

Kindness - Strength - Love
The IASWECE Council gets ready for the Celebration!

Javiera Cucurella



Although I am not a representative member of the IASWECE Circle, I was invited to join the extended group preparing for the conference to contribute another voice from Latin America. From the very beginning, I shared everyone's enthusiasm for preparing this great event. Although the dates still seemed far away, there was so much to do, and so much desire to do it well!

This conference is special because it commemorates the 100th anniversary of the founding of the first Kindergarten in 1926 in Stuttgart. Therefore, we want to make this milestone a great celebration. It is true that there are many challenges, especially for early childhood, families, carers and teachers, but precisely for this reason, we want this event to be a meeting place to celebrate the work and efforts of so many generations, to give thanks for what we do have, what has been achieved and learned over these 100 years, and to celebrate human encounter, what unites us, what we do, what we know. How wonderful to have the opportunity to meet with colleagues and loved ones, in what unites us beyond geographical distances, cultural and linguistic differences!

From the outset, the preparation of this conference has been guided by the desire to bring together the entire community and collaborate with one another, reflecting the enormous diversity that exists in the world of Steiner/Waldorf kindergartens today. Although there is a central organising group that has been working tirelessly since October 2024, it is nourished by the contributions of collaborators from different corners of the planet who were invited from the beginning, thus allowing the voices of the periphery to be reflected to some extent. There are participants from 70 nationalities, around 120 workshop leaders, simultaneous translation into 11 languages, stories and plays from different cultures.

The response from the community has been impressive! A month and a half after registration opened, the auditorium was already full. We are very sorry that so many have been left out, and we are doing everything possible to ensure that, despite this, they can have a close experience and feel part of the meeting from a distance, with live and recorded broadcasts of the opening, the conferences, the celebration, the plays, and all the material that will be available on the IASWECE and Goetheanum websites afterwards.

Thanks to the work and dedication of the organising group, comprising members of IASWECE and the Pedagogical Section, and their collaborators, the meeting has taken shape and is about to begin. Many of the participants will be able to attend thanks to the financial support secured, both through the efforts of the organising group and those of associations in countries or regions that have recognised the need to support their teachers. The generosity of many, including large, related organisations and foundations that understand the importance of supporting this type of education, has made it possible for educators from countries where many kindergartens are in challenging economic conditions to attend. This momentum has spread to such an extent that many countries are holding local meetings and celebrations as part of the centenary.

The golden thread that runs through, intertwines, and shapes the entire conference is the conditions for esoteric learning from the book: *How To Know Higher Worlds* by Rudolf Steiner (GA 10). The study of Chapter 5 is already being taken up in various parts of the world as a form of preparation. With this, we also want to bring to our consciousness the tools that Rudolf Steiner gave us, and perhaps his exclamation: 'We need kindergartens, we need kindergartens!' will once again resonate among us with sweetness, strength and love.

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