



Editorial



OMEP
 Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Prescolaire
 World Organization for Early Childhood Education
 Organizacjon Mundial para la Educaçion Ptescolar

Lighting a candle – what a wonderful symbol. But what good is a symbol, a reminder that things have to be changed, as long as there is no action. The picture was taken in South Africa. Everybody who had the chance to meet in Durban during the World Council 2002 had been confronted with the startling fact of up to 40 percent of the people being HIV-infected. We had heard of special training programmes for teachers to deal with HIV positive children and we heard also that a large number of these teachers never reach the end of the course, because they die of AIDS first. We saw that it has become a common ceremony at meetings to light a candle as reminder of this incredible situation. But what about actions? Grown up in Germany I remember that at Christmastime many people used to put candles into the windows in memory of the fact that Germany was a divided country. A political comedian commented this with the bitter words that the curtain industry would probably be the only one to profit from this. And in fact no one can believe that these candles finally melted the Iron Curtain. It needs actions to make a change... So when thinking about OMEP – and I know many members are concerned about its future – let's stop lighting candles of brilliant analyses but go to action. At the World Council 2003 in Turkey Selma Simonstein presented an idea for a working programme that was widely accepted by the present members: The child from birth to 3. How we can be active - for a start, read the following pages.

Ulla Grob

Regional Meeting in Helsinki, Finland, June 12 -14, 2003

The reconciliation of work & family is a theme that is widely discussed in many European countries. In many of them it still is a real problem and the effects of it on ECEC are considerable. This could be detected during the workshop OMEP Finland had invited the European community of OMEP to attend.

An invitation to Finland – not only experts of ECEC but of the educational field as a whole would have wanted it. Since the publication of the results of the PISA-study Finland had become a Mecca to politicians, media people, teachers, scientists and anybody else working and interested the educational field. Nevertheless we were a rather smallish group that met in Helsinki in the beginning of June. OMEP Finland, well imbedded in the Central Union for Child Welfare had called for participation in a workshop on “Reconciliation of Work & Family”.

Summer had come

Before sitting down and listening to papers to come the visitors had had the chance to go an visit day care centres - one of the best traditions of OMEP touring! Summer seemed to have come right on time, so our excursion into the surroundings of Helsinki was accompanied by warm sun, blue sky and a friendly sea. This gave the visits to these wooden villas I saw, which dated back to the time when the Tsar in St. Petersburg governed Finland, a slight holiday-touch. Especially when all children seemed to be on a day out, because finally the sun had come. The discussions with the directors, however, brought one back to reality. Devoted to ECEC we got an insight into the constant discussion of development in pedagogical thinking and practical implementation in everyday work to serve the children. Good achievements are certainly due to a good teachers' training. A short introduction in the development in Finland in this field was given to the OMEP group by Prof. Mikko Ojala during a reception at the Research centre of Early Childhood and Elementary Education of the University of Helsinki.

Working mothers - problems not yet solved

The workshop the next day gave OMEP members who had come from Germany, Denmark, UK, Ireland, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland a good overview over the situation in Finland. Johanna Lammi-Taskula from Stakes delivered the facts and figures while Lena Tense looked at the situation thorough the eyes of a working mother. In the afternoon the guests had their turn: they presented their facts and figures as

well as the pros and cons in regard to different ways of matching the fact of working mothers and quality day care and early childhood education.

Going back to OMEP work

The next day was dedicated to the OMEP business meeting. One theme was picked up again that had already been discussed in Gothenburg: Is there a way of cooperation among European OMEP members by the means of EU programmes? This time scepticism predominated. Those who had already experiences with projects paid by EU money pointed out that the overhead structure and core funding to run such a programme would be largely above the capacity of an average OMEP committee. Nevertheless members were invited to check with their local EU representative and search the internet to see, whether possibilities could open to a joint venture project under the leadership of one OMEP committee.

