



## ***Newsletter from the World President***

***August 2005  
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➤ **Declaration by the World President at the Closing Ceremony of OMEP International Seminar and 7<sup>th</sup> CELEP Gathering on International Education**

On the occasion of the closing of the International Seminar and the 7<sup>th</sup> International Gathering on Initial and Preschool Education of CELEP, Latin American Center of References for Preschool Education, held in Havana City, Cuba, on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005, OMEP, one of the world organizations defending and promoting the rights of the child with special emphasis on the right to education from birth, states its great satisfaction in having shared with Cuban educators experiences, concerns and ideals on quality education for children worldwide.

Among the various contributions developed during this joint OMEP-CELEP gathering, we highlight those elements (see below) that match with our ideals and aims of child education, that can be achieved as an educational policy and pedagogical practice in the various countries where we are active:

1. The importance of children in the national policy of this country, evidenced by the early childhood education national system that has achieved an historic and unique attention to children from birth to their entrance into primary education.
2. The concept of an integral and integrated awareness of the child from his/her conception with the active participation of the family, as the place and period of education. In this particular respect, OMEP restates its recent decision to conduct educational activities with children from birth to 3 years, since almost everywhere educational systems pay little attention to this stage of education.
3. The close link between education and health, both at institutional and programmatic level. The health center, home and educational settings should share the education of children from conception.
4. Communication strategies between preschool and primary education, that

guarantee there are no difficulties for the child in the transition from preschool to first grade.

5. The willingness of educators to think about their practice and involve other groups as a strategy for ongoing training and the improvement of the quality of their educational approach.
6. The creation of a community network in the interests of children, focused on education.
7. The ability to achieve much with few resources, to be creative in producing didactic materials and make wide use of natural local resources as potential educational tools in a creative and appropriate manner.
8. The use of the media in a substantial way, by means of TV and computers as educational tools for children.

We consider that the elements we observe especially in the EDUCATE YOUR CHILD programme, make a relevant contribution to our task within OMEP – the World Organization for Preschool Education.

➤ **World Assembly in Cuba (July 2005)**

The World Assembly sessions were held on 11 & 12 July. Twenty three member countries attended: **Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, El Salvador Germany, Israel, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Mexico, Nigeria, New Zealand, Panama, United Kingdom, Sweden, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.** Eleven countries voted by proxy. UNESCO was represented by Rosa Blanco, Regional Specialist in Education and Innovation - OREALC.

With reference to the work carried out in 2004, the reports were approved unanimously.

Regarding the work programmes, a detailed discussion about the involvement of OMEP in various alliances was discussed. Alliances are a regular strategy these days. The topic was analyzed by the regions during their group meetings and proposals were put forward so that a joint approach could be made.

Special attention was paid to the OMEP project in Asia, developed as a result of the tsunami, and based on the contribution by some members of our organization. This must take place this year.

It is worthy to mention the active participation when analyzing the different topics.

Elections were also held. (See this Bulletin for more detailed information).

On Monday 11<sup>th</sup>, the book by Lilian Katz was launched (See this Bulletin), followed by a welcome dinner when we were entertained by the Danish juvenile group Vestebro, whose songs are based on peace and a call to disregard drugs, etc. At night, there was a panoramic city tour to Havana.

On Tuesday evening conference participants went to the Belles Arts Museum for the inauguration of the International Seminar following the World Assembly.

OMEP wishes to recognize the ongoing contribution made by the Cuban Ministry of Education to the success of this international event, and to the organizing team represented by Ana María Siverio & Hilda Pérez, and also to Zósima López, from the Convention Centre.

Hurricane Dennis, which went across Cuba some days before our event, could not tarnish the excellent organization of the host committee, which was widely recognized for its tireless and warm reception.

Unfortunately some participants were prevented from arriving on time due to flight changes.

- **2004 Annual Report (Handed out in Cuba)**  
The participants in the Assembly were given a trilingual version containing reports from 71% of OMEP members. A copy of the Lithuanian report was added to the book.

