

IASWECE Council Meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, April 3 – 7, 2017

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For the first time a Council Meeting took place in the Southern hemisphere – in Cape Town, South Africa – at a place of great cultural and social diversity, where the power of the elements is intense – and at a time of political activity calling for renewed change.

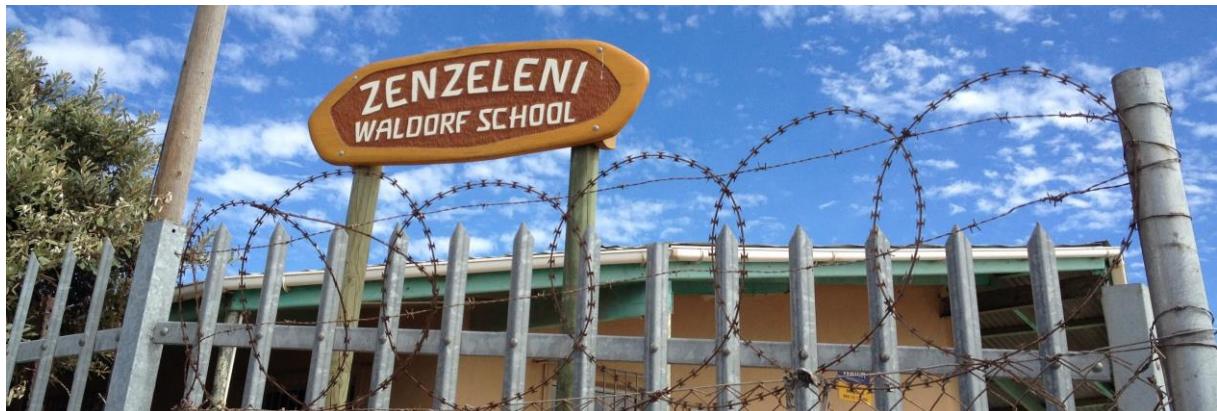
Louise Oberholzer from the *South African Federation of Waldorf Schools* gave us an insight into the nature of the country and the development of Waldorf education there. Beginning in the 1960's a Waldorf founding movement established 17 schools along with kindergartens, among them 11 schools in the region of Cape Town, 1 in Natal and 5 in the North, in the area of Johannesburg. In 1984 the end of Apartheid brought equal rights and freedom for all. Since then the question of how to deal with this freedom has been an issue, especially in the education of children.

Mary-G Häuptle, the representative from South Africa, reported, that in the last 20 years more and more *educare centres* in the Townships want to work on the basis of Waldorf education, and the small Waldorf schools there - being the "younger stream" - equally want to become part of the Waldorf movement.



The *Centre for Creative Education*, founded in Cape Town in 1993, offers training courses based on Waldorf education. They are approved by the State. The training for educators is particularly taken up by kindergarten teachers who come from townships and with great initiative have been founding kindergartens there.

We were able to visit the kindergartens at *Constantia* and *Imhoff Waldorf Schools*, as well as several kindergartens and schools and baby care projects in the Khayelitsha and Manenberg townships. With deep respect and humble admiration we could perceive how the educators there create healing oases by living up to original values of caring and sharing in a surrounding of prevailing poverty and potential violence.



Our work in the Council took place under special aspects of collaboration and interconnection. The study work on the theme of *Sleep* was based on quotations from the work of Rudolf Steiner and made us aware of the nature and the importance of healthy sleep for children and adults. To our delight, the impulse given by the *Birth to Three Working Group* to work on the theme of *Sleep* in regional conferences has been taken up worldwide with great response. For current information see www.iaswece.org.

Working groups on “burning issues” continued on the themes initiated together with *ECSWE (European Council for Steiner/Waldorf Education)* in Tartu, Estonia in October 2016: *Digital media, Transition from Kindergarten to School* (reviewing a Manifesto on school readiness) and *Assessment* (preparing a Waldorf statement).

Other “burning issues” were *Trauma and Resilience* as seen from the point of view of Waldorf education and *Supporting Parents in questions of prenatal medicalization, birth, early childhood and nutrition*. In this context the proposal made by *IKAM (International Coordination of Anthroposophical Medicine)* to collaborate in a multi-professional way on their CARE-project, *Pregnancy, birth and healthy development in early childhood*, was adopted.

The Council also made a number of decisions. Among them the *IASWECE Guidelines for the Training of Steiner/Waldorf Educators Working with the Child from Birth to Three* were approved. A new procedure for the *Recognition of Kindergartens* for the World List was established. New *Criteria for IASWECE Project Support* now provide a possibility to support students individually. The *Financial Report 2016* was approved.



Nana Göbel from the *Freunde der Erziehungskunst* was our guest and reported on current trends in the development of Waldorf education in Eastern and Southern Europe, Turkey and Africa, and also on the tension between a steadily rising demand for support and limited financial resources. She gave an update on the projects set up for the Waldorf anniversary in 2019 and mentioned plans for special books including a new edition of the *Study of Man* and the *Faculty Conversations* in their original context.

The Film [Waldorf 100](#) has already attracted great interest. IASWECE is joining the world wide movement *WALDORF 100*, and will also publish proposals for kindergarten projects. A number of ideas have been collected so far. A mandate group will be organizing the *IASWECE World Conference on Early Childhood Education* to take place in Dornach from April 15 – 19, 2019.

The preparation of the Waldorf anniversary 2019 also raised the question about the future and the renewal of the Waldorf impulse and of our organization. Which “substance” will be needed for the 100 years to come? The interconnection and collaboration for the wellbeing of the young child will continue to remain the most essential issue. With this in mind opening new fields of relations among organizations, institutions and individuals as a basis for shared efforts shall be a priority concern for us.

We can say that in South Africa a step in this direction was taken. Many new encounters came about during this Council Meeting and we would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Mary-G Häuptle and all those, who prepared the space for this to take place.

Our next Council meeting will take place in Barcelona, Spain, October 11-14, 2017.