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To this Edition

Dear colleagues,

With this issue we send out our best wishes for a light-filled Christmas season and a happy and rewarding New Year. We are pleased to be able to present you with another interesting and varied Newsletter.

In our Michaelmas issue which was centred around the 90th anniversary of Steiner Waldorf Schools the Section leader explored the question of what kind of education was appropriate for our time. We now continue the theme with a look at the movement's internal history and karmic aspects, on the basis of the 'Study of Man' and its sequel 'Balance in Teaching?'. The article was first published on 30th October 2009 in the anthroposophical weekly journal *Das Goetheanum*. Still within the context of the anniversary we would like to share with you the birthday letter which the General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Germany, Hartwig Schiller, addressed to the Freie Waldorfschule Uhlandshöhe in Stuttgart and to the Council of the Association of Waldorf Schools in Germany (Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen).

How do we bring quality to our teaching? What are the criteria? Are there any criteria for education in general or for Waldorf education in particular? They can certainly be established in principle, but need to be kept flexible.

A number of people have been working on this question recently. At its last meeting in Dornach in November, the International Council of Waldorf/Steiner Schools passed a set of fundamental criteria or qualities of Waldorf Education. We are pleased to be able to publish the criteria, which will accompany those of the European Council, in this issue and make them available to the schools and to interested colleagues. The criteria paper is available in electronic form from the Section.

After a first conference on the theme of 'class plays?', which took place at the Goetheanum, we are printing a summarized report by a participant which clearly illustrates the pedagogical value of doing whole class plays.

We conclude our Christmas edition with an article on how Waldorf Education can be developmental aid and peace education in one.

With warmest Christmas greetings

Pedagogical Section

Educating with Development in Mind: Individualisation as a Human Being

Education for the future places itself in the stream of human development. Christof Wiechert, the head of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum pursues this theme with Waldorf education in mind. In the comparison of the Study of Man with Rudolf Steiner's *Meditatively acquired Knowledge of Man* it is evident that the individual in-between the polarity of the will and thinking – the theme taken up by the Hibernian Mysteries – is encouraged to take hold of the power of the middle.¹

The lecture course, *Meditatively acquired Knowledge of Man*² was held in Stuttgart for the teachers exactly a year after the *Study of Man*³ and comprises only four lectures due to a shortage of time and an excessive amount of work. Steiner wanted people to understand it as a continuation of the Study of Man.

And indeed, after he has pointed to the task of the Middle European impulse in education in the introduction – which follows on from Herder, Goethe, Schiller and Fichte –, the second lecture begins with a closer look at the second lecture of the Study of Man.

Thinking and Will

This second lecture of the Study of Man simply finds a new psychology by raising two questions: what is thinking and what is will? What sort of activity is thinking?

The main feature of the activity of thinking is that it must make use of pictures. When do I see a picture? when I stand in front of an object. It is the gesture of antipathy. The head has separated itself off from the cosmos, has become independent; it can develop antipathy by looking and forming a picture in the imagination. One is in the realm of semblance, not in the real world, always turned back. The power of thinking comes from the realm before birth. If the power of thinking is intensified, it becomes memory, a concept.

The will, on the other hand, is without pictures (even if I conceive of an act of will); I cannot see it, it cannot be remembered (like the idea), but it is there and is at hand. What the will does, whether good or bad, is always real, is a fact, completely orientated towards the future. You can only will what lies ahead of you.

1 Already in the time of Heinz Zimmermann as head of the Pedagogical Section, a group of people met on one weekend every year to work on the Study of Man. After 14 years this work came to a close; however, now the group is continuing its work on the *Meditatively acquired Knowledge of Man*, while another group has begun anew with the Study of man and has already reached Lecture 7. The present contribution is above all the fruit of this long-standing work together.

