



Early Childhood Education for a Sustainable World



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OMEP is a voluntary, international, non-governmental, and non-profit organization with Special Consultative Status at the UN, UNESCO, and UNICEF. In its 75 years of existence, OMEP has become a global benchmark in defending the human rights of children from birth to 8 years old.

OMEP's work focuses on sustainability and education as rights and for the achievement of other rights: comprehensive development, citizenship, well-being, and dignity of all children around the world.



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

OMEP advocates for the best interests of the child, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), with a special emphasis on the active participation of children in matters that affect them, as well as on respect for children's perspectives and ideas. We recognize early education as a powerful tool for promoting the development of attitudes, skills and behaviour that promote environmental, social, political, and economic sustainability from childhood onwards.

In 2010 OMEP Sweden hosted the 26th OMEP World Congress, Children – Citizens in a Challenged World. This gathering of researchers, practitioners, and policy makers marked the beginning of OMEP's commitment to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

Research underscores the urgency of the next decade for transformative change to promote sustainability. These changes must begin in early childhood as the foundation for sustainability-promoting attitudes, skills, and behaviour throughout the life course. Therefore, the momentum for ESD in ECEC has never been stronger.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015-2030) call for access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education for all children (Target 4.2) and emphasize the importance of acquiring knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development during childhood (Target 4.7).

The aims of OMEP's World ESD project are to promote ESD as an integral part of high-quality early education and to share examples of worthy sustainability projects.

The newest addition is a free online course **Sustainability from the Start**. It is available in multiple languages when downloading the app **ECE Academy**.

You are invited to participate!

Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson
OMEP ESD Chair

Mercedes Mayol Lassalle
World OMEP President

www.omepworld.org



OMEP's highly successful, on-going World ESD project includes several components: research, early childhood teacher education, a self-assessment scale to improve ESD in early education settings, a free, on-line course for practitioners, and an annual competition for OMEP's ESD Project Award. During the last 15 years, the project has reached an impressive number of children, teachers, families and student teachers.

143 817

**young
children**

15 679

teachers

13 790

families

1 044

**student
teachers**

Part I - Children's voices 2009

Aims of the project:

To collect information about young children's thoughts, comments and understanding of a drawing of the Earth and to enhance the overall awareness among parents, educators, and other professionals.

How to start this project:

Interview children informally about the drawing of the Earth



Children's responses

- Are they really cleaning up the earth, or just washing the globe?
- Because the global warming is a very serious problem and it would lead to the last day of the earth.
- You know, it is very easy. You just turn off the lights or the electricity when not in use.
- They are doing it as a group activity since that it would be more fun rather than playing alone.

Part II - ESD in practice 2010

Aims of the project:

To implement Education for Sustainable Development together with children in early childhood education practices and to collect information and further understanding of young children's ideas and actions for ESD.



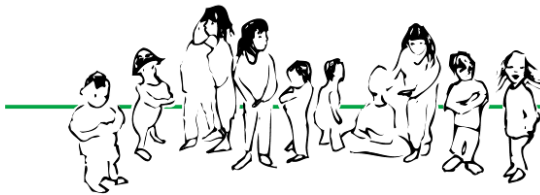
How to start this project:

Ask the children: -What is NOT sustainable here in our setting?
- How can we change this together?

Based on the children's ideas, apply the 7 Rs to your daily practices.

OMEF Project about ESD

respect	the rights of the child	reuse	make more use of old things
reflect	on the cultural differences in the world	reduce	we can do more with less
rethink	people today value other things	recycle	someone else can use it again
		redistribute	resources can be used more equally



Respect, Reflect and **Rethink** relate directly to social and cultural dimensions

Reuse and **Reduce** highlight environmental aspects

Recycle and **Redistribute** draw on the economic perspective.

Part III - Intergenerational Dialogues for ESD 2011

The aims of the project:

to broaden the perspectives and strive beyond the preschool/school by engaging children and their teachers in intergenerational dialogues and projects.



How to start this project:

Choose one of the questions and discuss how children understand the chosen topic.

- How do we use plastic? Reducing the number of plastic bottles and plastic bags used in the preschool/ school/ and at home.
- Where does food come from? Creating a new garden in the neighbourhood to produce food and to recognize the cycle of life in nature.
- How do you play with toys and with other children? Establishing a network of friends, starting by the exchange of games and traditional play.

How is it today? How was it before in previous times? Prepare questions to put to old people.

More information: Engdahl, I. (2015). Early childhood education for sustainability: The OMEP world project. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 47 (347-366). doi:10.1007/s13158-015-0149-6



Part IV - Equality 2013

The aim of the project:

to collect examples of early childhood education initiatives that focused on social perspectives exemplified with addressing poverty.

The rationale for Part IV was to promote the social, cultural and economic dimensions of sustainability.



How to start the project:

Use the following themes:

- socio-economic/relative poverty,
- special needs and disability,
- social injustice,
- gender and
- ethnicity/indigenous peoples.

Part V - Teacher Education 2014

The aim of the project:

to elaborate resources for ESD to be implemented in Teacher education and in early childhood education for sustainability.

Teacher educators and teachers were asked to address and give voice to children and to enhance child participation.



Part VI - OMEP ESD Rating Scale

The OMEP ESD Rating Scale (2019) exists in many languages. It is a three-page scale following the three dimensions of sustainability.

Today, it is most often used as a tool for educators and teacher students for in-service training and competence development. The scale enables educators and management to develop a broader understanding of sustainable development, a joint professional language, and to identify areas in need of action towards sustainability.

How to start using the scale? Just visit this link:

https://omepworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2019-OMEP-ESD-rating-scale2ed.ENG_.pdf



OMEP ESD Award 2009

Since 2009, OMEP launches an annual competition in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability, and from 2019 also a competition for ECE student teachers. We invite projects that focus on a holistic view on ESD and children's rights, as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We would like to see projects that are child-oriented where children are active in play and communication with other children, teachers, families, and communities, in a transformative change for sustainability. SDG 4.2 specifically asks for quality education for young children.



OMEP and UNESCO

OMEP participated in the UNESCO Decade for ESD 2005-2015 and in the Global Action Programme 2015-2019. During that time, we together developed a resource bank for ECEC projects for sustainability – ECEC for Sustainability Resource Bank

<http://ececresourcebank.org/index.php>

OMEP is an active partner in the UNESCO Agenda for 2030, advocating for both children's rights and a sustainable world.



Join a free online course on ESD

Sustainability from the Start is a state-of-the-art program, co-funded by the EU and created specifically for Early Childhood Educators.

Dive into Eight Comprehensive Modules: Explore various dimensions of sustainable development through our user-friendly modules. Engage and Educate Together: Immerse in engaging activities crafted for educators and children.

It is available in multiple languages, catering for diverse global curricula.

Simply download the ECE Academy App, create your free account, and start!

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