



Organisation Mondiale pour L'Éducation Préscolaire
World Organization for Early Childhood Education
Organización Mundial para la Educación Preescolar
Te Rūnanga ā-ao mō te Mātauranga Kōhungahunga

Newsletter December 2021 No. 5

Kia ora koutou,

President note

As I type this, the sky is a brilliant blue, and birds are chirping while our hope for freedom to roam dangles precariously. What another busy month for OMEP with opportunities to connect globally with the Education for Sustainable Development Awards presentations and the Asia Pacific Conference. Glynne Mackay, our International Liaison, was one of the three facilitators for ESD - the zoom was at 11 pm, and some of us managed to attend!!! It is accessible on the World OMEP website.

Auckland members Diti Hill Denee (Auckland Chapter Rep), Fiona He, and I attended the Asia Pacific Regional Meeting via zoom on Friday November 4. It was an opportunity to hear what was happening in our region. Covid-19 dominated the conversations with all countries being impacted in their work environments and OMEP, and vaccinations appeared to be compulsory for all early childhood personnel. Only Fiona managed to access the Asia Pacific Conference the next day due to technical/language difficulties. The link for the playback is <http://omeplive.dearfunnyard.com/zhibo4.html> and is available for two months if you would like to view it.

Thanks to Marianne Kayes, who has worked tirelessly to finalise the Constitution. It has been accepted by the Companies Office. Email omepaotearoa@gmail.com or see it on our website If you would like a copy. Amanda Higgins, who has formulated, then put our membership renewal online to reduce administration.

Anita Croft (past treasurer) and Kristy Austin (current treasurer) have been organising the accounts and revising our membership forms as we transition out of Chapters. Anita also reported our activities to the Charities Commission.

Diti, Marianne, Fiona, and I met via zoom with the China NZ Exchange after attending the New Zealand/China Exchange Symposium in October. We aim to forge stronger

links. It has also led to discussions around the New Zealand China Trust which was based in Wellington.

Diti, Marianne, Nola Harvey, and I continue to work on the digital resource for For Each and Every Child: He Taonga Tonu te Tamariki, responding to feedback. We are still wanting photos if you have ones that reflect children's rights. We trust all centres have their copies now. Our members will receive one copy with their subscription renewal.

Did you notice our changes to our letterhead? We believe we are the first country to add their indigenous language to the OMEP logo.

In a world full of changes, we are also moving as 2022 heralds our new structure. With this last newsletter for 2021, we say farewell to Chapters and thank everyone past and present for their contribution to OMEP. Best wishes for 2021, and I hope you enjoy being involved in your rōpū.

Ngā taima nga mihi me ngā hararei koa.

Ngā mihi nui, Charlotte

News from OMEP World & OMEP Aotearoa New Zealand

The climate crisis is a child's rights crisis at its core

OMEP Aotearoa must find ways to support ARNEC (Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood), and especially OMEP PIN (Pacific Island Nations), in strategizing for climate change in the wider Asia-Pacific area. Ufemia Camaitoga, the president of OMEP PIN) needs our help in this. Children's futures are at stake; this is a children's rights issue.

With the Asia-Pacific conference in Sydney/Australia in the latter part of 2023, we could begin planning for ways to support by drawing on ARNEC's current focus: ***Our climate is our children's future.*** ARNEC wants to highlight Early Childhood in all global climate change discussions in 2022. Children's futures depend on our actions now. Part of this enormous and global issue is making people in Aotearoa NZ and, importantly, other parts of the world, aware that the Pacific Ocean even exists, has people living there in small (and larger) island nations, and is in crisis, with multiple issues affecting the region.

A small thing we could do as OMEP Aotearoa is promoted world maps that highlight the Pacific Ocean; maps that have the Pacific Ocean as central....maps that can be shared with children in ECE and school settings. Many maps of the world currently displayed in ECE centres have North and South America as central to the map, with the Pacific Ocean mostly absent. Specific Pacific island nations are not identified. Even Aotearoa NZ is often 'dropping off' many world maps! I'm keen for us to work with Ufemia and OMEP PIN on this and other strategies throughout 2022, with the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in 2023 in mind.

