

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNIMA PUPPETS IN EDUCATION, DEVELOPMENT AND THERAPY COMMISSION 2008 to 2012

MEMBERS AND CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Members:

Livija Kroflin, President (Croatia)
Ida Hamre (Denmark)
Edmond Debouny (Belgium)
Edi Majaron (Slovenia)
Meg Amsden (Great Britain)
Barbara Scheel (Germany)

Corresponding Members:

Oscar Caamaño (Argentina)
Judith O'Hare (U.S.A.)
Hicela Ivon (Croatia)
Helena Korošec (Slovenia)
Meddah Sid-Ahmed (Algeria)
Richard Ph James (Australia)
Chen-Chieh Sun (Taiwan)
Albert Bagno (Italy)
Phylemon Odhiambo Okoth (Kenya)

AIMS AND MEANS

Aims:

1. To support the UNESCO Roadmap for Arts Education 2006 and to stress in this context the importance of the art of puppetry with its unique ability to communicate
2. To encourage creative ways of using puppets from earliest childhood and throughout life
3. To encourage researchers to engage with the field of puppetry in education, development and therapy, and to share their results
4. To encourage the inclusion of puppetry in the training curricula of teachers, therapists and development workers
5. To encourage professional puppeteers to collaborate with educators, therapists, community and development workers, and other professionals, to use puppetry in their fields

Means:

1. Drawing up a recommended bibliography on the subject
2. Sharing experience and ideas through personal/group visits
3. Collaborating with festivals or organisations (e.g. UNIMA Centres) to organise workshops and give lectures/demonstrations
4. Displaying our *Aims and Means* on the UNIMA website, with a list of Commission members and up-to-date minutes in the 3 UNIMA languages, with a link to a new satellite website
5. Creating a new satellite website which will: allow and encourage the exchange of ideas; host on-line meetings; and provide space for reports on projects, articles, etc.
6. Assembling an on-line library of short clips of examples of good practice, with links to the creators so that those interested can explore on a deeper level
7. Linking up with Education, Development and Therapy groups and institutions in different UNIMA Centres and countries and encouraging them to communicate and co-operate with each other via web links
8. Exploring the possibilities of contemporary technology (e.g. web conferencing or chat room meetings) in order to facilitate that all the members and correspondents meet and communicate more effectively

MEETINGS

The Commission held meetings on 24, 25 and 26 June 2008 in Šibenik, within the framework of the International Children's Festival. Present were: Livija Kroflin, Ida Hamre, Edi Majaron and Meg Amsden, and for one day, Hicela Ivon (corresponding member) with a group of teachers from Šibenik and Split.

The second meeting was held in Dordrecht on June 23rd and 24th 2010. Present were: Livija Kroflin, Meg Amsden, Edmond Debouny, Ida Hamre and Barbara Scheel. It was decided to take part in the conference on education to be held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in June.

The second meeting was held in Ljubljana on June 29th 2011. Present were: Livija Kroflin, Meg Amsden, Ida Hamre and Barbara Scheel. It was decided to publish a book not only of the papers presented at the Conference but of the other works of the members and corresponding members of the Commission as well.

CONFERENCE

The members of the EDT Commission took part in the conference "Promoting the Social Emotional Aspects of Education; A Multi-faceted Priority" that was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 26-30 June 2011. The conference was organized by and took place at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education. The conference welcomed researchers and practitioners from a range of disciplines, including primary school education, early childhood education, history, psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, philosophy and organisational theory with an interest in this field.

The conference was based on the European Affective Education Network (EAEN) which has an interdisciplinary membership of scholars, researchers and practitioners interested in the "affective" dimension of educational process. This dimension has as its focus the personal, social, moral, cultural and spiritual development of students, and is concerned with feelings, beliefs, attitudes, interpersonal relationships and personal wellbeing.

Five out of six members of the EDT Commission took part: Meg Amsden, Ida Hamre, Livija Kroflin, Edi Majaron and Barbara Scheel.

Commission members acted as ambassadors for puppetry in education and therapy promoting also the name and ideas of the UNIMA.