As a follow up of the workshop on reconciliation it was decided that each member country having attended should produce a short text that included the following:

- a) Major points for a successful reconciliation of Family & Work in the different systems
- b) Age children started school
- c) Reasons why this was a good idea
- d) Advantages of pre-school and the work done in pre-school

It would also be necessary to add a list of definitions such as the age of children in pre-school, what pre-school facilities actually were etc.

The texts were to be collected and analysed and the good practice highlighted. (Perhaps these lines will remind some of us who have not yet delivered their text to send it to Pirjo Honkavaara (pirjo.honkavaara@skl.fi or to me ugm@krippenverband.ch). Any contribution is welcome!)

Ulla Grob-Menges

Regional Meeting 2004

(Invitation and details to follow)

Friday April 23	Visits of to childcare provisions in the Dublin area
Saturday April 24	Conference “Children of the Global Village” Dublin Insitute of Technology, Aungier St. Dublin OMEP workshop on “The child from birth to three”
Sunday April 25	OMEP Businessmeeting

OMEP St. Petersburg

Since quite a time we knew from our friends in Sweden that there is a lively group in St. Petersburg working for children. They finally made it: they are members of OMEP Russia and we like to give them a hearty welcome.

The participants of OMEP St.Petersburg committee are the pedagogues of the kindergartens, scientists, psychologists, journalists and other specialists who connect their professional activity with the preschool education. Among these persons there are not only residents of St.Petersburg - our colleagues live and work in Novgorod, Krasnoyarsk, Rostov-on-Don, Ekaterinburg, Moscow, Taganrog, Kiev. All of these persons are active figures of the preschool education (and education in general), each in the certain field and the region. No formal unit of the persons born from mutual value orientations concerning preschool childhood and common projects initiated mainly by two organizations - the Institute of Early Intervention and the Agency of educational cooperation.

Since our colleagues abroad are well acquainted with the programs of the Institute of Early Intervention and its director Elena Kozhevnikova and other specialists, I think that it is not necessary to represent the activities of the Institute. I only want to underline that the Institute of Early Intervention became one of the most active non-governmental institutions in the preschool field in Russia.

As for the Agency of educational cooperation, it is non-commercial organization, created by pedagogues, scientists and pedagogical journalists, representing various periodicals and some cities in Russia. The task of the Agency - to maintain and to support the relations of cooperation between the educational units, organizations and individual pedagogues. In our opinion, the isolation has especially dramatically character in the fields of preschool education, so in country schools, in pedagogical education, in the work with adolescents at school and out of school. The 1st action of the Agency is publishing of periodicals for the preschool pedagogues; so for the teachers and directors of country school; about the adolescent's pedagogy. So the Agency publishing the newspapers "The Kindergarten on all sides" and "The Kindergarten. Management" which address first of all to the pedagogues and supervisors of the kindergartens. The newspapers are issued 6 numbers per month. The readers of the newspapers are preschool pedagogues all over Russia. So the participants of our common projects are often the authors, the readers, the partners consolidate around these periodicals.

In Russia there are many clever, active and kind for children pedagogues. All of numerous projects of the Institute of Early Intervention and the newspaper "The Kindergarten on all sides" (common projects, conferences, seminars, organized in different cities, common actions in press) have the mission to unite the efforts of all these persons. Only the last year we conducted the seminars and conferences in Krasnoyarsk, Taganrog, the international conference "The Good Kindergarten" in St.Petersburg. We are sure that becoming the member of OMEP will contribute to this activity of our non-formal group and will help to maintain the communications with pedagogues not only in Russia.

The nearest action of our group will be the celebration of "The Day of the Pedagogue of Kindergarten" on the 27th of September 2003. There is no such a day in the official calendar. We have only the Teacher's Day. But we consider it is necessary to support morally the pedagogues of the kindergartens. It is necessary to declare once more that preschool childhood is a self-valuable period in the mans life and those who help the child in this period as significant as the teacher at school or in the higher school. The reason to the celebration is the 140th anniversary of the opening of the 1st kindergarten in Russia. In honor of these date the series "The Kindergarten. The Debut in Russia" of 8 issues was published by our newspaper. The series represented the most important persons of Russia's preschool education from the beginning of the XIX to the beginning of the XX century.