The format is the same that was used in 2003, except that this year a summary of the OMEP activities carried out by our representatives to UNESCO and UNICEF was included.

It was stressed that the report is the result of the work developed jointly with participating members. In this issue, photographs were provided by some committees and Regional VPs.

This report is intended to be a source of relevant information for the organization as a whole. Next year national committees are requested to provide some data as to the number of their members.

In order to produce a more dynamic report, we ask national committees to send a more succinct report and where possible in more than one OMEP working language.

The use of technology allows the optimization of resources. Electronic copies are preferred.

- **New OMEP web page ([www.omep-ong.net](http://www.omep-ong.net))**

The new web page was presented by Selma Simonstein, OMEP World President.

Information will be displayed in the three working languages as well as on the first page in the following sections: **Articles, Directory, News and Publications.**

We have also incorporated the distribution of the last OMEP Newsletter to most members of the organization, thus optimizing time and resources. Other interested parties will be allowed to register as subscribers to this newsletter through the web page.

Regions will be able to promote their events through this page. Additionally, it will be possible to access some of the presentations by the World President and Executive Committee in various events, thereby ensuring a more effective and efficient spread of information. There will also be information from the International Journal (IJEC) and from projects developed by OMEP.

Feedback from the committees will make a significant contribution, providing a better and more up to date communication tool.

Some publications have been digitalized already, such as the History of OMEP, prepared by Madelaine Goutard, former World President, for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization.

➤ **OMEP International Seminar in Cuba, attached to CELEP 7<sup>th</sup> Gathering**

The official opening ceremony was held the evening before.

The first day began with a Plenary Session on the **Bases and Peculiarities of Initial and Preschool Education in Cuba** presented and coordinated by Ana María Siverio, CELEP President. This was followed by papers on the **Educational Process for the Early Childhood in various settings** delivered by OMEP representatives from its five regions, chaired by the World President, Selma Simonstein.

After lunch, working sessions took place in parallel commissions.

That evening participants enjoyed an artistic cultural soiree, with a performance of the Chamber Orchestra of Amadeo Roldán Conservatory. This was much appreciated.

The next day was devoted to field visits in the provinces of Havana, Pinar del Río and Villa Clara, and Havana City where the participants experienced and discussed the educational programme which incorporates the institution, the family and the community. Originally a visit to Matanzas had been planned, but this had to be cancelled due to the effects of hurricane Dennis on the community.

On Friday 15, there were working sessions in four parallel commissions.

On Wednesday 13 and Friday 15 July, a **Scientific Programme** on free topics took place. These included oral presentations or posters, conferences, round tables, symposia, international panels, workshops and forums. Renowned Cuban and international specialists shared their aims, ideas, studies and experiences in their corresponding countries, generating fruitful exchange and discussion. There were also a diagnosis and update of

educational programmes, their fundamental problems and application.

The “Clementina Serra” Award for a free oral presentation was given to Amalia Bayón and Ma. Paz Diez-Hochleitner, who presented a **Quality Educational Process in Math**. OMEP is very proud of this award, as Amalia is the President to the Spanish National Committee and Ma. Paz is in charge of International Relations.

At the official closing ceremony, the OMEP World President presented the **Declaration of Havana**, and the complete version is in the first section of this Bulletin.

The Ministers of Education from Cuba and Venezuela were present with interesting and sensitive closing remarks.

➤ **Research Forum**

The group met in Cuba and Leah Adams, Regional OMEP Vice President for North America and the Caribbean, informed us that from next year the coordinators will be Jayne White, President of the NZ National Committee, and Meripa Toso, member of the same committee.

The project will aim to improve the quality and continuity of communication among its participants.

➤ **Results of Elections for Regional Vice President and World Treasurer**

New members of the Executive Committee from January 1<sup>st</sup>. 2006 will be Victoria O. Bilewu (Nigeria), newly elected VP for Africa and Madeleine Baillargeon, Regional VP for North America and the Caribbean. The World Treasury will be in the hands of Maggie Koong (Hong Kong). They will replace Ebele Maduwesi and Leah Adams who have completed two terms of office, and Nirmala Rao who did not wish to stand again.

