



Editorial

A Report of the ENSWaP
Spring Meeting

More than Baking Cakes

What Our Children Need
from Their Elementary
School to Prepare Them for
Their Future

ENSWaP Conference 2015

::Accomodation

:: Registration



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ENSWAP
International
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Editorial

by Mariam Francq

Practically, a few weeks have passed since about half of the coordinating committee met near beautiful Graz (southeast Austria), on volcanic grounds with a generous continuous flow of energy from deep below. Not only were we hosted like royalty with very gracious service, but we bathed in beautiful landscapes and blossoming nature to our full content. Such an environment was obviously favourable for a truly friendly and efficient meeting, thanks to our most generous host Gerald and local organiser dear Karin from Schonau, Austria.

We deeply regretted the absence of some members of the committee, particularly the organisers of next October's public conference. It is definitely not easy to bring everyone together, even if planned in advance and for a short period... Let us hope we will succeed in time. Our appreciated counsellor, Christopher Clouder was present, as well as chairperson, Mariam from APAPS France, Márti, our marvellous secretary from Hungary, Monica, deputy chairperson from sunny Italia and Karin, organizer of the spring meetings, plus dear Gerald. The one and foremost issue which we all agreed upon immediately was changing INSWaP to ENSWaP! The "I" of international was replaced by "E" for EUROPEAN... in order to stick to reality. Truly enough, all our meetings so far have been attended by European representatives or participants exclusively, which is definitely understandable. HOWEVER, we wish to insist that our conferences are OPEN TO ALL... European or other! PLEASE TAKE NOTE!

The day following our meeting, our precious Márti had whipped up very comprehensive minutes of our conversations regards the message of the added value of Waldorf, fundraising, guidelines for our conferences, website, etc., etc. which you will read all about in her report in this issue of our newsletter. May it go far, to as many Waldorf parents as possible... from one end of the world to the other, so that we all feel more and more part of an extraordinary family counting many, many individuals who are eager to meet and exchange emotions and experiences pertaining to the education of our cherished youngsters during ENSWAP gatherings, here and there.

I(E)NSWaP's Spring Meeting

by Márti Domokos

This spring, for the first time in INSWaP's history, a few members of the coordinating group had a meeting not coinciding with the annual conference. The goal of this meeting was to define the role of the conference, of the coordinating group and of INSWaP itself. The meeting took place in Austria, in Gossendorf near Graz. We were hosted by Gerald Rosenitsch, who has been a supporting friend of INSWaP's for years. We stayed at a hotel with lovely views of the rolling hills and forests, vineyards and small villages. During the day we had our discussions at Gerald's beautiful home/seminar house.

Unfortunately not everyone from INSWaP's steering committee could attend due to time issues and expensive plane tickets. But thanks to this digital era we could connect to most of the group.

In the meeting a – for us – serious decision was made: INSWaP became ENSWaP, from international to European. This reflects reality: although the organisation started out with the aim of becoming international, in the last few years there has only been interest and attendance from European Steiner Waldorf parents and friends. So in order to reflect reality and not to be pretentious, we decided on the name change. This does not mean that at any time our international friends from outside Europe would not be welcome: on the contrary, every friend of Steiner Waldorf education will be met gladly.

We discussed the possible reasons behind the relatively low attendance at our yearly conferences. Though for years the attendance fee being too high for some countries was seen as one of the possible reasons, in fact during the last couple of years there were scarcely any requests for waving or lowering the fee. The more possible reason might be that parents and schools do not see the added value of these conferences – so it is up to us to emphasise these. The, for us, as Steiner Waldorf parents/friends, obvious values are these:

- international cooperation;
- seeing other points of views within the Waldorf world;
- showing that Waldorf pedagogy is still human, still humane;
- most of the schools stand alone in the midst of other values, they can become “prisons”; the conference shows that we are part of a whole;
- an unique opportunity, open for everyone, to talk about how Waldorf education works throughout Europe.

Organising the conference is not only the responsibility of the country where it takes place, but the general theme, the speakers and such is decided by the steering committee, as it is an ENSWaP conference and not a conference of one or two schools. There have to be guidelines set on how the speakers are to be compensated for their lectures. Luckily, there are quite interesting and eloquent speakers in our midst, so we will use our own resources as much as we can.



