

HIPPY INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

JUNE 9 –12, 2009



FOREWORD: Dr. Miriam Westheimer, Director, HIPPY International

Dear Colleagues,

While some time has passed since our intense days together in Vienna and we are all back in the routines of our daily work, the memories of our multi-hour long sessions in the packed hotel room are still vivid. I am sure when you read the summary that Pamela Lubell so skillfully presents us here you will find yourself reliving our time together. I also hope that reading this summary will remind you of the many opportunities we have to work together. We can all benefit from our growing international network, but it does take an extra effort to communicate and to share with one another.

What impressed me the most is how we are growing. Just a few years ago, I would not have imagined so many people from so many different countries. This is great news for us, but it also poses new challenges as we plan for our future gatherings. I will be writing soon to ask for your feedback on various new options for our future gatherings,.

In the meantime, Pamela and I will be following up on some of the projects that we discussed which you will be hearing more about very shortly. As always, if there are other ways we can be helpful to you, please let us know.

Best wishes for a fruitful year,

Miriam



Attending the conference:

Country	First Name	Family Name	Organisation	Position
Argentina	Nora	Blaistein	HIPPY Argentina, AMAI	Project Director
Australia	Nicole	McKenzie	HIPPY Australia	Curriculum Specialist
Australia	Carmen	Calleya-Capp	HIPPY Australia	National Manager
Denmark	Thomas	Hansen	HIPP-HOPP Denmark	Project Co-Director
Germany	Dorothea	Razumovsky	HIPPY Germany	Board President
Germany	Konstanze	Mathieu-Baur	HIPPY Germany	National Coordinator
France	Victor	Flusser	Marc Bloch University	Professor
Israel	Malka	Melamed	Hebrew University, Jerusalem	Director, Early Childhood Programs
Israel	Ayala	Berkovitch	Hebrew University, Jerusalem	Associate Director, Research Institute for Innovation in Education
Israel	Arye	Meir	Hadar Publishing Company	CEO
New Zealand	Jane	Hall	HIPPY New Zealand	National Director
Netherlands	Tonny	van den Berg	Independent Consultant	Founder, HIPPY Netherlands
Austria	Liesl	Frankl	HIPPY Austria	National Program Director
Austria	Wolfgang	Kratky	HIPPY Austria	National Program Director
Austria	Stephanie	Neubauer	HIPPY Vienna	Program Coordinator
Austria	Martina	Afolabi	HIPPY Graz	Local Project Director
Austria	Xenia	Werba-Weninger	HIPPY Graz	Local Program Coordinator
Austria	Inna	Stallegger	alpha nova Graz	Division Manager, Family, Consulting, Education
Switzerland	Erika	Dähler-Meyer	HIPPY Switzerland	Program Director
South Africa	Khadija	Richards	HIPPY South Africa	Director
USA	Marvin	Schwartz	HIPPY USA	Executive Director
USA	M. Gayle	Hart	HIPPY USA	National Program Director
HIPPY International	Miriam	Westheimer	HIPPY International	International Program Director
HIPPY International	Pamela	Lubell	HIPPY International	Director, Special Projects
Canada (via conference call)	Debbie	Bell	HIPPY Canada	National Director



FROM START TO FINISH...

Spanning the Viennese public of actual and potential HIPPY stakeholders, the conference began with a ‘meet and greet’ get together on Tuesday afternoon (June 9th) attended by city officials and others interested in expanding HIPPY in Vienna and Lower Austria, and closed on Friday afternoon (June 12th) in the heart of the marketplace in a social gathering with HIPPY Austria families from Vienna’s Turkish immigrant community.

Session One: “AVIMA IS SITTING ON MY SHOULDER”¹

The conference opened formally with words of **tribute in memory of the late founder of HIPPY, Professor Avima D. Lombard**, from HIPPY directors and colleagues who had worked with Avima personally, among them, Gayle Hart (USA), Malka Melamed (Israel), Jane Hall (New Zealand,) Tonny van den Berg (Netherlands). They recalled her formidable presence – both literal and metaphorical, her tireless dedication, energy and business-like approach to her mission and work. Director of HIPPY International, Dr. Miriam Westheimer closed the tribute, speaking of Avima Lombard’s clarity of focus, her laser-sharp mind – always so clear about HIPPY’s goals, thus “grounding us” and ensuring the powerful legacy of HIPPY, and at the same time, challenging us to



explore paths of change which meet contemporary and specific needs, and thereby strengthen rather than contradict the program’s core, universal and original principles. In subsequent sessions, the conference in fact addressed issues of change and adaptation, while revisiting definitions of principles. This session closed with a screening of the film on Professor Lombard, produced for the exhibition in her memory, held at the NCJW Research Institute for Innovation, at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem –where HIPPY began.²

