CHILDREN’S CAPABILITIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Announcing the 2011 Awards on Learning for Sustainable Development with Young Children

Winners will receive a travel grant to attend the OMEP World Conference, 8-9 July 2011 in Hong Kong.

The competition

Under the title “Children’s Capabilities for a Sustainable Future”, OMEP/Sweden and SWEDESD are announcing a competition for practitioners using innovative approaches in education for sustainable development with young children (birth – 8 years). The competition is open to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) practitioners from five world regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia & the Pacific, Middle East & North Africa, Eastern Europe & Central Asia and Central & Latin America.

OMEP has chosen education for sustainable development (ESD) as one of the OMEP’s priority themes in the period 2011-2014 (see: www.omep.org.gu.se). SWEDESD aims at developing the capacity of ESD practitioners, researchers and policy makers in the Global South (see: www.swedesd.se).

OMEP and SWEDESD invite ECEC practitioners to submit a brief document describing innovative and inspiring situations, cases, projects and approaches of learning and education for sustainable development with young children. The specific instructions are given below.

An international jury of representatives of OMEP International, OMEP Sweden, SWEDESD, Hong Kong Institute of Education and one independent expert will judge the competition entries.

The awards

Five awards will be available, one for each of the five world regions. The award will consist of a grant of US$ 2,150 to attend the OMEP World Conference in Hong Kong “Meeting the Learning and Development Needs of Our Young Citizens” (see: http://home.ied.edu.hk/~omep2011/en/Venue.htm). The award winners will participate in the official awards ceremony during the Conference. They will present their winning submission in a special Conference session.

The travel grant will cover the conference participation fee and in addition a large part of the winner's travel expenses and subsistence costs (food and accommodation).

Aim

The overall aim of the competition is to encourage ECEC practitioners from all over the world to describe and report on inspiring and instructive examples of education for sustainable development among young children, from birth to eight years.
OMEP and SWEDESD strive to enhance the awareness among children, teachers, educators, caregivers and the community at large about sustainable development and to collect methods linked to the everyday world of young children that can empower children and their teachers with confidence and action competence to address sustainability challenges in their own teaching and learning environments.

Today’s children, wherever they are, are competent, active agents in their own lives and the lives of their family and community. They are affected by and capable of engaging with complex social and environmental issues. Therefore their education and learning are steering away from romanticized notions of childhood as an arena for innocent play, while assuming that children are leading or should be leading sheltered, safe and happy lives untouched by events around them. Early Childhood Education has strong traditions of integrated curriculum approaches embedded in children’s everyday lives and of child participation. This aligns well with education for sustainable development (ESD) as promoted by the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014 (see: http://www.unesco.org/en/education-for-sustainable-development/decade-of-esd/). ESD refers to learning in formal and informal setting with respect to the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars’ of sustainable development such as social development, economic development and environmental protection. ESD recognizes humanity’s dependence on a healthy biosphere. Participation and engagement are necessary components of ESD, with an emphasis on empowerment and agency for active citizenship, human rights and societal change.

Instructions for the competition

The competition entry should deal with a case which speaks to the topic of the competition “Children’s Capabilities for a Sustainable Future”. It should vividly describe and illustrate how through innovative, attractive, motivating and inspiring ways and means situations have developed and conditions have been created for children and teachers to enhance their capabilities and competencies (appreciation, knowledge, understanding and intellectual and practical skills) to meet the social, economic and environmental challenges of their surroundings, at present and in the future.

When judging the entries, the jury will use the following six criteria:

a. the case involves learning and education with young children (birth – 8 years);
b. all three ESD dimensions (environment, economic and social) are explicitly present, and their interconnections are specified;
c. children are active participants in the project; i.e. they are not mere receivers of information and instruction, but they are actively engaged in the learning process;
d. the case is innovative in terms of pedagogical and learning methods;
e. the case explicitly addresses the link between the learning situation and the wider community; and
f. the case shows to be responsive to the major challenges of our time, such as biological diversity, climate change, social justice and economic equity.

The actual submission should be in English, French or Spanish. It should not exceed 9 pages of text, including the cover page and any annexes. Submissions exceeding 9 pages will not be considered.
The submission document should contain the following sections:

Cover page: Title of the case, place where it is taking place (town, country), date of submission, author(s) name and full address (including: organisation, postal address, email address, telephone number(s))

Section 1: Summary
Section 2: Background – why this case; when this case; where this case; and who is involved?
Section 3: Aims and objectives of the case.
Section 4: Approaches, methods and materials.
Section 5: Main outcomes, results and lessons learned.
Section 6: Interesting quotes.
Section 7: Current and planned follow-up.
Section 8: References.

The deadline for submitting the competition entries is 2 May 2011. Please note, by submitting your case description you also give authorisation to use your submission for later publications.

The competition entry should be send to Lisbetth Söderberg: lisbetth.soderberg@ped.gu.se

We are looking forward to your submission!

Ingrid Engdahl Frans Lenglet Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson
OMEP Sweden SWEDESD OMEP World President

Further reading:


