

Report of the IASWECE Meeting in Hamburg

Silvia Jensen



Dear Colleagues,

Last October, the IASWECE Council was honoured to be hosted by the Hamburg Waldorf Early Childhood Education Seminar. Anna-Kathrin Hantel, Erika Henning, and other colleagues gave us a warm welcome and did everything to make us feel at home, with good meals, refreshments, and outings. We are very grateful to them.

Hamburg is a city cut by the Elbe River, which offers nice walks and a beautiful atmosphere for sunset. There are many parks with very old trees. These are some of the qualities that make this city hospitable.

This time our meeting was hybrid, as some colleagues from far away participated in the meeting through the Internet. We are very grateful to them for making this effort to be with us at such different times of their days.

I would like to address two of the main topics we discussed.

Phillipp Reubke referred to the need for us to celebrate the centenary of the Waldorf Kindergarten movement in 2026. Isn't it amazing? How many children have received this education that prioritises the healthy development of the child, and allows them to play freely, experiencing the body in its many forms? To whom should we be grateful? Who were the pioneers? How can we honour this moment and at the same time be aware of the needs of our time?

The Goetheanum will invite us all to a World Early Childhood Conference in April 2026, and we can also celebrate at home. Should we study a common theme? Or could we find stories in different regions that can have in their content images of empathy, kindness, tolerance, and calmness - qualities so necessary today? How about a puppet festival that will delight everyone, from the child to the elderly?

We also had the opportunity to hear more in depth from Louise deForest and Susan Howard, representatives of WECAN, (Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America), about how the movement is developing in Mexico, the USA and Canada. It becomes clear that we have to be aware of the need to find the essence of Waldorf education in all countries that were massively colonised. The question is: how can we include in our actions more awareness of what was almost annihilated many centuries ago? Do we need an even more conscious anti-racist education in order to learn to

open up to the oppressed? Among all this growing awareness, we must always take into account the needs of the child and act according to his or her needs. This is our priority.

At this meeting we welcomed Thailand as a new Member, we are very happy that, little by little, more and more Asian countries are becoming part of the IASWECE circle.

We said goodbye to some members and especially to Svetlana Eks, who was for many years the representative of Ukraine and a founding member of IASWECE. We wish her all the strength to endure the war that is taking place in her country, she will always be in our thoughts. We welcomed Natalia Orlova, as Ukraine's new representative.

We also welcome Marelle Tang from Estonia and bid farewell to Heli Müristaja, to whom we wish all the best.

Best regards,

Silvia

On behalf of the Council of IASWECE



Silvia Jensen is a Waldorf kindergarten teacher in Florianopolis, Brazil, and is a trainer and mentor around the world. She has been the representative of Brazil in IASWECE for many years.