Session Two: HIPPY INTERNATIONAL – BRIEF INTRODUCTION AND UPDATE

Dr. Miriam Westheimer, Director HIPPY International

For the benefit of first-time participants, Miriam explained that HIPPY International is not a large organization but a network with a small, part-time staff of three, the Director (Miriam herself), Dr. Pamela Lubell, Director of Special Projects, and Administrative Assistant, Carol Ginsburg. Miriam referred to the latest developments (such as the new program in Argentina), and gave examples of how using one’s network of connections can contribute toward the expansion of HIPPY – such as her relationship with UNICEF, and Canada Director, Debbie Bell’s, with CIDA, which are advancing the potential of expansion in African countries such as Ethiopia. HIPPY International is also exploring a potential partnership with Sesame Workshop. Other networking

¹ An expression embedded in HIPPY New Zealand discourse.

² <http://www.hippy.org.il/html/avimalombard.html>

opportunities will be forthcoming with the participation of the HIPPY International director in the Clinton Global Initiatives events and in the “Facing Tomorrow” Annual Global Conference to be held in Israel in October, 2009.

The subsequent sessions addressed the following topics:

- Country updates – developments over the past year
- Curriculum Developments
- Revisiting HIPPY Core Principles
- The HIPPY International Book Sharing Project
- Other Topics, including: Collaboration, communication and exchange; Potential partnership with Sesame Workshop
- Reflections on the Conference – Summary Session

Session Three: COUNTRY UPDATES - NATIONAL REPORTS

Click on links. Also, see Other Topics section below for various points raised in discussions.

COUNTRY	2009 FACT SHEETS	COUNTRY UPDATES IN PPT/PDF	ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
Argentina		HIPPY Argentina 2009 presentation.pdf	
Australia	HIPPY Australia 2009 Facts	HIPPY Australia 2009 presentation.ppt	HIPPY Australia Curriculum Project.ppt HIPPY Australia - A Framework.pdf
Austria	HIPPY Austria 2009 Facts		
Canada	HIPPY Canada 2009 Facts		New trade books (hard copy)
Denmark	HIPPY HOPP Denmark 2009 Facts		
Germany	HIPPY Germany 2009 Facts		HIPPY Germany Family Politics
Israel	HIPPY Israel 2009 Facts	HIPPY Israel 2009 Presentation.pdf	Rabbi Yochanan Lombard.wmv
Italy	HIPPY ITALY 2009 Facts		
New Zealand	HIPPY New Zealand 2009 Facts	HIPPY New Zealand 2009 presentation.ppt	
South Africa	HIPPY South Africa 2009 Facts		
Switzerland	HIPPY Switzerland 2009 Facts	HIPPY Switzerland 2009 presentation.pdf	
USA	HIPPY USA 2009 Facts		
International	Avima D. Lombard film: http://www.hippy.org.il/html/avimalombard.html Book share project: HIPPY International Library Basic assumptions and Paradigm Shift (hard copy)		

Session Four: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS

New Zealand: Until now, New Zealand has worked with the updated versions of the USA Age 4 and Age 5 materials. New Zealand is now embarking on a new two year program to rework the materials in alignment with the national early childhood curriculum –a linkage which raises the HIPPY profile and credibility according to Jane Hall, Hippy New Zealand National Director. The revised materials will also incorporate new illustrations and an emphasis on generalizing activities in everyday life. Jane also referred to the extensive use made of the Tutor Guide materials.



Germany: HIPPY Germany's plan to introduce the Age 3 curriculum using translated versions of the USA Age 3 trade story books and activities has been on hold for financial reasons, but is expected to resume progress this year. The 30 Activity books have been translated and are close to completion. Like New Zealand, Germany would also like to incorporate revised illustrations in the Age 4 and Age 5 materials.

Two years ago, HIPPY Germany was approached by schools to develop a program for school-children (age 6-7) who had not been previously enrolled in a HIPPY program. This project is now being piloted and involves a program of two activities per week (similar in format perhaps to **HIPPY Israel's** *After the Bell* or *From Home to School* group programs which brings children and parents together in school readiness learning activities, and with the school teacher and other school personnel.) **HIPPY Austria** is also piloting a similar school program model for HIPPY graduates.

USA: The most recent update of materials was made in 2007 for Age 5. Since children in their third year of the HIPPY program are also engaged in a more demanding formal curriculum, HIPPY USA has decided to offer a packet of learning activities every other week rather than weekly. The materials also include references to appropriate activities and services such as visiting the library.