By Diti Hill-Denee

ARNEC Learning Session with WHO: The Nurturing Care Framework (NCF)

On October 21, Glynne Mackey, Charlotte Robertson and Diti Hill-Denee attended an Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) 'learning session' on Zoom with an Early Childhood Development (ECD) specialist working with the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Geneva: **Sheila Manji**. Sheila spoke to about 30 people, most of them representing NGOs in Nepal, Cambodia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand. A few people were government representatives. There was no-one from the Pacific region and no-one from Australia. The objectives of the session were:

- A shared understanding of the Nurturing Care Framework (NCF)
- Learning about global NCF tools and resources
- Sharing good practices, innovations and challenges

The NCF was developed by the UN, UNICEF and WHO in May 2018 as a holistic and inclusive child development initiative to underpin education programmes. Sheila said that multi-sectoral groups from various governments were already drawing on the NCF. Sheila said that the NCF revolves around the rapid 90% of brain growth that happens before a child goes to school. Sheila explained that the term 'ECD' includes children from conception to 8 years old, that it addresses the first 1,000 days, and covers both 'pre-primary' and early primary. The NCF is a life-course approach with two inter-related areas: *What a child needs* (security, safety, good health, responsive caregiving) and *Enabling environments* (policies, services, communities and observant, listening to people who are proximal to the child).

Sheila raised concerns about the proliferation of more and more voices claiming to have 'the answer'. She said that, in almost all countries, policies and programmes already exist, and it is up to NGOs to build on what exists rather than create new policy directives. She said that UNCRC is of global importance; it sits alongside the NCF and state education programmes and *must be in the radar, not under it*. **Website:** <https://nurturing-care.org>

By Diti Hill-Denee, Glynne Mackey and Charlotte Robertson

Fiji ECE Educators Mini Summit and Inaugural Virtual Summit

On October 6, Ulu Nawaqavanua and I joined 80 Fijian early childhood teachers via Zoom to talk about OMEP – globally, regionally, nationally and locally. The global structure of OMEP was explained, and the OMEP World website was shared, along with the many activities and online groups worldwide members can join and take part in. Ulu and I also shared a powerpoint presentation that focused on the history - how OMEP Pacific Island Nations (PIN) and, especially OMEP Fiji, arose from meetings with the ECE liaison person for UNICEF Fiji (Wendy Rich-Orloff) and members of PRC4ECCE in 2013 and 2014. Then, in 2018, how Glynne Mackey, Ulu Nawaqavanua (then the OMEP Aotearoa Pasifika liaison person) and I attended the annual Fiji Early Childhood Association (FECTA) conference in Lautoka. The 300 members at this 2018 conference voted to make OMEP part of FECTA. Fiji and Tuvalu are the two only active 'island chapters' of OMEP PIN, and OMEP Aotearoa has supported both over the past years.

Covid-19 has raged through Fiji, and spirits have been low over the past year, so Ufemia Camaitoga, the National President of FECTA/OMEP Fiji and also president of OMEP PIN, arranged for this online

ECE 'Mini Summit' with the theme *Re-positioning Ourselves as Early Childhood Educators in the New Normal*. Apart from the Aotearoa presentation on OMEP, there were presentations by Nikki Baldwin from the University of Wyoming (an ECE consultant for the Pacific region), Sofina Bibi talking about using *Seesaw*, Suzie Grey on *femLINK*, a group that supports women throughout Fiji and the Pacific, Asela Naisara on the *Mama Ashy Network* and how it supports families in Fiji, and Babra Masters on using *Google Classroom*. The participants received a signed professional development certificate at the end of the two days, 6-8 pm, online 'Mini Summit'.

On November 28, I was invited to the larger online Virtual Summit, again hosted by Ufemia as FECTA and OMEP PIN president. This took place 6-9 pm NZ time. Unfortunately, Ulu was unable to attend and Feilo'aiga, OMEP Aotearoa Pasifika rep, has no internet as yet. Over 100 early childhood teachers from throughout Fiji attended. The keynote speaker was Andrew Oberthur from Queensland, Australia on *Are you ready for School?* Dr Deb Moore, also from Australia, spoke on *Rethinking Children's Rights*. There were a large number of local speakers, with opportunities for evaluation and feedback. Overall, I would say this was a successful online event that brought teachers together in Covid-19 times.

I felt privileged to have been invited; it gave me an opportunity to meet ECE friends from the 2018 face to face FECTA conference in Lautoka, Fiji, at which 300 members voted to 'nest' OMEP within FECTA. Ulu and Glynne also attended this conference, and Glynne was the keynote speaker on climate change.

