

## IASWECE Early Childhood Trainers Meeting Vienna, October 2014

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Early childhood teacher trainers from all over the world gathered in this beautiful city for a four-day conference, hosted by IASWECE's Working Group on Training and Brigitte Goldmann and her colleagues at the "Haus der Anthroposophie." The 59 participants are all teachers in Steiner/Waldorf early childhood courses throughout Europe and in Brazil, Canada, China, Ethiopia, India, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States.

After looking back at previous gatherings, we began to break new ground through working with our questions and building pictures of how we can develop new approaches in our teacher education work so that it is effective for our time and for the future. Some of the questions we explored are as follows:

- How can we inspire our students in new and different ways?
- How can we enliven the course content for students with different learning styles?
- How can we awaken the will of students and give them inner experiences of the work as well as inspiring their thinking processes?
- How do we facilitate the individual student's taking of responsibility and deciding upon his/her own path of development?
- How do we as teacher educators stand in the world? How do we work with and contribute to contemporary research?
- How do we connect strongly to the inner sources of our work so that we can embrace other cultures and engage inwardly ourselves?



The question “What is my own individual research?” is important for both the student educator and the adult educator. These questions help us as students - and trainers - to deepen, in the context of self-realization, an understanding of how “I” am in relationship to myself, how “I” am in relationship to the children in the early childhood setting, and how “I” am in relationship to the world. Working to empower students - and trainers - to work with such questions may be one of the ways that Waldorf education can be assured a long and lively future.



Many of these questions will be carried further at the next colloquium, which will probably be held in two years time. Many valuable seeds were planted for me this time:

- ◆ exploring the difference between mentoring and advising and what that means to the student
- ◆ awareness of the relationship between the seven life processes and how the individual learns
- ◆ experiencing that the more senses involved in the learning process, the more human the process
- ◆ exploring and understanding my own learning style and being careful to not project my learning style onto all others.



I come away with many questions. How can I help the students to research their own questions? How can I support and learn from Steiner/Waldorf education around the world? I have obviously come away with some homework from a very rich and valuable collaborative experience.



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