Although we had to either elect or re-elect a VP for Asia Pacific this time, no elections were held for this position and it was agreed to postpone an election until the next World

Assembly to be held in Tromsø, Norway (August 2006).

Joan Waters's period of office will end on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2005, and from then until August 2006, the post of VP for Asia-Pacific will be vacant. The Executive Committee will coordinate actions with a regional representative during this 7-month period. The person elected during the next World Assembly will take office immediately.

Before concluding her period of office, Joan will implement the OMEP long-term relief programme for the victims of the tsunami that devastated the region in December 2004.

➤ **Launching of Lilian Katz's book "Perspectives on Preschool Education"**

On Monday 11<sup>th</sup>, the launching of the Spanish version of the book took place. The copyright was transferred to OMEP by Lilian, who signed all the copies of this first edition.

Leah Adams, OMEP Regional Vice President for North America and the Caribbean, presented the book and portrayed the author mentioning her remarkable personal characteristics and professional achievements.

Lilian Katz was present and made some comments on its content and the circumstances that inspired her articles. Several participants mentioned that they were interested in editing the book in other languages.

This initiative motivated some OMEP members to consider a similar contribution.

➤ **OMEP Executive Meetings in Cuba (Sunday 10 & Thursday 14 July)**

The first session started on time in spite of the delay of some flights arriving in Havana City the day before.

The agenda was revised and discussed thoroughly. Around noon, the Committee shared a lunch offered by the hostesses, Ana María Siverio, CELEP President, and Hilda Pérez, Secretary to the Organizing Committee,

accompanied by Zósima López, professional organizer of the Convention Centre.

Due to the comprehensive discussion of topics during that meeting, the Executive Committee continued working on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> after the field visit. Here Executive members had learned about the Cuban preschool programme, Educate your Child, the running of Centres for Children and the links made for children entering primary education. Madeleine Baillargeon, newly elected Vice President for North America and the Caribbean was invited to participate.

As result of this meeting, the following decisions were made:-1. the prompt implementation of the OMEP programme in Asia associated with the tsunami devastation in the region (December 2004) was arranged; 2. the updating of the Administrative Guide, to make it consistent with the new Constitution, approved in Melbourne in July 2004; 3. to intensify the work with preparatory committees so that they become full national committees, as well as try to revitalize some national committees, whose presence and work have decreased.

The Executive Committee would like to meet next year before the OMEP World Assembly and Conference in Norway.

➤ **New Honorary Members**

This time the Assembly approved the nomination of Dina Alarcón (Chile); Audrey Curtis (United Kingdom), Robin Houkner (New Zealand), Aljahi Isaac Sa'i (Nigeria), Betty Mavis Armstrong (New Zealand) and Elka Petrova (Bulgaria).

All of them have contributed significantly to preschool education in their own countries and have raised the profile of our organization at international level.

➤ **CD edited by Audrey Curtis**

During the OMEP World Assembly held in Cuba, Audrey Curtis (former OMEP World President) distributed to the Presidents of National Committees the CD **OMEP through the eyes of the camera** containing a collection of photographs of some of the

important events that have taken place and the OMEP international work for young children and their families for more than fifty years.

Audrey indicated that the collection is only as good as the photographs received. The purpose is to take a pictorial journey over the these years - a purpose that has been met.

➤ **Invitation to the OMEP World President by the Venezuelan Minister of Education to attend the presentation of the new curriculum for initial education in the country**

At the closure of the International Seminar in Cuba, the Venezuelan Minister of Education, Prof. Aristóbulo Istúriz, invited the World President to the launch of the new program for Initial Education in his country. The ceremony took place in the Theater Teresa Carreño, with 2400 educators from the 24 Venezuelan regions attending.

Participants in this ceremony included representatives of the Ministry, Lic. María Auxiliadora González and Olga Sánchez, and other specialists from various universities.

