Dear colleagues of the OMEP

I have been given 5 minutes to report to this Assembly. I found out that in 5 minutes you can say about 850 words in Spanish, my message has 865...

I am not concerned about doing it incompletely, because, I have been presenting myself at OMEP, through the work and commitment and the identification I feel with the ideas of the founders, with human rights and with early childhood education and care.

I have also sent you my resume, pointed out my competences for the position of President, anticipated some ideas and today you have on your desk a summary of my Proposal of the Strategic Plan for next few years.

You know me and know what I think and feel, so everyone has already the internal decision of whom you are going to elect today to serve as World President.

I just want to write down some ideas:

1- I believe that the field of education is a space of ideological debate, of permanent building of senses and, it is a reality that, within the OMEP, we do not all share the same visions about the political situation, nor we give the same content to the concepts and ideas that underpin public policies for early childhood education and care. Education is a social practice that is embedded in a web of actions and interactions that build their meaning, try to legitimize it, shape it, transform it and even throw it away (Cullen, 2004). However, among the members of OMEP we are linked by a great commitment to early childhood and the deep desire that all the children of the world have a dignified and full life, based on a happy childhood.

2- I believe in critical thinking, collective construction and democracy as paths to building consensus for effective work by OMEP. That's why I believe in an OMEP built from the UTOPIA. That is, from the paradigm of complexity, from the critique that proposes alternatives that allow us to advance in the idea of education as a time of hope and to redefine the institutional space, from the struggle for recognition of the desires to learn and the power to teach (Cullen, 2004)

3- I believe that the legitimacy of education policies is based on human rights and is governed by the normative principles of justice: equality and freedom (Cullen, 2004). I recognize education as a common good and not as a consumer good or a commodity. That is why I have been working within the common desire to improve education from a humanistic and integral vision that appeals and relies on the non-delegable responsibility of States to protect rights and on the co-responsibility of all of us. In this sense, the realization of rights as social and universal rights requires another world, a world in which the solid and righteous pillars are challenged, and in which the "property" of rights is not their possession, but what is "particular" of the idea of right, that is, its social quality. (Saforcada, 2009)

4- I believe that if we are really committed to SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; we must understand that:

- will be inclusive; because it is based on the principle that all people learn together, that learning processes are collective and that difference and diversity are essential to foster and nurture apprenticeships

- will be equitable: because we must work to guarantee equality in the realization of educational trajectories and in the realization of learning. Equality is at the heart of this political project and equity is its strategy.
- and it will be of quality: because it will be holistic, rich, integrating culture, play, art, knowledge, human values.

5- Regarding the personal and professional, I believe in the daily effort to build coherence and in the work guided by an ethical posture and oriented to real results.

As one of my teachers and friends, Dr. Cullen, says, the ethics of the educator and leader is supported by three knowledges:

1- A knowledge supported in being with others, in the body, in the presence, in the communication, in the empathy, in the recognition of "the other"

2- A knowledge supported in the construction of identity, of a "being", - in this case being president of OMEP - an ethical knowledge that is being built in the very performance of the role together and with others.

3- A know-how to project, look beyond, generated in intelligence, in interpreting signs, in building historical and forward-looking sense, in being strategic, in believing in utopias: in critical hope.

Finally, as the Czech writer Bohumil Hrabal held, "let's go meet what doesn't exist yet"

What does not yet exist: a world that lodges newcomers: very young children, with love, intelligence, kindness and justice, and with a strong commitment to the realization of their human rights.

Mercedes

Panama, 22 July 2019