



©Anna-Karin Engberg



Newsletter No 1 – April 2021

To project leaders in the OMEP ESD rating scale project

These are extraordinary times!

The Covid-19 pandemic has put the whole world on alert. IN OMEP, most of our activities have moved to virtual meetings on Zoom or Teams.

We know that the situation all over the world is difficult, a lot of activities must be closed or cancelled. In most countries, the ECE centres have been closed for longer or shorter periods. The 19 National OMEP committees who signed up for the OMEP Rating Scale project also have made different decisions. Thus, working with the OMEP ESD Rating Scale project has not been their first priority. However, the project is still active, and in countries like Russia, many teachers and children are involved in the project.

To National project leaders and National presidents participating in the ESD project

We are inviting you to the first OMEP ESD Cafe 11th May at 12am – 2pm (Sweden)
(Chile 6am, Thailand 5pm, Australia 8pm, New Zealand 10pm)

We are looking forward to meeting you and to discuss the following points:

- How do you cope with pandemic in relation to your ESD Scale project?
- What advice would you give to other ESD Scale project teams to enable the realization of the project?

The OMEP ESD Cafe will held at the Zoom platform.

You may expect the link 10th of May.

Most Welcome!

Special issue of IJEC on Education for sustainability: IJEC, 54(1)

Early Childhood Education for Sustainability: Critical Exploration of Possibilities and Challenges

This special issue of IJEC would collect articles with a critical exploration of the possibilities and challenges of early childhood education for sustainability (ECEfS) in the light of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the role of the Sustainable development goals (SDG).

Of special interest are contributions that focus on how ECEfS might contribute to or hinder the enhancement of resilience, i.e., building values, attitudes, and competencies, that strengthen the ability to cope in times of multiple crises (the ecological crisis, the climate crisis, the humanitarian crisis). The role and position of children is another important content that could be further explored in this special issue, for instance the dilemma between recognising children as participatory social actors in their own lives and the tendency to pass on existing knowledge within a normative framework.

Other possible content could be e.g., a critical debate about the concept of sustainable development. Many different concepts are used, ECEfS, as we have chosen in our call, Education for Sustainable Development, Environmental Ed, and Sustainability Ed. Additionally, research is sometimes focusing on only one or two of the foundational dimensions; ecological, economical, and socio-cultural, not to mention the political dimension of empowerment. In what ways do such studies contribute to the holistic understanding of sustainability, which leans on an integrated approach of the dimensions?

UN Agenda 2030 were not established as a kind of curriculum for education, but more as a roadmap for nations and the world towards achieving a more sustainable position in 2030.

Questions that we would like to address in the special issue are: What possibilities and/or challenges does the SDG framework afford for the position of the child, and for ECEC? Is it possible, or even eligible, to implement the SDGs in the daily work of practitioners? How are the SDGs understood, received, and translated in various cultural settings? How can the SDGs translate into empowering practices that contribute to hope and action, both at the individual and the social level?

Additionally, this special issue would invite articles on the development of national and local policies and practices within early childhood education and teacher education that lead the way to transformative change towards cultures of sustainability.

Ass. Professor **Ingrid Engdahl**, Vice President for OMEP in Europe

Dr **Ann-Christin Furu**

Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Ass. Professor **Marianne Presthus Heggen**

Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

IJEC Timeline for Special Issue 54(1)

1st July 2021 Final date for online submission of all manuscripts for the special issue to Springer Editorial manager <https://www.editorialmanager.com/ijec/>

1st October 2021 External peer review process completed, and feedback sent to authors (revision or rejection).

1st November 2021 Final date for revised manuscripts to be resubmitted by authors.

1st January 2022 Final feedback provided to authors for manuscript development (acceptance, need for any further minor revision, or rejection).

February 2022 Finalising the text, translation of Abstracts to three official languages (English, French and Spanish)

March 2022 All accepted articles submitted to Springer Production for copy-editing and typesetting for print issue.