Curricular bases now take into consideration the child from birth to six years. This constitutes a new development with reference to education as it includes the child from birth to 3 years.

Selma Simonstein participated, jointly with the Minister of Education, in a TV and radio broadcast.

➤ **International Study on Play – 0 to 3 years**

The idea of this study (comprising three research questions) took shape in the World Congress in Melbourne, Australia (2004).

Since then until June 30<sup>th</sup> 2005, data has been collected in seven countries: **Australia, Chile, Denmark, Japan, New Zealand, Norway** and **Sweden** through observations of at least five children in five different ECEC programmes.

A socio-cultural analysis of the qualitatively different themes/categories/meaning constructions that children were involved in

has been undertaken. Researchers in some countries have collected additional data of children in their everyday life in ECEC, thus broadening the sample set. The children's parents and teachers have also been interviewed about play and learning and their child's day in the programme. Stimulated recall was used to elicit teacher thinking about play and children's meaning making through play.

Once the analysis of researchers in each country is completed, a cultural comparison will be undertaken to find similarities and differences across cultures.

During the Assembly, Ingrid Pramling indicated that the group of participant countries would meet in Cuba and that the next step is the development of an agenda. The intention is to publish a book or report. All royalty payments would go direct to OMEP.

Marilyn Fleer, Monash University (Melbourne, Australia) and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson, Göteborg University, Sweden, will both act as editors.

➤ **OMEP Alliance with the Global Alliance**

This Alliance was introduced last year in Melbourne by Mark Ginsberg, Executive Director of NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), who invited OMEP to join.

After the meeting, the OMEP Executive Committee analyzed this proposal and had a detailed discussion on what joining an alliance means, what would be the role of our organization as well its rights and benefits.

This year, the World Assembly discussed this issue and approved NAEYC's proposal. The Executive will be responsible for determining the characteristics of this alliance.

This discussion of this topic was broadened so that OMEP might make an alliance with several organizations.

➤ **33<sup>rd</sup> Session of UNESCO General Conference (October 2005)**

To be held in Paris on 3-21 October.

Education commission is Number 2. Among the special sessions, the round table for **Ministers of Education on Education for All** is highlighted.

This theme will take place in parallel with the debate on general politics (7-8 October).

OMEP will be represented by Françoise Matray-Goureau, Madeleine Goutard and Danièle Bosom.

➤ **Consultative Network for Early Childhood**  
Latin American Committees submitted a letter requesting to take part in this network (Red Consultiva para la Primera Infancia).

➤ **In our letter-box...**

Various participants at the World Assembly (July 2005) personally gave the following material to the OMEP World President (See below). The sharing of information is invaluable...

- Book **Juegos populares tradicionales para los niños de hoy** (Traditional popular games for today's children – version in Spanish, 74 pages), written by Jacqueline Thériault & Denise Garon (OMEP Canada). This project was completed with the financial support of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in Quebec, the Department of Education Sciences of Quebec University in Chicoutimi, and the Research and Development Service of Sainte-Foy College.
- Book **Educate your Child** (bilingual version – English and Spanish, 68 pages each). Presents the Cuban experience in integrated early child care. Joint work by the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and CELEP.
- **El proceso educativo para el Desarrollo Integral de la Primera Infancia** (The educational process for the Integral Development of Early Childhood, Spanish version - 48 pages). Written by Drs. Ana María Siverio and Josefina López, it is a collection of papers on the theme of the Congress held in Havana City in July 2005. Sponsored by OMEP, CELEP, and the Cuban Ministry of Education. Electronic copy available.

