and the public in discussion about what needs to be done to improve life for children in New Zealand. The movement was established to focus on issues for the general election, but the decision has since been made that the campaign will be ongoing and will take a longer term advocacy role. OMEP is an official supporter of the Tick for Kids campaign with the OMEP logo part of its Toolkit – see Dropbox. Chapters will be informed when the Tick for Kids meetings are being held in Wellington and Auckland (video link). If you want to receive information directly, email everychildcounts@gmail.com .

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Project:

We are continuing with this project which is now in its 5th phase, overseen by Glynne Mackey of the Canterbury chapter. We are hoping to showcase all 5 phases as a presentation for Chapters towards the latter part of this year. The June newsletter will contain more details.

Treasury Request for Information on reaching vulnerable children and families:

OMEP made a submission on this document, and has now received a response. 250 replies were received and a summary is currently being compiled. Treasury reports:

“ One theme that was raised in the responses is that there is a substantial level of duplication of services and that there are opportunities to improve integration between services. This can make it more difficult for some people to access the services they need and can be a burden for non-government agencies. We appreciate that this is not a new issue and that there are existing attempts underway to address this. However, the RFI responses confirm that this should remain a priority if we are to achieve better outcomes for New Zealanders who are at risk of poor outcomes.

Another issue raised in the RFI responses, and elsewhere, is that the Government needs to get better at measuring what works and what doesn't, so that we can expand the things that are working well and stop the things that are not.

As you may know, the Government has asked the New Zealand Productivity Commission to do an inquiry on More Effective Social Services. We expect that this inquiry will also provide recommendations which, combined with the feedback from the RFI responses, will inform how the government responds to these critical issues. The Productivity Commission is due to release a draft report shortly.

If you have any questions please email us at socialinvestment@treasury.govt.nz.”

Early Education Federation (<http://earlyeducationfederation.com>):

OMEP Aotearoa currently has strong representation on the Early Education Federation whose meetings are held in Wellington. Deborah Wansbrough and Jayne Franklin are the OMEP representatives, and Marianne Kayes also attends. Thankyou for reporting back to the executive on important ECCE issues.

- *Early Childhood Code of Ethics.* After 20 years, Carmen Dalli and Sue Cherrington are reviewing and researching the Early Childhood Code of Ethics, initiated in part by OMEP in 1995, looked after by NZEI over the past years and mostly replaced by NZTC's cross-sector Code of Ethics in the workplace. See Dropbox and our website for key EEF documents e.g. a PDF on the 3 priorities for the government to address).
- *Impact of market forces on quality in ECE.* Those of you interested in the effect of rapid expansion of corporate models for ECE in NZ may be interested in an Irish report, "Childcare: business or profession?", an Irish publication by Start Strong – NZ is one of the countries studied. See:

http://www.startstrong.ie/files/Childcare_Business_or_Profession_Full_Report_Web_Version.pdf

- *Planned provision for ECE services.* Concerns have been raised re the lack of planning for provision for ECE services, and the impact on children and families where services are not available, not appropriate, or where continuity is a problem because of new services springing up and established ones closing. A position statement is being developed on this issue.

OMEP Pacific Nations:

During 2015, OMEP Aotearoa will continue to support the newly formed OMEP Pacific Nations as it moves from preparatory status to full participation in World OMEP. (See Dropbox and our website for documents that offer more detailed information on OMEP Pacific Nations).

UNICEF WASH Project:

During 2015 we will continue to promote UNICEF's WASH project by sending ECE hand washing kits to interested early childhood centres throughout New Zealand at the cost of \$5 a kit. Wellington chapter member, Mary Cull, with the support of Wellington chapter members, has offered to stay in touch with the UNICEF office to ensure that international Hand Washing Day on October 15th this year will involve all OMEP members in alerting the public to the importance of hand washing in the prevention of some of the most prevalent early childhood diseases (keep an eye on our website for further information). While Diti was in Wellington, she met up with Ann Pairman and Deborah Wansbrough from the Wellington chapter and together they had a very positive meeting with Jacqui Southey at the UNICEF rooms on March 18th. Jacqui, on behalf of UNICEF, will work with OMEP Aotearoa to distribute the WASH kits, seek feedback on the use of the kits, collect background material on the prevention of common diseases and, around June, begin to prepare for a week of publicity events. UNICEF will contact Campbell Live. Please discuss in your chapters and suggest ways in which you will share the WASH project with the public during the week of October 15th. Please contact Mary Cull (omepaotearoa@gmail.com) with suggestions and to ask for further information and kits.