2 Rudolf Steiner: The Study of Man GA293).

3 Ibid: Balancing Teaching (GA 302a).

To will is always to engage with something, to connect. It is the gesture of sympathy. However, the realisation of the will lies for us humans in the time after death. The seeds of the will which are sown in life germinate in the life after death. There they will become the impulse for the future. It is to this part of man, the will part, that the cosmos itself has great sympathies; it sends, as it were, its rays of approval into the body via the human limbs. If this willing is intensified inwardly, then imagination will develop from sympathy and finally, using the will, the faculty to ‘grasp’ perceptions through the senses in such a way that what the eye catches can also be recognised. Rudolf Steiner calls this process ‘conventional imagination’.⁴

Thus we see how this psychology builds up the soul out of the starkest polarity imaginable: thinking as a faculty that originates in the time before birth and the will which strives towards the time after death.

The Hibernian Mysteries

When we consider Steiner’s explanations of the Hibernian Mysteries, the last great mysteries in ‘*Mysteriengestaltungen*’,⁵ then we experience how much effort it has been for the researcher of the spirit to approach the content of these mysteries, for they have the tendency to not want to open up. Nevertheless, once the researcher has succeeded in advancing to these forms and has managed to communicate them in human words to those interested, then a shattering picture emerges. And in a mood of awe just in a glimpse, the thought will open up that this mystery wisdom has poured in as a new science into the understanding of man for modern consciousness, into appropriate language for this consciousness.

The acolytes of the Hibernian Mysteries were also led to this polarity – the polarity of sun and moon, but in such a way that the sun represented the macrocosm, which comes to us through thinking, through science, clothed in the light of thoughts, without the character of being. This impression was above all a masculine one. The other polarity, the moon element, is above all feminine, living out of warmth, getting involved with life, pregnant with the future, representing not semblance but being. This sounded in the words:

I am the image of the world
See how I am lacking in being.
I live in your knowledge,
I will become a confession in you.

4 Then there is a digression into neurology (in those days): the activity of the synapses and the interruptions between them are presented as the places where the soul is touched. For where the streams of sympathy and antipathy meet, the soul finds its expression.

5 Rudolf Steiner: *Mystery Knowledge and Mystery Centres* (GA232).

I am the image of the world
See how I am lacking in truth
If you will dare to live with me
I will become your contentment.

Knowing and willing are mentioned here, they are expanded in life to science and art.

Then in the further stages the neophyte of the Mysteries goes through crises of shattering and constriction, by means of which he is shown the way via icy cold into the time before birth and via heat into the time after death.

Learn to gaze in the spirit at winter being
And you will have a sight of the time before earthly life

Learn to dream summer being in the spirit
And you will have the experience of the time after earthly life.

The priests foretold the overcoming of this polarity for the future by showing (in pre-Christian times) the neophytes the image of the Christ: he will lead these opposites together.

Forces at Work

Now how does this relate to the second lecture of 'Meditatively acquired Knowledge of Man'? The motif of polarity is picked up once more in the second lecture of the Study of Man. Here too the 'male' and the 'female' of the polarity have receded right into the background. These are world forces that are at work. In this respect every individual has a part in the male and the female.

Now it is completely new in this lecture that the 'birth' of the ether body, the time of school readiness, is portrayed as cosmic formative forces streaming in, which work on forming the body. Once this task has been completed, these forces strike back up again from the body, but they also continue to stream in. When these two forces meet, a struggle ensues, a battlefield. The result of this 'battle' is the change of teeth. However, the relationship of these forces needs to be considered at the same time. The forces streaming in through the head from distant spaces behave like 'attackers', the forces streaming up from the (formed) body as 'defenders'. The relative strength of these (opposing) forces determines whether the child feels more drawn to the pictorial or more to the intellectual side.

The truly special part of this description is that it only becomes accessible to you, if you picture the forces streaming before you. If you do not manage to, the text remains hermetically sealed. We could take the view that this is a classic illustration of the 'pictorial understanding through meditation', which is spoken about two lectures on.