We consider it a great honor to become one more point in the World Net of OMEP. We greet our colleagues and ready to the cooperation in the field of preschool childhood.

Mikhail Epshtein

Present ECEC in your country – be in charge of an edition of OMEP Euro-News

At the regional meeting in Turkey Bulgaria put forward the idea that National Committees could alternate in producing an issue of OMEP Euro-News. What a splendid idea - your European Vice-President can nothing but support it! So anybody who is interested, please step forward and get in touch with me.

Ulla Grob-Menges

New BA-degree in Social education – now in English

I have often in OMEP been asked if Denmark offers any courses in Education. We have not – until now – have been to do it in English.

The whole Bachelor-programme

The first period takes place in Copenhagen. The programme starts up in August where you have to prepare from home some material sent to you. We actually meet in Copenhagen on in 4 months period with the theme "European Social Work and Care" from 1. September – 20. December each year.

Then you prepare for the stay in Portsmouth from January to June. In Portsmouth you have a 13 weeks practical placement with regular weekly studies at the university once a week.

From March till June you will have full-time studies at the university in Portsmouth. At Portsmouth you will pay a fee to the university.

The first semester in Copenhagen

This course is the first term of a BA course administered jointly by Frøbelseminariet and Portsmouth University. This first term is a separate unit that can be attended by students not wanting to finish the entire BA course. The language used is English.

The term consists of the following elements:

1. Two weeks introduction to Denmark and to the course, including a three day non-residential course outside of Copenhagen.
2. Three weeks of lectures given by visiting teachers and staff from Frøbelseminariet. Attention is paid to ongoing changes in social work. Examples of the subjects covered are: International social work, Social policy in EU, Immigrants and refugees, International communication.
3. Seven weeks of project work in which the students work together in teams of 6 with a subject chosen by themselves within the framework of the course.
Examples: Social exclusion, Homelessness, One-parent families. During the teamwork tutors facilitate the work on an outgoing basis and visits to agencies will be arranged.
4. One week is dedicated to creative workshops, which are core elements in the Danish education of social working.
5. At the end of term students present their projects and an evaluation takes place where ETCS marks are used.

Who can attend?

Applicants from countries within or outside the EU will be considered, if they have completed 2 years of social work training.

What about costs?

Education is free in Denmark, but students have to pay travelling expenses and living costs. We will help the students to find accommodation.

To help pay your living expenses EU citizens may apply grants from the EU programmes (Socrates and Leonardo) through a college or university in your home-country.

Nordic students can apply for grants through Nordplus.

The eastern European countries may look carefully into the EU programmes – get help from your local Socrates office – to find the proper programme.

Non-Europeans may investigate the grant possibilities in their home countries.

Where does the 1st semester take place and what is Frøbelseminariet?

The purpose of Frøbelseminariet, National Institute of Social Education is to educate staff to public and private welfare work within the social educational area.

Frøbelseminariet is the oldest college in the world still in function within this working area. It started in 1885 and to day we educate teachers to work with the children in nurseries, pre-schools, after-school arrangements, young people in youth clubs and people of all ages with special needs, with focus on the social work dimension.

Frøbelseminariet has been engaged in international activities for many years and has extensive exchange programmes with partner schools in many European countries. The international course has been running since 1992 but has from 2003 been transferred from Skovtofte to Frøbelseminariet.

Frøbelseminariet is situated in the central Copenhagen and is an attractive city-college with easy access by Metro and busses. Frøbelseminariet has a lot of space and good facilities.

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Where can you get more information?

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www.socialeducator.dk (look for Frøbelseminariet)

www.froebelsem.dk