Each of the members presented their papers.

Papers presented

Edi Majaron, who teaches Puppetry for students of different departments at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, was one of the keynote speakers. The theme of his paper was "Communication with and through Puppets" and the title: "**Art as a Pathway to a Child**". He talked about the important part that puppets play in various aspects of a child's development. He expressed his belief in the magical power of the puppet in all kinds of communication with children, which enlightens their talents and different forms of their creativity.

Meg Amsden's paper was titled "**Teaching Sustainability through Shadow Puppetry – A practical example of a project to encourage 7 – 11 year-olds to design for their future**".

The topic of the paper was the Being Carbon Neutral project, carried out by Meg Amsden and her colleague Nicky Rowbottom in schools in the Broads National Park in 2009. The objective of the project was to encourage children to think dynamically and positively about living sustainably in a future dominated by climate change.

Ida Hamre presented the paper "**Affective Education through the Art of Animation Theatre**" (Theme: Emotional Intelligence). Her paper focused on: a Knowledge of Confiding, Emotional Learning, Dialogue, Humour and "Utopian Imagination".

Livija Kroflin presented the paper "**The Role of the Puppet in Teaching a Second or Foreign Language at Workshops for Children**", in which she wrote about her experience in teaching a second or foreign language – particularly Croatian as a second or foreign language – under the specific conditions of a brief workshop for children of various ages, various pre-knowledge of the language and diverse motivations. In those circumstances the puppet has shown its importance in the role of motivator, eliminator of inhibitions and an integrating element for a group of children who barely know each other. The use of the puppet, particularly when connected with the content of fairytales, has shown itself to be a powerful device in establishing deep emotional connection with the subject being taught, along with higher motivation and greater efficacy in adoption of the material in question.

Barbara Scheel presented the paper with the theme "Special needs and needs of children from various cultural backgrounds" and the title "**Puppets and the emotional development of children – an international overview**". She described her worldwide experience in puppet therapy, and puppetry in schools and institutions for disabled people. She expressed her belief that puppetry is one of the most self-differentiating tools for communication and expression of emotions and is a wonderful tool for therapy, education and special needs.

Workshops

Meg Amsden led the workshop "**Shadow Puppets in Environmental Education**" – a practical workshop based on extensive work she had carried out in The Broads in the UK and the Danube Delta in Romania. The participants worked in small groups to devise a very short story on an environmental topic. Then they made a shadow show and performed it to the other participants.

Chairing

Livija Kroflin was asked to chair a session in which 2 out of 4 papers were dedicated to the use of puppet in education. That was one more opportunity to discuss the ideas of the UNIMA.

Closing remarks

The members of the EDT Commission were announced as "ambassadors for puppetry in education and therapy". Livija Kroflin, as the President of the EDT Commission, was asked for the closing remarks on the UNIMA, the EDT Commission and the use of puppets in education, development and therapy. She stressed the importance of the art of puppetry with its unique ability to communicate, and to encourage creative ways of using puppets from earliest childhood and throughout life, these also being the aims of the UNIMA "Puppets in Education, Therapy, and Development" Commission.

PROJECT 2010-2011: A NEW BOOK

After the success with *The Puppet – What a Miracle!* book published by the Puppets in Education Commission in 2002, it was decided to prepare another book and publish it for the UNIMA Congress in Chengdu. All the papers presented by the Commission members at the Ljubljana Conference found their place in the book, and also other members and corresponding members of the Commission were asked to send their contributions.

The following authors found their place in ***THE POWER OF THE PUPPET*** book: Edi Majaron (*Art as a Pathway to the Child*), Ida Hamre (*Affective Education through the Art of Animation Theatre*), Helena Korošec (*Playing with Puppets in Class – Teaching and Learning with Pleasure*), Livija Kroflin (*The Role of the Puppet in Language Teaching*), Cariad Astles (*Puppetry for Development*), Matt Smith (*The Politics of Applied Puppetry*), Meg Amsden (*Being Carbon Neutral*) and Barbara Scheel (*Puppets and the Emotional Development of Children – an International Overview*).

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