News from around the Chapters:

Otago: At present there is no Chapter Liaison person for Dunedin, but we hope to remedy this shortly. We were all very saddened to learn of the loss of Lyn Foote. Our thoughts are with the Otago Chapter as you come to terms with Lyn's death. As Fiona Ellis said, Lyn still "sits on people's shoulders' offering her sage advice".

Canterbury: There will be a number of conferences and other significant early childhood events in Christchurch this year, including a visit by Marilyn Fleer, so Canterbury Chapter are planning their activities to fit with these.

Wellington: The year's programme is planned, with the theme of "Strengthening our Whāriki". Wellington is coordinating the UNICEF Wash Kit project, and has had lots of interest from

early childhood centres. Amanda Higgins has been appointed as research coordinator for the Chapter.

Waikato/BOP: A fund-raising movie evening is planned. The Chapter's focus for the year is on children at risk, with a particular emphasis on the local level.

Auckland: We were delighted to note that Jean Rockel, an Auckland OMEP member, was awarded the QSM in the New Year's Honours list. Congratulations Jean. Auckland has held their first workshop – Diti Hill speaking about the challenges and opportunities inherent in broadening OMEP's commitment to ECCE in the Asia-Pacific region. Members will be helping with the Asia-Pacific Conference in November.

World OMEP Update:

We have written to the Prime Minister in support of World OMEP's call to national Governments to request that UNESCO declare a Decade for Early Childhood Care and Education.

The 2015 OMEP 67th World Assembly and International Conference, "Early childhood pathways to sustainability", will be held July 27-August 1, in Washington DC. See www.oemp-usa.org for further information. Diti, Juvena Jalal from the Wellington Chapter, and possibly two members from the Otago chapter will be going, so let Diti know if you are thinking about it (d.hill@auckland.ac.nz)

General Interest:

AGEL (Advisory Group on Early Learning): This group was set up by the Minister of Education to advise on strengthening Te Whāriki and how best to ensure consistent learning from birth – 8 years. It crosses ECE and primary schooling. Consultation is now underway, closing on 7th April. The Ministry of Education has asked for help in ensuring all interested people participate, so please encourage your colleagues to respond. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/advisorygrouponearlylearning>

He Panui Kohungahunga. This new monthly newsletter from the Ministry of Education is now the key source of MOE early childhood education information and will gradually replace other publications. Contact the MOE if you want to be added to the mailing list.

Japanese visitors. There has been a recent personal visit to NZ by Professor Emeritus of Shizuoka University and Nagoya University, Toshiko Kaneda, accompanying Yukiko from Nagoya (a regular visitor to Dunedin and Auckland). in the last week of February and first week of March. Toshiko is immediate Past President of OMEP Japan. They were visiting Fional Ellis in Dunedin, and Nola Harvey had an opportunity to meet briefly in Auckland.

Brian Sutton Smith. We note the passing of Professor Sutton-Smith, aged 90, a New Zealand pioneer in the study of the significance of play. Sutton-Smith was one of the foremost play scholars of the last 100 years. His interdisciplinary approach included research in psychology, education, and folklore. You can read more about his work at <http://www.vnews.com/home/16021590-95/brian-sutton-smith>

Contributions to the Newsletter

If you have any items of interest to OMEP members that you would like included in the next newsletter, please email to omepaotearoa@gmail.com by 31 May 2015.

*Diti Hill and Marianne Kayes
20th March, 2015*