

International ECEfS update by Sue Elliott, 22 Sept 2023

During August 2023, two international face-to-face gatherings were held focussed on ECEfS and specifically research in this field. Australia was well represented at these gatherings by Dr Sylvia Almeida, Dr Fran Hughes, Dr Jayne Kinley, Dr Lisa Sonter and Dr Sue Elliott. As a participating co-convenor of both the Transnational Dialogues in ECEfS Research (established 2010) and the European Early Childhood Education Research Association Sustainability SIG (established 2019) it was inspiring for me to hear from researchers across many countries.

Firstly, the eighth Transnational Dialogue in ECEfS Research (TND8) was held with generous support from Mälardalen University, Sweden, where co-convenor Professor Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér is located. The 27 attendees represented some 11 countries and the focus was *Where to next? Examining the gaps, issues and needs in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability research*. Over three days we visited local preschools, engaged in round table discussions, shared country updates and offered research presentations. As the group had only met online since 2017 in Canada, many connections were rejuvenated and newcomers welcomed. The group is developing a proceedings report for publication to document the initiatives and insights generated at TND8. The TND has an international mailing list of over 150 participants and the co-convenors are: Professor Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Mälardalen University; Professor Barbara M. Sageidet, Stavanger University; Dr Sue Elliott, University of New England; Dr Sule Alici, Kirsehir Ahi Evran University; and, Dr Lyndal O’Gorman, Queensland University of Technology. Please direct any queries about TND to the local Australian co-convenors, Lyndal lm.ogorman@qut.edu.au or Sue sellio24@une.edu.au.

Secondly, the annual European Early Childhood Education Research Association conference was held in Estoril, Portugal. The Sustainability SIG meeting held on the first day attracted 41 participants from across 12 countries. A meeting highlight was the launch of a SIG Sustainability position statement now ratified and well supported by the EECERA Board of Trustees. This statement offers a benchmark for other early childhood education associations/organisations seeking to promote sustainable futures for all. The SIG members also offered four symposia around ECEfS during the conference. For more information about

the Sustainability SIG, see <https://www.eecera.org/sig/sustainability-in-early-childhood-education/>. The 2024 EECERA conference will be held in Brighton, England and offers an overarching sustainability focus, see <https://2024.eeceraconference.org/>

Lastly, beyond these two international meetings, there are three recent international initiatives supporting our work in ECEfS:

- *Sustainability from the Start* is a series of eight free online modules for early childhood educators available in multiple languages on the ECE Academy App (AppStore/Google Play). The modules were developed in collaboration with Kristianstad University, OMEP Europe and edChild, launched in September 2023, <https://www.edchild.com/>.
- The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has published the *General comment No 26 (2023) on Children's Rights and the Environment with a specific focus on climate change*. [General Comment No.26 | General Comment No. 26 on Children's Rights and the Environment \(childrightsenvironment.org\)](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/2023/11/26-general-comment-on-childrens-rights-and-the-environment)
- In the USA, *This is Planet Ed* was launched in late 2022 by the Aspen Institute. This initiative addresses climate change through empowerment across all education levels and is, significantly, inclusive of early childhood education. <https://www.thisisplaneted.org/initiatives/early-years-climate-action>

These international initiatives offer wider support for the work we are currently doing in Australia around the new sustainability principle in the EYLFv2 (AGDE, 2022). Much more to do here!