One of the first challenges facing HIPPY USA's new curriculum specialist in the Arkansas State Office will be to identify any gaps between HIPPY materials and the formal school curriculum, and develop solutions accordingly.

Denmark: Thomas Hansen, **Hipp-Hopp** Project Co-director described the curriculum development process, in which the activities materials are being written by a university team. Trade books (new and classic s) will be used. In addition to the independent core program, there will also be a website with further activities for children and parents together. Denmark made the decision that

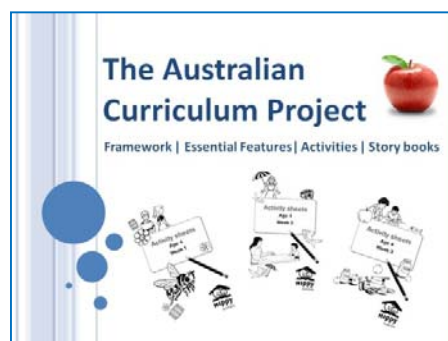


rather than invest their resources in translating existing HIPPY materials, they would create their own aligned with the kindergarten curriculum.

HIPPY Canada received a grant of \$300,000 to 'Canadianize' the curriculum and is in the exciting process of replacing original HIPPY storybooks with quality Canadian trade books. It is working with the Canadian publisher, Groundwood, and will include Aboriginal and multi-cultural books among the 15 new books to be introduced into the HIPPY program this year. A curriculum development team of Aboriginal and multicultural consultants is working on a pilot curriculum relating to the new books and the pilot will be implemented this year. One concern that could complicate the use of trade books is the issue that books can go out of stock. On the other hand there is interesting potential for developing materials for these books to be used on the open market. The collection of HIPPY Canada's stunningly beautiful new books was on display at the conference.



Australia: Yet another new dramatic dynamic is the extensive reworking of existing HIPPY materials that has been taking place in Australia. The rationale and main principles and features of Australia's new and in-development HIPPY materials are outlined in the accompanying power-point ([HIPPY Australia Curriculum Project.ppt](#)).



The concept of **generalization processes and practices** is central to the new approach. Australia has completed the Age 4 new curriculum and is now working on the Age 5 program. Regarding the question raised that language used might be too advanced for some parents, it was noted that home visitors have the role of explaining terms, and that parents appreciate knowing and mastering the terminology and being able to use it in discussions with teachers.

HIPPY Australia reiterated that all materials developed are available to the entire HIPPY network.



HIPPY South Africa: Since curriculum change is a huge costly undertaking, it is currently confined to 'wish-list' status, but should it become possible, priority areas would include indigenization, a greater focus on emotional and social play activities, and possibly a citizenship component –in addition to new design and packaging. HIPPY South Africa Director Khadija Richards also referred to the need for addressing different levels of ability, and the challenges involved in the of delivery of materials.

HIPPY Argentine has been facing the challenge of language suitability, since there are substantial differences between the Spanish used by the Hispanic community in the USA (and therefore in the existing Spanish materials) and that used in Argentine. (**HIPPY Austria** has a similar issue with the use of German)The new Argentinean program would also like to see more up to date and appropriate illustrations in the materials.

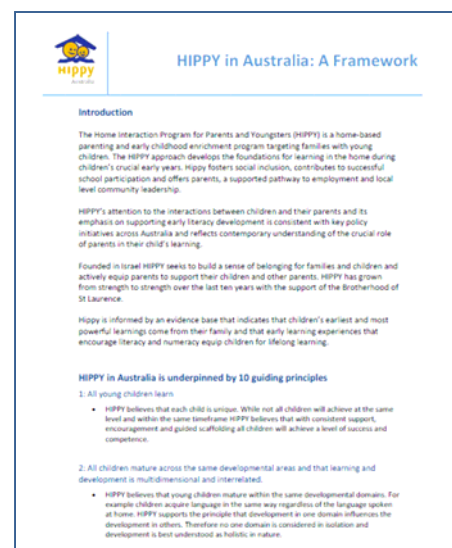
Professor Victor Flusser (Strasbourg), who attended the conference and would like to introduce a HIPPY pilot project in France, raised the possibility of providing highly innovative music components for incorporation into the HIPPY curriculum.