- **Bases Curriculares de la Educación Inicial en Venezuela** (Curricular Bases for Initial Education in Venezuela). A set of documents to support its implementation.
- Book **A New Challenge**, written by Joan Waters, Vice President for Asia Pacific Region.
- **Veinte años de experiencias** (Twenty Years of Experiences). A report on the programme PROMESA (Colombia) “**Desarrollo Infantil Temprano: Prácticas y Reflexiones**” **Siguiendo Huellas** (Early Childhood Development: Practice and Reflections” Following the Footprints) by Marta Arango, Glen Nimnicht with Fernando Peñaranda and Alejandro Acosta. Publisher: the Bernard van Leer Foundation.
- **Le jeu de l'enfant, symbole de l'éducation de la paix et de la citoyenneté** (Play of Children, a Symbol of Education for Peace and Citizenship). Author: Sarah Kala-Lobe Kutta, Psychologist & Researcher, and OMEP National President of Cameroon.
- Journal **Ronda** (Circle) including educational topics on **Initial Education**. Author: Lilia Fornasari de Menegazzo (Argentina).
- Journal **Ajoke Search Light**, celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ajoke International School, in Nigeria.
- Journal **Quality in Pre-School**, a summary of Bill 2004/05:11 of the Swedish Ministry of Education.
- **Te Whariki. He Whariki Matauranga mo nga Mokopuna o Aotearoa**, publication by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand.
- **Redes Comunitarias, Creación y consolidación de alianzas estratégicas** (Community Networks, Creation and Consolidation of Strategic Alliances), Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports in Venezuela.

- **La ludoteca, una estrategia no convencional de la educación** (The Toy Library, a non-conventional Strategy in Education), Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports with UNICEF Venezuela.
- **Evaluación del Proceso de Construcción Colectiva del Currículo de Educación Inicial** (Assessment of the Collective Building Process of Preschool Education Program), Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports with UNICEF Venezuela.
- Journal **Nueva Aula Abierta** (New Open Classroom), Venezuela.

#### CDs received:

- **OMEP through the eyes of the camera** (See this Bulletin). In the days to come, Audrey will send copies to the presidents of all National Committees that did not attend the World Assembly in Cuba.
- **Los cien lenguajes del niño** (The Hundred Languages of Children) written by Lilia Fornassari (Argentina).
- **Los cien lenguajes del niño** (The Hundred Languages of Children) - Reggio Children and distributed by the Pedagogical Institute in Buenos Aires.
- **Network of Early Years Researchers.**

During the event, various committees and work groups handed out material to the participants:

- Ingrid Pramling distributed a brochure on the **IJEC**;
- **OMEP Brazil** distributed its latest bulletin;
- The **Danish committee** (absent) sent a CD and colorful bilingual brochures on Tromsø, the seat of the next **World Assembly and International Conference** (2006) that was handed out to the participants;
- Newsletter **Text 5**, from the **OMEP Greek National Committee**;
- The **OMEP Committee of Mexico**, the host country of the **World Congress in 2007**, distributed a brochure in the three working languages, and

- **OMEP Aotearoa New Zealand** provided information on the **Asia-Pacific Conference 2005**. The theme is **The Youngest Citizen**. The event will be held during 2-4 December 2005.

#### ➤ You may click on...

- Magazine **Children in Europe**. Click on: [www.childrenineurope.org](http://www.childrenineurope.org)  
For up-to-date info on with European policies, research and good practice. Published simultaneously in eight languages by a network of national magazines. Languages are: Catalan, Danish, Dutch, French, German, English, Italian and Spanish.

#### ➤ Updating the OMEP directory of members (postal and/or electronic address)

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**OMEP World Assembly and Seminar in Tromso, Norway (August 2006)  
“The Little Great Researcher”**

*Dates to Remember:*

Executive Committee Meeting: Monday 7 August  
World Assembly: Tuesday 8 & Wednesday 9 August  
International Conference: Thursday 10 & Friday 11 August

For detailed info about this event, you may click on: [www.omep-ong.net](http://www.omep-ong.net)

**Contact:**

Liv Cranner, President of National Committee in Norway: [liv@cranner.com](mailto:liv@cranner.com) & [lcranner@c2i.net](mailto:lcranner@c2i.net)

See the next Newsletter for more information!

**Selma Simonstein**  
OMEP World President

**From March 1<sup>st</sup> 2004, the OMEP World Secretariat address is:  
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