

Pearls and cotton candy? 50 years of the Waldorf Kindergarten Association! ¹

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The Association of Waldorf Kindergartens celebrated its 50th anniversary with a ceremony at the Anthroposophical Centre in Kassel.

What do children need for the future? What do they need from educators today - and how can they achieve what needs to be done? These questions were at the heart of the event. The keynote speakers ensured a lively exchange: Philipp Reubke (IASWECE) from France, who stood in for Henning Köhler, who was ill; the Hamburg physician Barbara Treß, and Marcus Schneider, head of the Anthroposophical Education College in Dornach - and for the moderation Sabine Cebulla-Holzki, head of the Waldorf Kindergarten Seminar Hannover, and Mira Drews at the piano, who contributed much more than just a musical side program through her virtuosity and her own compositions.

Wolfgang Sassmannshausen recalled in the introduction the founding initiative of Helmut von Kügelgen and Klara Hattermann: "Unlike other anthroposophical initiatives, the Association of Waldorf Kindergartens was not founded on the initiative of an individual in dialogue with Rudolf Steiner - as with Emil Molt for the Waldorf School. Accordingly, there are hardly any indications of early childhood education from Steiner's side. What the little child needs seems to be a question that everyone has to ask and answer anew - collectively, on the basis of the lively diversity of the relationships in which the children live."

First and foremost: the search, the questions. Philipp Reubke traced the basic gestures of togetherness along the pedagogical path of everyday life: Connection and boundaries, order and chaos, center and periphery. Barbara Treß took them up from a medical and anthropological point of view: Individual and community, autonomy and belonging, what has become and what is becoming - this is a field of tension and conflict in which life unfolds individually. Before all education: the relationship. Marcus Schneider gave insights into his own childhood, in which the parents had little time but where much nevertheless developed. In the structure of the world, requirements and stimulation do not always have to be the pedagogical intentions: The child who feels himself in a good relationship with his environment and finds possibilities and is able to seize them, may develop his resources without guidance. Like the oyster from the grain of sand the pearl - an image from Barbara Treß.

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So one of the key words for the success of development on this festive day was resonance. According to Barbara Treß, this is the basis for opening up "the future corridor" for children - especially in view of the rapid change in living conditions in a digital society. According to Philipp Reubke, this also applies to the worldwide community of Waldorf kindergartens: resonance as a basic prerequisite for the balancing act of the success of communal as well as individual shaping of life - a playground in which connectedness and mobility come together, the key to future questions. According to Marcus Schneider, what has been invested in childhood needs then to be cared for so that it grows like cotton candy. To recognize this, to resonate with these inner potentials that have developed in childhood, is the most valuable resource in everyday life with children.

For good reason, the little child may not have been at the center of Steiner's pedagogical considerations. It is just as impossible to think about the child without community as it is to think about the community without its children: the future is always a question of the context of the whole. - With cheerfulness, criticism and reminders, the festive community tried to paint a picture of the centenary in the year 2069.

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