Session Five: REVISITING HIPPY PRINCIPLES

This session took the shape of a workshop in which the group split up into small ‘international’ groups to explore the issue of a [“paradigm shift”](#) and discuss and suggest revisions to a list of various basic assumptions about HIPPY. The full group then reconvened and each assumption was then addressed with the representative of each small group presenting the latter’s opinion . Although there was some quite animated discussion on some of the assumptions, the emerging consensus did not appear to make revolutionary or deeply substantive changes. Some of the suggested revisions are noted here in italics:

- All children can *and want to learn under proper conditions.*
- (*All*)Parents *in general want (what they believe to be) the best for their children.*
- All families need and deserve to be supported. Different families need different kinds of support *HIPPY can respond to the unique needs of individual families.*
- Family support is *resource-oriented and* different than social service. (N.B. different countries interpret social services differently. See [paradigm shift](#) document.)
- Parents are their children’s first and most important / *influential* teachers.
- *In general, parents and primary caregivers* can learn how to teach their children school readiness skills and knowledge.
- Parents can be supported and taught by other parents.
- When parents are active in their children’s early learning a lifelong /*ongoing* process of parents’ supporting their children’s education begins.
- Programs that are integrated into a community context will better serve the families of that community.

The following additional assumptions were suggested (some on the basis of the [Australian HIPPY Framework](#)):



- Respect and acknowledgement of diversity enhance children's and parents' sense of belonging.
- All children mature across the same developmental areas and learning and development is multidimensional and interrelated.
- The HIPPY curriculum is written for parents.
- The HIPPY 'spiraling' approach facilitates learning which may not have been internalized the first time around.
- Home visiting is an effective early intervention strategy

Assumptions regarding HIPPY International

- National programs can benefit from supporting each other
- HIPPY programs must be adapted to the local/ national culture and context.
- We can serve families better when we collaborate with others rather than work alone.

N.B.: A small committee of HIPPY International staff and National Directors will be reviewing the recommended changes and will present a revised set of HIPPY Principles.

Session Six: The BOOK SHARE PROJECT – renamed: The HIPPY International Library

See [HIPPY International Library](#) for larger display of **HI-PACK** for samples of story-book jackets, activity books, CD/DVD, parent guide and website.



Four possible models were suggested:

1. Package a selection of existing, in use, HIPPY books and related activities (see example jackets above, top left).
2. Use trade books for which we create activities (like the new Canadian model) - thus marketing ourselves as experts in parent-child learning activities
3. Develop our own new set of HIPPY books and related activities (and keep traditional HIPPY for HIPPY families only) .

4. Packaging books created for HIPPY but not used currently for one reason or another. Create related activities if they do not yet exist.

The concept in general and the various models proposed raised a number of issues, questions and comments:

- Can the HIPPY materials offer a competitive retail package? Does its commercial success depend only on its packaging and business model?
- What are we selling – a methodology? A philosophy ?
- How does the idea affect corporate identity?
- Would we be competing with ourselves if we put existing materials on the open market?
- Could the concept in practice lead to some sort inequality situation – rich HIPPY and poor HIPPY?
- Should the brand name be HIPPY? It could be a source of pride among parents and children.
- How would we handle translation, authors' and publishers' rights issues?
- Is there scope for different activities in different countries?
- Could the package be offered as a follow-up –after completion and/or for the next child in the family?
- Should it all be put in the hands of one printer/publisher in the interests of economies of scale?³
- HIPPY Australia noted that a HIPPY International Library would be very attractive to the government now funding the expansion of HIPPY.
- HIPPY USA noted that the concept has interested the HUSA Board. Marvin Schwartz also suggested that the international agencies such as UNICEF could be interested.
- Can we think in terms of revenue from the sales toward not only our national programs but also to developing new projects.
- We will need a decision-making structure.

N.B.: In a follow-up meeting between Miriam and Pamela, it was decided to begin with a pilot of model Option #1 above – i.e. packaging one book and related activities with the jackets of the other books and then obtain feedback from publishers/distributors. At the same time, we will learn from the Canadian experience about the potential for designing and marketing activities to be packaged with trade books –beyond the HIPPY program framework.

³ The Israeli printer/publisher (Arieh Meir from Hadar) attending the conference commented that printing is changing, things can be done much cheaper – and that we not fear the financial angle. He also said that his company was prepared to invest in this project, and that using one such printing house would reduce costs substantially (30-40%) even including shipping costs. He suggested we begin with a small pilot project. Jane Hall provided materials from Pindar the New Zealand and Australia HIPPY publishers.

