

## „Life Rhythms in Various Phases of Human Life“ Waldorf Kindergarten Conference in Russia

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For 22 years, the Federation of Waldorf Kindergarten Educators in Russia has organized annual conferences. Each year the conference takes place in a different location – one could say that the conference wanders from city to city. The cities where the conference has often taken place include St. Petersburg, Yaroslavl, Vladimir, Ryazan, Samara, Kirov, and Kazan; the most remote is the Siberian city of Tomsk. In 2017 the kindergarten teachers plan to meet in Sochi.

Hosting the conference presents a wonderful opportunity for each city to make Waldorf education more visible. The conferences usually are highly regarded by educators, parents and members of the local educational administration.

On November 2- 6, 2016, a conference took place in Moscow at the „Put Serna“school. 120 participants from various Russian cities took part, as well as representatives from Ukraine, from the city of Kharkiv. This was the second time a conference took place in Moscow. The conference theme was “Life Rhythms in Various Stages of Human Life”. The lectures were held by Gunter Gebhard and Elena Schnapir. Workshops, conversations, and sharing of experiences took place in the afternoons.

In addition to the conference, Waldorf educators come to Moscow once each year in March for a deepening course that is organized by the „Center for Waldorf Early Childhood Education. “ There are 100 Waldorf groups and initiatives in Russia today, 49 of which are in Moscow.

During the preparations for the conference a great desire arose to speak again about the pedagogical foundations of our work, as well as the significance of simple, natural surroundings for the child, because today's world distances us, without our noticing, from what the little child really needs.

During the conference there was a special mood and enthusiasm, which was also expressed afterwards in the conference reviews. This was probably because we were gaining a deeper understanding of Anthroposophy and really looking at the needs of the child in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Another event also contributed to the festive mood of the conference; the „Berjozka“ Curriculum which we had written for the Waldorf kindergarten and submitted to the Russian government, has now been approved.



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