The same applies to the second polarity. This time we are dealing with astral forces, which stream in through the head into the child's body from the world and thus bring it to maturity such that all organ systems which are fully present as a disposition, but not yet functioning, now 'awaken', so to speak, to the world. When this is accomplished, these astral forces strike back up again from the body, meeting the forces streaming in. The result of this 'battle' is, for example, the breaking of the voice with boys. This time it is not the formative forces that bring about this process, but the powers of music and speech. Here the relationship of attack and defence is reversed such that comes from the organism behaves aggressively. What streams in as the music and speech element from the world picks up these forces and ennobles them to cultural activity. In other words, every adolescent (going through puberty) must be able to have the experience of an upper school choir. The relative strengths of attack and defence will, in this case, bring about the way in which the powers of music and speech are related to powers of imagination and will.

Here too there is this streaming pictorial element. If we look at both together, we will experience the building up of the soul forces out of the connection of the human being with the cosmos and their surroundings.

The health-bringing element

Curiously, Steiner characterises a third 'battlefield': this lies on the boundary between the ether body and the 'outside world'. Granted that the ether body projects slightly beyond the physical body, do we have here the real boundary between inside and outside? What is going on?

We can call this process to mind as follows: through what happens in these battles, the ether and astral bodies change, resulting in other relationships of the forces in them. Why is it healthy and wholesome to do eurythmy? because the ether body is already doing it in this way. If we do eurythmy, we use our ether body, which is held back by this means. This holding back brings about health, has a strengthening effect. This is a description of the process from the inside. Seen from the outside, this 'battle' looks like this: "And if we draw a line, draw something, then it is an attempt to fend off what wants to deform us the inside." This inclination to deformity involves the ether body developing the tendency to grow etherically in an excessive way through the new balance of forces. Anyone who would have any form of education would 'swell up', would be 'puffed up'. Every drawing makes 'barbed wire' in order to prevent it. Steiner's use of language here is drastic.

One of the great riddles of the Hibernian Mysteries is that the acolytes had to feel the colossal statues all over, which represented knowledge and will (life) in male and female form. They were meant to have such an experience of touching the boundaries of the form. The male form turned out to be elastic; that means working from the inside, the female form turned out to be plastic, changeable in response to touch. We are led to the question, what is inside, what is outside?

How does the inside pulsate with the outside – physically, etherically and in a soul way? At the end of these lectures Steiner describes how when you are modelling a human head the formative force comes positively towards you, as if it would be sculpted from the inside out. And with modelling the limbs the process is like penetrating, forming from the outside inwards, “you press in as if the organism is drawing back.” The way this corresponds to the acolyte’s experience of the Mysteries can hardly be overlooked.

Thus, the ‘Meditatively acquired Knowledge of Man ’ seems like a mysterious linking up of the world laws with human laws. The great riddle of man will be divined in the riddle of the individual human being.

Christof Wiechert
translated by John Weedon

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90 years of Waldorf education

Stuttgart 1 September 2009

Dear friends,

to mark the 90th anniversary of Waldorf education I would like to write a few lines to assure you of my warm interest and best thoughts.

Not long ago I had the privilege of congratulating Mr Wolfgang Tittmann, former Waldorf pupil and long-term Waldorf teacher, on his 90th birthday. It seemed appropriate to allude to the special circumstance that the former pupil and the school shared the same birthday (7 September 1919). I finally came across the following simple yet warm-hearted and profound words by Emil Molt:

‘You children who enter into this new school: joys are awaiting you. ... The new method ensures that learning is no longer a scourge as it used to be for us older people, but it will be a joy and a pleasure. Therefore rejoice, children, that you may enjoy this school.’

If only a small part of that programme has become reality we can, on this occasion, truly speak of a ‘moment of celebration of the world order’ (Steiner).

The ideas about what constitutes a suitable education are changing and we must therefore ask: what is this joy that Emil Molt so emphatically referred to in his speech at the opening of the school.

If someone takes an interest today in what children experience at school they inevitably ask whether it was ‘fun’.



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'Joy' and 'fun' have almost become synonyms. But it is precisely this lack of differentiation that could result in the school losing sight of its original mission.