By Diti Hill-Denee

International E-conference on Children's Right to High-Quality Education and Care

On October 22, Parisa Tadi attended the International E-conference on Children's right to high-quality education and care conference from Poland OMEP. The first-day conference language was Polish, but the second day was in English. Due to the time difference, I only stayed for the first half of the conference (it took to midnight NZ time); I am so sad that I missed the second half. The conference was very inspiring and brought many questions and debates to the minds. A few highlights of the conference are below:

- Dr Marek Michalak talked about children's rights during the Covid-19 pandemic; with attention to social and physical isolations. He also highlighted how the pandemic has affected the children's rights, such as access to education and health, expressing themselves and play rights. The high chance of bad interpretation of what a child needs by adults during the epidemic is another area of his concern. He further questioned the readiness of the education and health sectors, government, and all other related children's organisations for "post-pandemic time."
- Prof Ingrid Engdahl talked about ways to address sustainability and the anthropocene. She highlighted the lack of awareness about children's rights and adult perspectives still have stronger voices than children's ones. In that light, she talked about the children's right of a sustainable future and discussed this by planet boundaries, doughnut economy (IPCC report, 2021). She further explained children's rights in addressing sustainability and how empowering children may influence local and global changes. She stated the lack of awareness of the need for transformative changes in ECE sectors and the lack of connections between social-cultural, ecological and economic sectors. She introduced her new published book "young children in the world and their rights" by Springer.

· Dr Agnieszka Kozłowska talked about climate change and the call for action by writing a letter addressing the children's rights and the effect of climate changes on children's intellectual, physical and nature/environment education.

By Parisa Tadi

OMEP Aotearoa New Zealand Chapters

OMEP Wellington

OMEP Auckland

I am very happy for parts of the ARNEC news flash and bits of my commentary to go into the next newsletter. That way it will get to members? I didn't even mention that over the week that COP 26 was held in Scotland, a lot of the focus was on the Pacific Ocean and the disappearance of whole island nations into the sea! So ironic, since so many people around the world haven't got a clue about the geography and the many and varied Pacific island populations. Never mind that, in the meantime, the island resources are being depleted by outside economic giants - fish, fruit, phosphate, sand, corals (lime)... in return for a hall here and a church there. I could go on....The point ARNEC is making - at its heart, climate change is about children's rights - is very important.

Ngā mihi, Diti

OMEP Canterbury

OMEP Otago

Early Childhood News and Items of Interest

International Days

Some important dates to plan for in your centres and communities. Put these in your diaries and on the wall planners in your office!

OMEP adheres to the following international commemorations:

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Notes from COP 26

- · Kiribati opening up protected sites to fishing by China!!
- · Aote Tong – former Prime Minister - is angry about this....”terrible”
- · Australia: “My job is to protect Australia”
- · New Zealand the only Asia Pacific country paying its full share to address climate change in the Pacific. \$1.3 billion -2050 deadline....Other countries are not coming forward.

OMEP membership renewal notice

OMEP Aotearoa membership subscriptions for 2022 are due at the end of December, and renewals are welcome now. We have very much valued your support over the past year and look forward to your continued participation in OMEP. There are challenging issues ahead for Aotearoa New Zealand if we are to ensure that children's rights and wellbeing are taken fully into account in political decision making, and that young children and their families are given the support they need to thrive despite the multiple stresses that so many are facing at present.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead, putting into place the big changes we've made during 2021, strengthening our focus on advocacy for children at the national and international level, whilst maintaining the professional learning hui and opportunities to come together that are valued so much by our members at a local level.

This year there are no cumbersome forms to download, sign and return - instead it's super easy to renew via the online form: <https://forms.gle/VZ21fnofNdZV8gJc8>

Following our move away from a formalised Chapter structure, members will renew with OMEP Aotearoa, rather than via a Chapter. General information about OMEP Aotearoa and OMEP World will be sent to you directly. However, most of you will also be wanting to be a part of your nearest Regional Rōpū and participate in activities, hui, etc. organised locally, in which case you need to 'opt in' to permit your contact information to be provided to the relevant.



Picture from: <https://www.pinterest.nz/pin/180214422560743766/>

VISIT OMEP's New Webpage: <https://omeworld.org/>

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