15th April 2022 IJEC Special Issue published/in print

The Moscow ECCE conference in December 2020

A symposium about the OMEP ESD Rating scale

The members of OMEP from different countries actively participated in several events, dedicated to education for sustainable development and to the OMEP ESD Project. The symposium *International project: how to evaluate education environment for sustainable development?* was chaired by Ingrid Engdahl, Regional OMEP vice president for Europe, world project leader, and Natalya Ryzhova, doctor of pedagogy, professor, laureate of the Russian government award in education, Moscow city university and the Russian OMEP project leader. The Symposium was dedicated to the international OMEP project on Education for Sustainable Development.

The Project on the OMEP ESD rating scale involves 19 countries. Present at the ECCE conference were the three co-leaders of the OMEP ESD Project Natalya Ryzhova, Russia, Milada Rabušicová, Czech Republic and Adrijana Visnjic-Jevtic, Croatia. National project leaders from Turkey, Serap Erdoğan, Great Britain, Paulette Luff and Sweden, Laila Gustavsson talked about national implementation specifics in various countries, and challenges faced by educators in project implementation as well as ways to address them.

At the Symposium, **Natalya Ryzhova** talked about the timeline and results of the different stages of the OMEP ESD Project, in which Russia has been participating since 2010. She summarized the main achievements of the Project parts 1, 2, 3 and 4, in which many kindergartens became involved and the results of which were repeatedly presented at the OMEP Assemblies and Conferences.

Natalya emphasized that the main result of the projects is the fact that its participants have started to perceive the principles of sustainable and safe development as something of personal concern: they have understood that it is a matter of concern not only for scientists and governments, but that they, too, can and should take an active part in the process in their own city, town or village.

Ingrid Engdahl then presented the OMEP ESD Rating Scale, how it is constructed and how teachers may use it, as a tool for in-service training in order to improve the quality of their preschools, and also to improve the awareness of the importance of transformative change towards sustainability.

Paulette Luff, president of OMEP UK, presented some initiatives in UK around ESD. The OMEP Kenya / OMEP UK Partnership for ESD is a twinning project where teachers and children in the two countries work with similar projects for sustainability, inspiring each other and opening the world for both adults and children.

One project was estimating the ecological footprint of the children in England and Kenya with the help of the WWF calculating tool. The result showed (as an estimate) that a typical Kenyan pre-school carbon footprint was approximately 3 kg per child, whereas a typical UK pre-school carbon footprint was around 600kg per child (Huggins and Siraj-Blatchford, 2015).



Another very relevant project was about Hand-washing and water consumption where the English children learnt how to make and use a 'Tippy Tap'



Other joint projects have been ‘**Matarijio**’ (Hope/Expectations) with the goal to empowering children with role play and the Conservation of Bat-project.



OMEP UK has introduced national ESD Awards and also developed certificates for the participating preschools, as a visible token of appreciation for their results.

Adrijana Višnjić-Jevtić told about the ESD project in Croatia. An analysis has been made about ESD in the Croatian curriculum for early childhood education. The result shows that it is unclear whether sustainable development is part of

OMEP Croatia has run six workshops for teachers in the beginning of the project, reaching more than 200 teachers and over 2000 children. However, when asking about the OMEP ESD Rating scale, 2/3 of the teachers a Teacher perceptions on the ESD in the National curriculum show no clear understanding. An OMEP survey showed that 2/3 of teachers are not familiar with the scale.

Croatian kindergarten’s curricula, or if it is only one of the concepts that enrich documents without a clear application in practice. Three universities offer content from education for sustainable development as individual courses.



Milada Rabušicová, president of OMEP in the Czech Republic told us they have participated in all parts and phases of the OMEP ESD project, starting from 2009. Here is one example from part 3: Intergenerational for ESD, where the project’s perspective widened from kindergartens to cooperation with families and the local society. Here is one result:

What are the biggest differences between life today and before?