When Francis of Assisi, in his legendary conversations with Brother Leo, enthused about the nature of 'true joy' he explained that it was nothing to do with experiencing success, great success or greatest success. That could at best evoke ambition, vanity and pride. True joy was to be found in enduring humiliation and keeping one's countenance, in accepting and bearing the tasks that life provided. To keep one's dignity, equanimity and patience and preserve tranquillity in the face of attacks from the outside: that was true joy.

It says in the Quran that 'in the remembrance of God hearts find rest' [13:28]. St. Paul admonished the Philippians to 'rejoice in the Lord always' [Phil 4:4]. True joy is associated with the highest and most holy. The gratifying consonance of the founders of Christianity and Islam shows that a fun society was not what they had in mind for the conveyance of joy.

One often hears people say that 'true joy is a serious matter'. The statement sounds interesting because of the perceived contradiction, but what it describes is, in fact, a scowling sort of joy. It is indeed a mistranslation of an aphorism by the ancient philosopher, statesman and teacher, Seneca, whose literary estate includes many pearls of wisdom. A more adequate translation of 'res severa verum gaudium' would be 'serious matters lead to true joy'. This involves no tormented physiognomy but refers to a joy of which one has become worthy, which one deserves. No happiness without exertion. Saint-Exupéry extended this view when he wrote: 'True joy is the joy in other things', not in a friend or another person, but joy in the world.

There is an aspect of hope associated with the foundation of the Waldorf School ninety years ago. May it be the centre and fountain of true joy in the life of the growing young people. On 17 December 1903, many years before the school was founded, Rudolf Steiner said: 'This thought is fundamental to anthroposophy: that our I does not belong to us; it is not enclosed in this narrowly defined shape that our organisation appears to be; but that the individual human being is just a manifestation of the Divine Self of the world. He is like a reflection, an extract, a spark of the world-I.'

These words suggest another experience of true joy: I can experience true joy when I approach my own higher self which is at the same time the Divine spark in me; when I find myself.

May it become and remain the goal and endeavour of the Waldorf School to guide further generations of pupils towards this path that leads us to our true selves.

With warmest regards and best wishes
For the Council and the members of the Anthroposophical Society in Germany,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hartwig Schiller". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'H' and 'S'.

Hartwig Schiller
translated by Margot M. Saar

International Forum for Waldorf/Steiner Schools (Hague Circle) within the Pedagogical Section

The International Forum of Waldorf/Steiner Schools worked on and approved in its meeting from 19th – 22nd November 2009 in Dornach/CH a description of the main characteristics of Waldorf Education. These characteristics are basics and can be completed by specific attributes of each country. Translations in different languages can be done. These criterias are meant for inspiration and orientation.

“Waldorf” Description of the Main Characteristics of Waldorf Education

Preamble

Waldorf pedagogy serves as the basis for early childhood education and schools all over the world which exist under the name Waldorf Schools/Kindergartens, Rudolf Steiner Schools/Kindergartens or Independent Schools/Kindergartens. Irrespective of their name and their rich, cultural diversity, they are all unified through several essential characteristics which are described below. Schools or kindergartens which do not reflect these characteristics don't belong to the worldwide movement of Waldorf schools or Waldorf kindergartens.

Guidelines of Waldorf Pedagogy

The basis of Waldorf education is a study of human being and developmental psychology presented by Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925) in his volume of lectures entitled “A General Knowledge of the Human Being” or “Study of Man”. Since then, differentiated work has extended the fields of developmental physiology and psychology, methodology and didactics, as well as the number of new teaching subjects all of which now belong to the foundation of Waldorf education. It is a pedagogy which has its origin in the child and its goal is to develop each child's individual potential. It takes cultural diversity into consideration and is committed to general, human ethical principles (cf. U.N. General Agreement on Human Rights, December 10, 1948, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, November 20, 1989, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 13, 2008). It is the foundation of work within all types of institutions involved in education and professional training (for example, institutions for pre-school education, kindergartens, schools, job training, schools for children with learning difficulties, and many more). Educators and teachers require teacher training in Waldorf education, and feel obliged to undertake a form of self-education which is appropriate to Waldorf education, as well as further continuing professional development.

