

Conferences in 2019

Dornach, April 14 – 19, 2019

World Early Childhood Conference Goetheanum 2019

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translated by Susan Howard

The International Association of Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education (IASWECE) and the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum are preparing a World Early Childhood Conference to celebrate 100 years of Waldorf Education, which will take place from April 15 to 19, 2019 in Dornach.

The upcoming festive event gives us the opportunity to look into the past, the present and the future. Looking back, we can remember with warm gratitude all that has been realised in the past 100 years and the numerous special people who courageously and in a selfless manner devoted their lives to opening the doors for this new form of education. On this centennial anniversary of Steiner/Waldorf Education we also want to have our eyes wide open in the present and look around us to perceive the needs of our time. Last but not least, we also want to expand our gaze towards the future into the next century. What are the qualities we need to develop in this quickly changing world to preserve the possibility of fulfilling our human destiny? How shall we help the children to meet their future with courage and inner strength?

Out of our international work we observe that the big challenges of today have to do with searching for a healthy balance between the needs of the individual and that of the social setting. And the quality of social relationships among colleagues, with parents and board members, as well as with the

whole social environment is one of the factors in the child's surroundings which has a strong influence on his development.

The title of the conference:

**"Inner Freedom – Social Responsibility:
Finding Ways into a Human Future"**

Someone recently remarked to the planning group: it is odd that the theme of the 2019 World Early Childhood Conference is not pedagogical, but instead has to do with adults. Of course, the relationships among the adults are an important part of the surroundings of the child and have a strong influence on the child's development, but what could we do to bring about a real improvement in these relationships, so that they become more harmonious? It is not enough to just try to be nice to one another.

This comment is of course fully justified, as is the observation that one often talks about certain topics or themes when one is no longer able to achieve them. This means that those who talk a lot about the quality of relationships probably have difficulties themselves with relationships.

In order to take this a step further, our conference planning group members intend to work on three suggestions as concretely as possible and to encourage one another to find the courage to act on them:

- The field of self-education (the personal level): Difficulties in coexistence and working together are related to a particular soul-spiritual characteristic, which we all have today to a greater or lesser extent: lack of interest, lack of compassion, indifference, a tendency to become encapsulated in our own inner life, or what Rudolf Steiner calls a tendency to live out "antisocial drives"¹. This is expressed, for example, by the English newspaper, The Daily Mail, namely, the fact that "an epidemic of loneliness is flooding the western world"².
- The area of social agreements (the structural level): The forms that we give to our collaboration, the agreements we make, the policies we write, all help or hinder possibilities for intensive, harmonious collaboration. Or, as Michaela Glöckler put it after a working group at the last Whitsun conference in Hannover: We need social forms "so that egoism cannot let off steam" – forms that help us to "find the spirit". Or, as Rudolf Steiner says in a lecture recommended for this conference³, forms that allow each person to "lovingly indulge in one's own actions" "(without being inhibited by constant criticism and scrutiny) and "to enter into the actions of the others with understanding" (without being forced to do so by a supervisor).
- The field of education: How do we live and work with children so that they can later balance the necessarily prevalent antisocial tendencies with social skills?

How can we lay these foundations deeply enough and not stop at superficial exhortations? Steiner points out that certain social qualities are otherwise unimportant: "Gratitude lives in the body, and it must live in the body, otherwise it would not sit sufficiently in the human being."⁴

Study Material as Preparation

- Lecture 6 in *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, by Rudolf Steiner. GA 306.
- Social and Anti-Social Forces, Lecture by Rudolf Steiner on December 12, 1918, GA 186.
- "How Can the Soul Needs of the Times be Met?" Lecture by Rudolf Steiner on October 10, 1916. GA 168.

We have created a page on the IASWECE website for further articles, suggestions, suggested reading, etc regarding the conference: Resources for World Early Childhood Conference. If you have suggestions or contributions, please contact info@iaswece.org.

1 Rudolf Steiner, *Social and Antisocial Forces*, Lecture December 12, 1918 (GA 186).

2 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-5679315/Loneliness-epidemic-sweeps-Huge-study-reveals-HALF-Americans-feel-time.html#ixzz5EIFdoFV8>

3 Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, Lecture 6, April 20, 1923 (GA 306).

4 Ibid.

Preliminary Schedule, Tuesday through Thursday (April 16 – 18)

8:30	Singing, Verse, Eurythmy
9:00	Lecture
10:15	Break
11:00	Discussion Groups on the Conference Theme
12:30	Lunch
2:30	Workshops I
4:00	Break
4:45	Workshops II
6:15	Supper
8:15	Evening program

Bangkok, May 5 – 11, 2019

Deepening the Understanding – Developing Pedagogical Answers for the New Challenges in Childhood Today

Janpen and Porn Panosot and Nana Goebel for the preparatory group

Conference for Class teachers and for teachers dealing with the transition periods from kindergarten into primary and from primary into secondary education.

We invite class teachers from all around the worldwide Waldorf movement to work and research together from the 5th till the 11th of May 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The conference will start on the 5th of May at 17:00 and end on the 11th of May at 13:00. The program will include morning lectures mainly by Christof Wiechert and workshops. A number

of members of the International Forum on Steiner/Waldorf Education have already promised to guide the workshops (Sigurd Borghs, Ellen Fjeld-Köttker, Henning Kullak-Ublick, Trevor Mephram, James Pewtherer, Dusan Plestil, Claus-Peter Röh, Helena Sandell). Other workshop holders will come from Asia, Australia and New Zealand. We invite all participating teachers to share research in smaller circles in the afternoon and to give 20 minute contributions to the pedagogical answers they found to current challenges in education. We will have artistic performances in the evening.