



OMEP

*Organisation Mondiale Pour L'Éducation Préscolaire
Organización Mundial Para La Educación Preescolar
World Organization for Early Childhood Education*

Appeal from the European Regional Annual Conference

REACH OUT TO THE REFUGEES AND THEIR CHILDREN

September 25, 2015, in Moscow

The world is facing a refugee crisis of a magnitude not seen since World War Two. Children represent the human face of this crisis, and their pain cannot be ignored.

Today, the world leaders gather in New York for the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. It is now imperative for the world leaders to take immediate action. It is a human responsibility not to be taken aback by the numbers of refugees, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation.

OMEP would like to share some words from children about the crisis:

- *It is not human to ignore!*
- *Why do adults close borders and build fences?*
- *We don't want to flee to Europe. Stop the war that is all that needs to be done. We want to go back and live in our own country.*

These quotes show the concern and involvement of children confronted with the current crisis. All children, whether at risk or living in their own homes, are touched by the crisis. How we adults act in this exceptional time is noted by children and serves as examples of how we collectively stand up for human rights. Most importantly, is that we listen to children and arrange to support the refugees and especially children. All people have the right to be treated with dignity and compassion.

We call on our OMEP members, parents, teachers and other professionals to take action for children. It is the time to put the best interests and well-being of children first. Together with children, we can arrange for human living conditions and open access to play and education in their new surroundings. We can start collections and other activities based on the suggestions from children. We know that children want to take immediate actions in a crisis situation and the task for adults is to support and promote their ideas.

We also call on the European leaders from all societal sectors

- to concentrate their efforts on stopping the war as a top priority and
- arrange for humanitarian and just solutions for the refugees, especially for the children.

With national committees and members in more than 70 countries, OMEP is the oldest and largest worldwide, non-governmental organization for early childhood education, with special consultative status in the United Nations, UNICEF, and UNESCO.