The legal form best suited for schools, kindergartens and other educational institutions is that of an independent institution, which is organised by all those participating/taking part in the educational process.

Important Characteristics of Early Childhood Education, Waldorf Kindergartens and Waldorf Schools

In the first seven years, the healthy development of the child is fostered by a warm, loving and guided atmosphere which leads to joy, awe and reverence. The most important aspect of working with the young child is the inner attitude of the educator, who is the role model for the child's imitating. That is why this type of work requires constant self-education. Waldorf kindergartens, toddler groups, parent-child programs and other institutions involved in early child and toddler education lay the foundation for physical health and vitality, for wonder and an interest in the world, for the inner readiness to learn and discover the world through personal experiences, for the ability to have relationships, and finally, for lifelong physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development.

The basis of educating and teaching lessons in Waldorf schools is a curriculum framework which gives the teacher impulses for preparing his individual lessons. The lessons are oriented towards the above-mentioned guidelines. Each educator is responsible for his own lessons and is accountable to the community. Lessons are evaluated.

The Waldorf School is a unified, inclusive school model spanning all ages from pre-school to the end of the upper school/high school. Within the curriculum framework of the various class levels, the subjects are connected to each other. As the subjects are oriented to the developmental phases of the children and adolescents, they enable multi-faceted, age-related possibilities of developing the individual. These consist of, for example, the acquisition of knowledge, cultural competence, social and emotional skills, as well as various practical and artistic skills (see also multiple intelligence).

The educator's goal is to train himself extensively at being a creative educator so that his lessons result in making the students intellectually creative, socially responsible and instilling in them the ability to make decisions and act upon them. The teacher's process of self-education, together with his basic and further training are necessary prerequisites for this.

Generally, one teacher accompanies children through the first 6 to 8 classes as a class teacher. The subject teachers and mentors, particularly in the upper classes, require qualification in a specific subject, that is, an academic qualification in addition to the Waldorf teacher training.

Methodological-Didactic Principles

The manner and methods of teaching differ according to the age of the children and adolescents.

The toddler or small child (pre-school child) imitates and is brought up through roles models and examples. The essential characteristics in pre-school education are free play, that is not instructed but guided, as well as experiences in movement and the senses. Through the rhythmical element the educator encourages the child's healthy physical and emotional development, thereby laying the foundation for resilience.

The school-aged child learns from his teacher, who uses diverse methods, prepares creative lessons and who introduces all the major fields of knowledge to his students through main lesson blocks. The teacher, but particularly the class teacher, builds up a true relationship to his students (and their guardians) and practices ever more formal learning within his creative lessons as the children grow older. For the class teacher, performance standards mean that he must establish and realize learning goals for the entire intelligence span of his class (internal differentiation).

Adolescents in the upper school should learn the following through their increasingly academic lessons: how to look at and analyse lesson contents critically, and to arrive at individual judgements, all of which can be seen in the increasingly independent work carried out in different subjects. In addition, self-confidence, personal responsibility and a sense of commitment to the world are unfolded. In the upper school, more and more individualised ways of learning are offered. Through maintaining the class itself as a unit, social competence is promoted.

The following points are marked characteristics of a Waldorf school:

- Pre-school education without academic requirements
- Generally, one teacher accompanies children through the first 6 to 8 classes as a class teacher.
- Eurythmy lessons
- Main lesson blocks, subject lessons and other lesson forms
- Foreign language lessons as of Class
- Timetables, which are worked out, as much as possible, according to psychological-hygienic criteria
- The class as a community remains, regardless of the students' individual performances
- No purely quantitative assessments and tests for the tests' sake
- Report cards which, aside from describing the student's performance, also describe and honour the student's development, as well as providing suggestions for future work
- Pedagogical methods used in dealing with discipline
- Activities forming and fostering community, such as monthly festivals, yearly festivals, excursions, practical work terms, stage plays, etc.

- Religion lessons in different denominations could be arranged if parents wish. Otherwise schools offer independent, non-denominational religion lessons.