OTHER TOPICS

(i) Ways of collaboration, communication and exchange:

- At the national level - HUSA (HIPPPY USA) hold weekly staff meetings so all are updated; currently are encouraging families and staff to send in photographs –so there's now a new HIPPPY photo on the website every week. National offices could emulate this model of sending out an update to all on larger broader issues, implementation opportunities etc.
- The HIPPPY International website could be used in more as an interactive forum : e.g., for monthly updates; chat forum for children and families ; on-line coaching and supervision for new countries; sharing – progress on projects; sharing materials.
- It was agreed that we were not likely to take on an international monthly update, but a quarterly one at least via email should be possible and we should be able to upload documents to the website

(ii) Sesame Workshop – potential partnership

Sesame Workshop is interested in a more personalized delivery of its programming content than via the screen and has therefore held a number of meetings with HIPPPY International Director Miriam Westheimer to explore possible avenues for cooperation. In parallel and since the Vienna conference the idea of implementing a pilot partnership project in Israel has and is also being explored. Among comments made at the Vienna conference:

- HUSA has had experience of creating outreach material in collaboration with TV (Boston literacy Between the Lions program). Public TV stations distributed the booklets developed by HIPPPY.
- Khadija felt TV was not an appropriate tool for South Africa – where there was too much use of TV as a babysitter;
- Carmen and Nicola (HIPPPY Australia) commented that Sesame is no longer as popular as other more contemporary animated series.

(iii) Illiteracy and L2 issues:

How can HIPPPY tackle the issue of illiteracy? For example, in South Africa where the literacy rate is particularly low.

- Is the use of CDs with stories a good method? (Israel has materials in audio plus L1 text for Ethiopian families.)
- Is using the assistance of literate siblings necessarily an appropriate method?
- Can and should we have a package for specific interventions –e.g. literacy

- Adults have multiple literacy skills, even if not conventional reading and writing literacy. Their HIPPY experience is often is first time they admit to illiteracy and some are spurred on to take up adult literacy courses.
- Reiterating this point, Miriam referred to highly developed memories which facilitate functioning in the literate world, and that our materials for parents and young children together are low literacy level 'friendly'. At the same time, HIPPY is not a language program. A parent has to be happy interacting with his/her child in their own language.
- All concurred that we need to do whatever makes the parent feel powerful, confident and build on that.
- In Australia and South Africa – indigenous parents want their children to learn in English. Carmen also noted that low literacy parents have been spurred on by observing Braille users in HIPPY.

(iv) Group Meetings

Liesl (HIPPY Austria) expressed concern about increasing attendance and participation from the approximate, current 30% rate in parent group meetings . Gayle (HUSA) commented that 30% and up is actually good.

Other suggestions and comments made: To ensure attendance it is prerequisite to understand from parents what interests them. The coordinator needs to establish a good relationship with the parents. Meetings should be held at a convenient, accessible venue, preferably in walking distance from the families. Parents need to feel they have benefited, been enriched by the group sessions. Khadija mentioned that parents in the South Africa program are very enthusiastic regarding the group meetings, and such meetings are held weekly, affording parents the sense that they are members of “a stakeholder group that can access services.”

SUMMARY SESSION

On the positive side, first-time participants felt that the conference facilitated their sense of belonging to a larger HIPPY community, to a network in which the sharing and exchange provided a valuable contribution as they engaged in their steep learning curve. They felt empowered and encouraged to learn that within the very strong and basic framework of HIPPY, there is room also for innovative practices, appropriate to their communities.

If anything, there had not been enough time in just three days to explore some subjects in greater depth –such as the revisiting of HIPPY’s core principles. The HIPPY Austria idea of a pre-conference exchange of country updates was a very good and efficient one and was intended to preclude long sessions on such updates during the conference. In practice some of us, nevertheless, delivered unnecessarily long presentations and this reduced time that could have been available for other common topics. Thus some subjects which are hugely significant for new and veteran programs, such as MIS systems; on-line reporting; research; and the development of evaluation methods were only briefly touched on. It was also felt that the time had come to produce a new collection of research and evaluation studies.

Some felt that while there is undoubtedly a need for all HIPPY Directors to meet together, not all face the same challenges and we should consider a degree of restructuring the conference format to include for example, small group encounters, in which veterans can discuss common issues, and newer programs can compare and exchange on their own challenges. Alternatively or in addition, small groups could also embrace mentoring processes, in which veteran and new program directors work together in bilateral relationships.

More work could also be done in advance in a participatory planning process regarding not only the structure but also the conference agenda. A more structured program might require plenary sessions, task forces on different topics and so forth. Another suggestion was that a facilitator be employed so as to free Miriam up to participate more within the discussions.

*HIPPY International
thanks
HIPPY Austria –
beratungsgruppe.at
for its gracious
hosting
of the June 2009
HIPPY International
Conference.*

