

Workshop 1

Voices of the Young in a Changing Climate

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OMEP – the World Organization for Early Childhood Education, is having its 26th World Congress in August 2010 which is this year being hosted by Sweden. It is hoped that connections made during this conference in Lund can help to contribute to this conference, where there is funding available for people who can contribute with good examples and experience. www.omep2010.org

When talking about ESD in a global context we must remember that this can be as basic as even having a preschool, having food or proper infrastructure, etc. OMEP's perspective on ESD is to have the child perspective. Although sustainable development (SD) is a problematic concept that can be understood differently, it is important to start doing something about it in the realm of education. A case study done in Sweden showed a lack of the term ESD in nearly all curriculums and the term environment referred mostly to the working environment. Children's perception of SD related primarily to keeping the nature tidy, recycling, cultivating, etc. So even in Sweden there is a long way to go to getting SD fully integrated into the curriculum.

Much of the discussion was then based around the following topics:

Need for inclusion of both a *child* perspective (in the best interest of the child) and a *child's* perspective (bottom-up, inclusive in education) in education.

SD tradition comes from environmental science – the challenge for ESD is bigger so there is a need for a re-orientation of education at all levels and in all phases of education.

When it comes to working towards SD in schools, many schools are already engaging in this type work but not recognizing it as SD. There is a barrier to schools working explicitly towards SD due to lack of knowledge of what SD really is and what it involves. Without connecting to a network it is

difficult to learn from each other and to be able to move forward. Networks are also necessary not only in a global school-to-school context but also locally in society with businesses, municipality, etc.

Sweden can be seen as having the task of showing other places in the world that it is possible to have access for all to a process of lifelong learning.

It is difficult to measure a school's progress in working towards ESD. There is a need for quality measurements that all schools can use.

Including the child's perspective deals with "vertical teaching" which includes learning from the inquisitions of this new generation. Here it is important to point out that learning from the children still includes the educator taking responsibility – he/she needs to both understand the child's perspective but base the education on what he/she as an adult and educator knows can work and be responsible for driving the ideas forward. (*"yttre tryck – inre vilja"*) What it often comes down to is that a teacher needs to dare to see the perspective of the children, listen to it, and to say "yes"!