Evaluation

Educators and teachers participate in internal as well as external evaluations. This is all the more important because such great value is placed on lessons that the teacher himself creates and is responsible for.

The School's Organisation

Waldorf kindergartens or Waldorf schools are administered and run by the teachers itself.

A group consisting of parents and teachers is responsible for the economic and legal side of kindergartens or schools, albeit within a certain legal framework. The form and structure of these institutions depends on the people taking part, the cultural milieu, and the available legal possibilities.

This form of self-administration in Waldorf schools and Waldorf kindergartens includes delegating tasks to smaller groups or individuals who are designated for a limited period of time. Within this form of self-administration, all sorts of organisational models are possible. Placing an individual in the role of internal (pedagogical) leader in a kindergarten or school should be avoided.

Working Together

Each colleague feels obliged to participate in the weekly pedagogical conference. This is the leading pedagogical body of the school or kindergarten and includes foundation work (the study of man/education), dealing with pedagogical questions, the observation of children, questions of organisation and the task of leading and shaping the school together with other committees.

The teachers' conference is not only a place where colleagues receive further training, but also where perception, judgement, learning and giving the school new impetus all lead to a common consciousness for the whole.

Besides the common work in one's own conference, further training and exchanges with colleagues on a national and international level also take place. The Pedagogical Section of the Goetheanum and the Section groups in other countries, working together with national associations, are responsible for this.

Within the Pedagogical Section there is an organ responsible for the recognition of schools as Waldorf Schools and, for kindergartens as Waldorf Kindergartens.

The legal right to this name is granted after the school or kindergarten has been recognized as such. This task can also be delegated to national committees.

The Waldorf Schools which have been recognized are listed in the International Waldorf School Directory, published by the German Association of Waldorf Schools.

P.S. For simplicity's sake the word "his" has been used, although "his" and "her" is meant.

Approved by the International Council of Waldorf/Steiner Schools (Hague Circle)
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Dornach, 21st November 2009

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translated by Angela Wesser and Dorit Winter

Stage Play in Class 8 – A Pedagogical Task

From 31st October to 1st November 2009, nineteen class teachers from Germany and Switzerland met in Dornach to discuss the play in class 8 under the leadership of Christof Wiechert.

Many colleagues reported that when approaching Class 8 an enormous pressure builds up to put a play on the stage at least ‘as good’ as the last one. A ‘full auditorium’ seems to become the overall standard.

For some class teachers, especially for those who don’t feel ‘at home’ on the stage, this presents an enormous challenge, a pressure they don’t feel they can bear.

Therefore it can’t be a coincidence that the task of producing a play in Class 8, and often in Class 12 too, is, more and more, placed completely into the hands of ‘professionals’, i.e. actors or people who have directed plays before. In doing so one hopes to achieve the right ‘result’.

The class teachers then see to all the organizational work – and are relieved.

The conference wanted to encourage teachers to scrutinize this development: Whoever told you that a gigantic play has to be performed by all means at the end of Class 8, no matter how?

From the very beginning small scenes can be played in every class and thus be part of our daily ‘Art of Education’.

Carefully adapting the language to the age of the children and leading them cautiously from speaking in chorus to playing individual parts, the teacher can walk a path together with his/her pupils that leads from Class 1 to 8; a path that is cultivated and developed further throughout this time – and may lead to a successful end in Class 8.

Of course professional support is needed and valuable thereby – but the play as such presents a pedagogical task!

In this way the conference took place:

Christof Wiechert talked about the anthropological basis of drama work with pupils. Pedagogical and didactic aspects formed the ground on which practical exercises could be built up with the help of professionals:

In an engaging and ‘catching’ way Matthias Hink, a eurythmist and actor, and Barbara Stuten, an actress, created an alertness for the space of the stage, for voice and gesture – but mainly they built a space in which the colleagues gained the trust and joy to act.

During this work the pedagogical aspects were examined again and again:

The subjects of this discussion were the choice of play and cast and the question of how to interweave the play and the current work at school. The urgency to interrupt the rhythm of the work on the topic of the main lesson as little as possible became clear, so as not to let the pupils get ‘unruly’.