- *The intergenerational meetings were revealing for the children. They motivated them to think about the comfort in which they live. They learned that this was not always the case. They found out that some games are known not only to their mothers but also to their grandmothers, and that some things can be done in other ways. They also learned that there is no need to buy everything, that some things do not need to be thrown out right away, but that it is possible that someone will still use them. "*

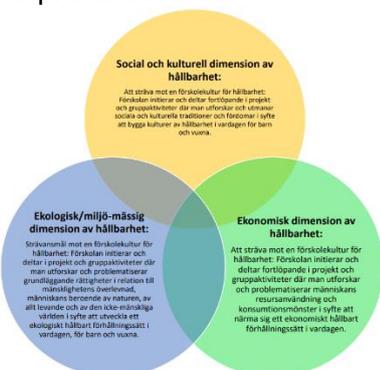
Concerning the OMEP ESD Rating scale, all materials are translated into the Czech language, and in the process the materials passed evaluation by several teams of Kindergarten teachers, who saw the scale as understandable and useful. The scale is published on the OMEP Czech web (omep.cz) and promoted via networks and media.

Also in the Czech Republic, the project includes a contest for teachers and students of Schools of Education with a financial award. Several kindergartens showed their interest in the project. but due to coronavirus no Kindergarten has started the project yet.

Milada concluded by saying that the OMEP Projects are sustainable in terms of longitudinal impact in her country. Children do know now what the sustainable development means and are involved in activities based on curriculum and local initiatives. Teachers are more informed and motivated nowadays. The OMEP Projects can be seen as „added value“ to regular curriculum

Project leader **Laila Gustavsson** from OMEP Sweden told us that the new scale has been translated and adapted to Swedish conditions and the Swedish curriculum. It is available at OMEP Sweden website <https://www.omep.org.se/>.

The scale has been introduced to universities, and preschool teacher students at some universities bring the scale to their placements and local tutors. The introduction to Heads of preschools was made in two steps, short to many, and then a more detailed information to Heads of preschools with interest in the project, and to the preschool staff.



First results – voices from 5 preschools

The scale is a good support in their work for a sustainable future
 Some of the indicators are difficult to understand
 A difference between children´s level and the preschool level
 They are interested in hearing examples from other preschools in other countries

Then the Corona virus started spreading and the work stopped



Serap Erdoğan is the OMEP president in Turkey. She proudly presented the OMEP Student Committee and challenged us to start student committees in our countries. Serap continued by saying that OMEP in Turkey actively promotes development projects. During 2013-2016, the OMEP World Project, where Turkey was participating in the project which resulted in the rating scale: *OMEP Classroom Environment Rating Scale for Education for Sustainable Development* together with 9 other 10 countries. Other Turkish projects have applied for the OMEP ESD Awards, and in 2019 in the 10th year, Turkish projects received 1 Student Award, 2 Honor Awards and 1 Student Honor Award.

In Turkey, first of all, calls have been issued to scientists working in the field of pre-school in order to specify cooperative co-workers of the project. In this course, translation of the scale into Turkish has been completed, and the adaptation studies and process of submission to an expert opinion are in progress.

The first step of the project will be a pilot study to determine the scale's suitability to Turkish culture and its comprehensibility in Turkish language. The pilot study will be realized in Eskişehir and Bursa.

A call text was prepared to get in contact with volunteer teachers and a total of more than 50 pre-school teachers across Turkey have filled out the voluntary participation survey. It is notably remarkable for the project that the teachers are from different regions and cities.

During actual implementation of the scale, 12 regions included in Statistical Regional Units Classification of Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) will be used in order to make socio-economic analysis of regions for reducing development disparities between regions, and to produce comparable data with European Union (EU).

The study will be carried out with a total of 36 pre-school teachers and 720 pre-school children, 3 teachers (2 principal, 1 substitute) for each region which will be selected from 12 regions in NUTS1 level. It is assumed that each teacher has 20 children in her/his class.

