

## UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP)

### World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP) Proposal

#### Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for Sustainable Development

##### Introduction

While Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in other sectors tends to be strongly focused upon teaching and learning classroom practices, Sustainable Development in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) requires an approach that involves the full range of integrated services and concerns for children and their families from birth to school.

There is a growing awareness that perspectives focused upon institutional 'pre-primary education' *alone* are inadequate to the challenges of sustainable development in ECCE. The safety, nutrition, hygiene, attachment, stimulation, and communicative interaction that is provided to young children from birth onwards are of fundamental importance in setting the foundations for all of their later learning and development (Britto and Ulkuer, 2012). Many of the most demonstrably effective early childhood interventions around the world have also been developed in 'combined' projects and preschools that have included family outreach. This was the case in the celebrated *Perry Preschool project* (Schweinhart, 2004), the *Elmira Prenatal/Early Infancy Project* (Olds et al 1997), *Early Head Start in the US* (Raikes et al ,2006), the *Sure Start* programme in the UK (Belsky et al, 2007), *Early childhood stimulation in Jamaica* (Grantham -McGregor's 1991, Gertler, et al 2014), *Familias en Acción in Columbia* (Attanasio et al 2013), and also the recent successes of Save the Children in Mozambique that have been widely reported in *The Promise for Preschool in Africa* (Martinez, et al, 2012). These were all highly robust studies and the evidence of their effectiveness is widely acknowledged. Amartyan Sen has emphasised the importance of promoting human capabilities in sustainable development (Sen, 2000), and from this perspective emergent literacy and numeracy education may be seen as fundamental to the achievement of individual agency, freedom and citizenship. Chapter 36 of *Agenda 21* adopted by the United Nations in Rio in 1992 identified basic education as the first priority for ESD (UNCED, 1992), and this remains a major global imperative. Sustainable Development in ECCE is therefore most crucially concerned with inequalities related to children's health and safety, and in their educational outcomes. These integrated and holistic perspectives have been fully accepted in developing the OMEP GAP project proposal and they are fundamental to the perspective that has been adopted on ECCE teacher education.

This is an initiative that extends OMEPs development and trials of the *Environmental Rating Scale for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood* (ERS-SDEC), and the development of its user handbook in ten OMEP countries between 2010 and 2014. The trials were carried out as a voluntary contribution to the project by senior University academic members of the OMEP community in Chile, China, Kenya, Korea, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, the UK, and the USA<sup>1</sup>. The ERS-SDEC applies the same rating procedures as the widely used and adapted *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised* (ECERS-R) (Harms, Clifford and Cryer, 1998) and ECERS-E (*Extension*) (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2003) research and development instruments. They are applied to measure the quality of the educational provisions provided in preschools and these ratings have been shown to correlate highly with child outcomes. In many research contexts the ERS-SDEC may therefore be applied conveniently alongside these more elaborate and comprehensive quality rating scales. The ERS-SDEC may also be applied by individual or groups of practitioners to audit their education for sustainable development curriculum, and to help practitioners and preschool centre managers in setting curriculum development priorities. OMEP is committed to the further development, refinement and revision of this instrument in the future in collaboration with practitioners. The ERS-SDEC may be downloaded from:  
<http://www.worldomep.org/en/esd-scale-for-teachers/>

The proposal also seeks UNESCO support in the development of a *Global Teacher Education Resource Pack for Early Childhood Care and Education for Sustainable Development (ECCESD)*. This pack will provide a multilingual handbook, and a DVD of exemplar practices to support inter-rater consistency in the application of the OMEP ERS-SDEC. These resources will explain how this ESD curriculum evaluation

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<sup>1</sup> Siraj-Blatchford, J., Park, E., and Mogharreban, C. (Eds.) (forthcoming) *Developing a Research Programme for Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood*, Springer Books

instrument can be used in different ways by groups and individuals around the world to improve the quality and effectiveness of ECCE. The pack will also include a range of additional teacher education materials contributed by OMEP groups in each world region so that they will be demonstrably relevant in different world contexts. The editing of these will be strongly informed by an ongoing GPE technical review of basic educational provisions in ECCE in Africa, which OMEP, and the editorial and management team for this project are contributing towards. This review will support us in identifying the highest priority resources to be included in the Resource Pack at this time, as well as the particular high quality pedagogic and curriculum practices that are of particular relevance in the most challenging under resourced preschool settings around the world.

The OMEP Editorial and Project Management Team:

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**Summary Proposal** (See also project proposal Timeline and Spreadsheet documents)

The proposal addresses the UNESCO GAP: *'Priority Action Area'* :

**3. Building capacities of educators and trainers for the effective delivery of ESD (in Early Childhood)**

**Targets/Activity**

OMEP proposes a Global Action Project supporting the integration of sustainability principles into ECCE, and the development of resources for early childhood care and education (ECCE) and training settings. Over a period of five years it will provide three concrete deliverables:

1. A fully illustrated user handbook for the OMEP Environment Rating Scale for Education for Sustainable Development (ERS-ESD) (for Publication in July 2015), and;
2. A comprehensive ESD in ECCE resource pack for initial and continuing teacher education and training. (for publication in October 2016)
3. An OMEP ESD 'Kite Mark' for Early Childhood Teacher Education

(Please see attached documents for more complete details of proposal, timeline, targets and evaluation criteria)

**Resources**

As a voluntary organization mobilizing ECCE practical, policy and research expertise in more than 70 countries, OMEP is in a unique position to develop these resources. The total project budget is \$179,592. Of this, we seek UNESCO support in securing a contribution of \$86,172 (US) which represents 49% of the budget to support the production and publication of the work, and to ensure that it is adequately disseminated beyond the countries where it is initially developed.

(Please see attached for more complete details of proposal)

*Note: OMEP is a voluntary organisation. In developing this proposal we have asked our members to identify the number of hours they envisage spending on the project and their normal rates of remuneration in order to estimate their contributions in concrete financial terms. In the attached spreadsheet we account for this time at the conservative rate of \$30 per hour (\$240/day). International rates awarded to similarly qualified consultants through UN agencies are often more than double this figure. No DSA is being accounted for or required. We consider this proposal to be extremely cost efficient and capable of significant global impact.*