A great part of the rehearsals could take place in the rhythmical part of the main lessons and in substitution lessons for quite a long period. Thus they can stay a part of the daily studying if it's their own teachers who do this work. Only when approaching the performance would additional rehearsals then be necessary.

Christof Wiechert even talked about rehearsing on the stage parallel to working in the main lesson books within the same room.

Many questions concerning the daily work of the class teacher made clear how necessary and helpful the inner orientation to the foundations of Waldorf Education can be, beside the cooperative work among colleagues, in order to test one's own intentions, maybe to adjust them anew and then to gain confidence in oneself.

A colleague of mine told me that even in the curative education, plays can be acted and – if carefully chosen and adapted to the needs of the children – be helpful.

In the evening we took great pleasure in watching “Amphitryon” together. With newly opened eyes we recognized many things we had learned and worked out together during the course. Determined and encouraged to take up drama again as a regular part of our pedagogical work and to train ourselves with the help of professionals, we returned home to our schools and – hopefully onto the stage.

Hildegard Oelerich
translated by Dorothea Habmann

Peace education and developmental aid

What is good emergency education? It is an education for areas in conflict that needs to be adaptable to special situations which are in continuous flux. This keeps the peace and emergency education flexible, but it still relies on the fundamental pedagogical elements that form its backbone: the children's own activity, artistic expression and rhythmically structured lessons are as much part of that as a sustainable concept that leads beyond the emergency situation to normality. Further training courses for teachers also belong to this concept because they ensure that the fundamental principles find their way into each classroom at all levels. Schools in conflict areas follow the state curricula which often do not tolerate deviations. Materials are also lacking to keep the artistic activities in the lessons going. How can one introduce small islands of relaxation into a very tight teaching schedule? These are the kind of problems teachers are dealing with in conflict areas.

Especially in emergency situations the focus on sustainability must not be lost because nothing is worse than the disruption of the continuity that an emergency education first has to build up.



Emergency education in forgotten places

As an example of emergency education I would like to mention the work that is being done with women prisoners. The women learn about child development and are encouraged to think through their daily life with the children. Examples illustrate how they can support the children in their development. What can be done for the sense of touch when one dresses the child? What toys help to develop their senses while actively involving the mother, too? What books do these children need that also stimulate the mothers' imagination and allow normality to enter into the prison walls?

In a prison in Chisinau/Moldova the charity *Caritas Switzerland* set up a mother-and-child house where mothers and children can move freely. It allows for normal everyday situations where good toys are available and the mothers have educational support.

Another pedagogical situation presents itself on the tuberculosis ward. The young children there have no toys. The older ones are drilled with the national

curriculum by their teachers in a room where they all use the same blackboard. After thorough assessment of the situation a concept is now being developed to support the hospital in providing healthy tuition for the children while still adhering to the national curriculum. Their isolation in hospital means that the children have a lot of time which should be filled with meaningful and enjoyable learning activities. One of the goals is that children rejoin their old classes in the village school once they can leave the hospital after six or twelve months.

Now dolls are being made that can be washed at high temperatures as well as other disinfected toys. Former colleagues from Bale have agreed to paint pictures with their classes to decorate the bare hospital walls. As soon as the children in the hospital can start painting, their work will also be exhibited in the Swiss schools to raise awareness of their situation.

Moldova has another educational emergency: the countless social orphans who leave school to join the many street children. Their parents are often working abroad.

Peace education in Kosovo

65 women teachers, who also attend the regular further education classes during the school year, took part in the Summer Academy 2009; nine gained their bachelor degree and twelve others handed in their diploma dissertations. Each of them researched her topic in the actual work situation. How valuable their work was became apparent as they listened to each other's presentations taking extensive notes about their colleagues' experiences. Who knows all the games one can play with PET bottle caps? One teacher sowed wheat and, with the children, looked after it, harvested it, made it into flour and baked bread. Many of the ideas would never have occurred to them if they did not have to improvise every day. They might not be spectacular, but they document emergency education by means of action research.