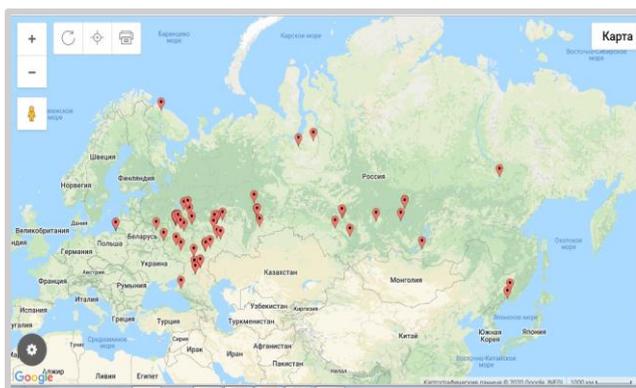


A concluding opening from Serap Erdoğan was a first glance at OMEP Turkey's wish to arrange a World Conference. As soon as the pandemic is over ... we will surely hear more about this.

Natalya Ryzhova then took the floor and talked about the impressive Russian participation in the rating scale project. Currently over 70 kindergartens from over 64 regions in Russia are engaged in the project. Many kindergartens have already tested their environment using all the indicators of the scale, formulated their proposals, and launched joint adult-child projects for change in their kindergarten environment. In Russia, the project was named *Is Your Kindergarten Ready for Sustainable Development?* The rating scale was translated, adapted and supplied with examples. The criteria included in the scale were provided with Russian cases to make it easier to use by pedagogues. The application of the scale has shown that the most difficult dimension to assess using the scale was the economical dimension.

The Russian National project leader together with a famous educational journal organized webinars at the national level: *"The International ESD Project: Taking Part Together"* and *"Is Your Kindergarten Ready for Sustainable Development?"* (continuing conversation about sustainable development)". Recordings of the webinars is available at the website of the educational journal for teachers and are very popular. In order to analyze and generalize data from participants, a special form for participants was created and sent to kindergartens. All data together with new information was gathered in a single table. Some participants have worked with the scale even during the pandemic times.

Map of the ESD Project and participants in Russia)



Round table of the Russian National Committee of OMEP and strategy for efficient cooperation.

The President of the Russian National Committee of OMEP **Larisa Shevchenko** presented her report on the history of the Russian Committee from the international cooperation perspective, showcase successful projects, share insightful ideas, and globally recognized new pedagogical techniques. The session brought together experts from **Italy, Greece, Turkey, Russia, Portugal**. They reviewed partner-based preschool educational projects launched during the pandemics and discussed social partnership and its benefit for PEIs and society. Much attention was paid to the international project *“Learning Cultures Through Pedagogical Exchange”* that involved five country members of OMEP: **Maria Gerasina**, vice president of Russian National Committee of OMEP, *“Matryoshka—Plagona—Matregona”* by **Nektarios Stellakis** from Greece, *“Matryoshka—Soganli”* by **Serap Erdoğan**, President of OMEP Turkey, and *“The Unbelievable Adventures of Pinocchio in Russia”* by **Matteo Corbucci**, President, Italian OMEP National Committee.

SCIENTIFIC SESSION “Education for sustainable development in early childhood”

(Chairs: **Ingrid Engdahl**, Regional OMEP Vice President for Europe and **Natalya Ryzhova**, Doctor of Pedagogy, Professor at Moscow City University).

The participants focused on various social, environmental and economic issues (how to train resource-saving skills in children) and discussed what a kindergarten can do for sustainable development, how to change relationships between adults and children, support child leadership, manage project work, apply ICTs in lesson, transform the learning environment, set up interaction with families, change staff training and re-qualification approaches, how to build a green kindergarten, and a lot more. College and kindergarten educators shared their ideas and achievements.

Teachers about the Project:

“This rather interesting experience helped many pedagogues to see child development across the world in a new light. We are thankful for the new vector of the kindergarten's development”
(Kindergarten teacher, Zelenogorsk, Russia)

“Thank you very much for the opportunity to participate in the project”!
(kindergarten #201 Tolyatti, Russia)

At present there are applications collected from 77 kindergartens and 1 college for teacher education at a university, from 29 regions of the country. Municipal kindergartens are prevalent, including institutions for children with special needs, private kindergartens are also present.

