EDITORIAL

This issue of the journal marks a very special occasion for OMEP, as this year the organisation is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation.. In 1946 five persons, committed to improving the care and education of young children from birth to seven years, met together to discuss how it would be possible to help young children and their families in a world devastated by the effects of war. Two years later their ideas came to fruition, and shortly afterwards the link with UNESCO began, which was to lead to OMEP having consultative status with this international body as a valued NGO. One of the aims of the founder members was to encourage communication between professionals in all parts of the world. This aim was first met with the introduction of a Newsletter, which in 1969 developed into the present International Journal of Early Childhood.

During the last fifty years society has undergone many changes as have attitudes and opinions. More and more women are working outside the home and as a result many more children are being cared for in institutional settings. In some countries, this is accepted, in others there are still arguments about whether this is appropriate practice. Issues relating to the education and care of young children are discussed at international, national and local levels. The numerous books and articles in print bear witness to the concern of many adults for the needs of young children and their families.

In this anniversary edition of the journal almost half the articles are devoted to papers from the Nordic Countries as they are hosting the World Congress and Assembly in Copenhagen in August. These range from interesting accounts of grass root projects carried out in the various countries to more philosophical articles on issues relating to our modern society and how children may be affected. In other parts of the world countries are experiencing differences in approach to curriculum and curriculum planning, sometimes imposed by an altered political ideology. The challenge which faces early childhood workers is constantly to monitor and reassess these changes to safeguard the principles of early childhood education. In some of the papers it can be seen that educators have taken up the challenge.

This issue is the last one which I and my team will be editing as we shall be handing over to Professor Tricia David, Director of the Centre for International Studies in Early Childhood Education, Christchurch College, Canterbury Kent, UK. and her team. I would like to thank all those who have helped me over the years, particularly my business editor, Margaret Hewitt, who has dealt with the administration so efficiently. I have enjoyed working as the editor and have developed many friendships through the articles that have been sent in- please continue to send them to the new editor, particularly articles in French and Spanish, which sadly have been missing from the most recent issues.

My good wishes go to Tricia David and her team. I am sure they will produce an exciting and innovative journal..

Audrey Curtis
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