Apart from 25 kindergartens with 38 groups there is now the nursery centre *Dielli* (sun) which has eight classes and now also learning support which means that children with learning difficulties can get more help. The pre-school education training has found its heart here: not only are lessons being taught here every day, but teachers have found work places which allow them to work on their dissertations and prepare lessons.

Next to the Romani and multicultural nursery education, pre-school education can now be further deepened and researched. This is happening in the present school year also in a kindergarten for Bosnian children who are taught in Albanian. The Bosnian village decided this in order to ensure that their children, in later life, will not be disadvantaged in Kosovo where Albanian is the main language. The kindergarten obviously still has to cultivate Bosnian traditions. Eurythmy is being practised in the multicultural kindergarten and the experience gained will benefit other kindergartens. The IPF (Initiative for Practice-based Research)⁶ further supports research in Kosovo and promotes collaboration with other pedagogical colleges. Two interns from the teacher training college in the Swiss town of Zug took part in this year's Summer Academy.

A peaceful kindergarten

Peace education is health-giving when it is fully in tune with the environment. The stability in the kindergarten allows the children to grow because there they can deepen the themes that they perceive in their surrounding. All the senses need to be stimulated and the children need to become active in order to increase their treasure of experience. It has been shown that doing plays with children enhances their linguistic skills because they learn to play with language. This playfulness is important because the learning of a new language should not induce additional stress.



6 A Swiss-based international organisation which supports social and educational projects (*translator's note*)

It was possible to hold two teacher training courses in Grozny this spring (which were also attended by education officials). One hopes that this can be repeated once the political situation has stabilised. In conflict areas I am often asked crucial questions such as ‘How can one strengthen the long-term memory of school children?’ It becomes evident in these places that formal teaching primarily addresses the short-term memory and that young people cannot recall what they learned in order to transform or apply it. In conflict areas and former war areas it shows dramatically among the older classes that the teaching does not involve the body and the feeling and that artistic subjects are being neglected.

There is no Waldorf formula

Is it Waldorf education when the kindergarten room is covered in pink veils and the building blocks have no corners? Certainly not, because that would mean that the environment was not reflected in the teaching space; the child would live in a kind of parallel world. This is not healthy because children have to be rooted in their environment. Teachers who are active in the world and want to be representatives of a true ‘global education’ have to first familiarize themselves with the surrounding in which the child is being taught. They need to get to



know the traditions that are being cultivated, develop a feeling for the religion and the language and absorb the children’s verses, ring games and handwork traditions of the area in question. The teachers cannot represent something in the kindergarten that they have not made their own and that does not come from the heart. Leaving the plastic toy car in a shoe box outside the kindergarten because plastic toys are not used there is pointless. If we drink from plastic bottles every day it cannot be wrong to play with these useful items. The simple objects of everyday life are ubiquitous and this is exactly why they offer such good opportunities for pedagogical use.

These simple items are even available in prison as I noticed when we filled PET bottle caps into milk powder tins in Chisinau to create rattling toys: the first toys for the young children of imprisoned mothers.

Beatrice Rutishauser Ramm

Beatrice Rutishauser Ramm is a Waldorf teacher and works for the charity Caritas Switzerland in Kosovo, Moldova and Chechnya. Caritas Switzerland is a partner of IPF.

I would like to warmly thank my colleagues at the Rudolf Steiner School in Bale for their continuous support and practical help.

translated by Margot M. Saar

Agenda

Coming Pedagogical Section Conferences and Events at the Goetheanum, 2010

22. – 23. Januar 2010	Weiterbildungstage der Schweizer Lehrer
26. – 28. Februar 2010	2. Lehrgang Kinderbetrachtung, 5. Teil
19. – 21. März 2010	Meditative Praxis im Lehrer- und Erzieherberuf
28. – 30. Mai 2010	Trinitatistagung/ Religionslehrertagung
30. Mai – 3. Juni 2010	Ausbildungsseminar für Religionslehrer
24. – 26. September 2010	Allgemeine Menschenkunde, 8. Vortrag