In "Education for Sustainable Development: How Can a Kindergarten Contribute?" **Natalya Ryzhova** told about ESD in Russia and showed practical cases that demonstrated what contributions kindergarten make for achieving the ESD Goals. She analyzed the 17 Goals and proposed different kinds of activities in kindergartens for each of them. Kindergartens carry special significance for education for sustainable development, since it is closely connected with children's families, their grandparents, various non-governmental, municipal and private organizations and agencies.



Adrijana Višnjic-Jevtic, President of OMEP Croatia, presented "Teachers' Perspectives on Adaptive Reuse in Artistic Activities as a Part of Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood Education". The rest of the participants, teachers and heads of kindergartens, and university professors shared their experiences in different areas, such as:

- creating green kindergartens,
- using IT for teaching children about sustainable development and energy saving,
- cultural practices of attracting preschoolers to musical traditions as a social component of ESD.

Please send us your report on the OMEP ESD Rating scale project

We are interested in knowing about the current situation in your country, your situation. And we also want to share information and ideas about the OMEP ESD Rating Scale project. WE will do this in four steps:

- 1) We welcome you to a **virtual ESD café** on May 11 at 8pm (CET) for the participating countries in the project (see special invitation)
- 2) We ask you to send us a **short National report**, by using the Form at the end of this newsletter. It is OK to leave some parts blank if the pandemic has come in the way for your plans on how to work with the project.
- 3) We will prepare a **report to the OMEP World Assembly** in August 2021. We will also arrange an open seminar to spread our joint experiences from the ESD Rating Scale project, probably as part of the World Assembly programme. **The dead-line May 31, 2021**, email the report to vpeurope@omep.org
- 4) We will **welcome more participating national committees** to join the world project, starting in September 2021.

If ANY questions, please don't hesitate to contact us in the ESD project leadership team.

Ingrid Engdahl	vpeurope@worldomep.org
Milada Rabušicová	milada@phil.muni.cz
Natalia Ryzhova	ryzhovoi@gmail.com
Adrijana Višnjic-Jevtic	avisnjic.jevtic@gmail.com



©Anna-Karin Engberg

The OMEP ESD Rating Scale project

2021 PROJECT REPORT from (country)

Date of report _____

Please email us your report to vp europe@worldomep.org before May 31, 2021

Project leader(s)		
Email address(es)		
Have you translated the ESD Rating scale?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> We are working on the translation now <input type="checkbox"/> We can use the scale without translation.	
Have you sent it to world project leader?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> We will send it later around _____ (date)	
Project activities	Planned	Done
	<input type="checkbox"/> Translation of the scale	<input type="checkbox"/> Translation of the scale
	<input type="checkbox"/> Informing about the project	<input type="checkbox"/> Informing about the project
	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment of participants	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment of participants
	<input type="checkbox"/> Training sessions	<input type="checkbox"/> Training sessions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Implementation of the scale	<input type="checkbox"/> Implementation of the scale
	<input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary project results	<input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary project results
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Participants involved in projects (only relevant where the project has been active)	Number of ECE settings	
	Number of children	
	Age of children	
	Number of primary schools	
	Number of children	
	Age of children	
	Number of higher education institutions (University, College...)	
	Numbers of ECE Teacher students	
	Number of families	
Other categories (museums, parks, NGOs, gardens etc)		
National OMEP President		
Language	We work in the _____ language(s)	
We have participated in previous OMEP ESD Projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If Yes, describe which project(s):	

Description of what you have done in the project

(please describe the project in maximum 300 words, the description could deal with translations, recruitment, training sessions, meetings etc)

What positive ideas and experience have you made during the project?

(please describe in maximum 200 words)

What problems have you faced around the project?

(please describe in maximum 200 words)

What plans do you have for the rest of 2021?

(please describe in 200 words maximum what you will do)

What ideas do you have for the future of this project after 2021?

(please describe in max 100 words if you have ideas or your thoughts about the OMEP ESD project)

Do you have any results already? Please tell in 200 words and/or add an attachment.

How do you share information about the project amongst OMEP members/interested community?

(please describe in max 50 words what communication channels you would use to share information and results about OMEP ESD project)

Anything more you want to share?