ENSWaP’s financial situation is still a serious question, as at this point of time we have no sources of revenue. In the near future there will be a donation button on our website (which, by the way, needs a serious rehauling), with the kind help of the Norwegian Waldorf association. Other means of funding are currently explored. If any of you, dear readers, have any brilliant ideas, please, do not hesitate to share these with us.

The roles with practical tasks for each member of the steering group were defined in some detail. This gives a much better overview so we do not overlap within these tasks and this way everything is covered. One definite role was found for all of us: pro-activity. We look around for new possibilities, if we think something has to happen we do not wait for each other. We help each other in any way we can.

All in all, it was an incredibly productive meeting. It is such a different experience to meet and talk face to face as opposed to online conferences. Thanks again to Karin Dauer and Gerald Rosenitsch for giving us this lovely opportunity – a new ENSWaP tradition has been started.

More than Baking Cakes – Parent Involvement at Steiner-Waldorf Schools

by Karin Smith

With kind permission from the author through Waldorf Resources
(www.waldorf-resources.org)

Introduction (by MD): below you will find an article that helped me during various talks with parents and teachers. It reflects in a clear way some of my thoughts when trying to answer questions put to me by teachers and parents, such as: "why aren't parents more active?", "why do teachers not listen to us?". I think you'll enjoy it as much as I do. Thank you, Karin.

Parent partnership - or parent involvement - is a central concept at Steiner Waldorf schools, but what do we mean by it? Are we thinking of parents volunteering for help at the annual fair or with cleaning the school? Are we talking about "educating" parents at parents' evenings? Are teachers meant to guide parents in family life and childcare? How can parents become actively engaged in school development, what are the teachers' contributions and which aspects are important?

Waldorf schools were founded through a social impulse; this impulse lives in the dynamic triangle of teachers, children and parents. In the course of time, certain activities have in many schools become established as 'typical parents' jobs', but is this still appropriate today? Parent participation in schools has to be adapted to the contemporary situation. For a teacher to lecture the parents at the parents' evening, to reduce the so called 'parent partnership' to baking cakes with the assumption that mothers are 'housewives', are ways of thinking that need thorough scrutiny. Parents are themselves professionals; they are trades people or managers, they are doctors or gardeners. A variety of professions and talents are represented through the parents. Due to demographic developments, there are also many grandparents who want to be actively involved in school. This potential must be welcomed in schools. Parents and grandparents do not want to be mere helpers, they want to be actively involved, they want to contribute ideas and be given responsibility. Today, parent involvement has to be founded on true partnerships.

Understanding obstacles

Often, we view the other person in their particular role; we



see 'the Teacher', 'the Mother' or 'the Father'. On the other hand we also speak and act out of our own role. This way of relating may lead to anxiety on all sides. Teachers fear to be considered incompetent by the parents; therefore they hide behind the mask of the all-knowing expert. They can come across as condescending, even towards parents who have been longer at the school than the teacher herself. Teachers sometimes forget that the parents have been with the child since birth, that they know that child and its development in a more intimate way than the teacher. Parents, on the other hand, may show little awareness for the class as a whole. They are focused on their own child. Their questions are, "Is my child well? Does she get enough attention? Are his individual needs met? The parents expect the school to offer their child perfect learning opportunities. They have chosen the school for their child, they put up with extra financial obligations and additional demands. Steiner might have foreseen some of this potential conflict when at the parents' evening at the school in Stuttgart on 22nd June 1923 he said, "But above all, we have to focus on our intentions. We cannot hope to gain much from particular instructions that teachers should address the parents in this way or that and vice versa; but we can expect much when teachers and parents meet each other in the right spirit, with the right attitude. "Much depends on the right intentions or inner attitude. This is true for the direct encounter between parent and teacher but also for everyone involved in the life of the school.

Appreciating qualities

Parents and teachers embody certain qualities. The school is the teachers' daily work place where

consistency and reliability are created through their work. They might be perceived as a tightly knit and somewhat closed community. Teachers have to find the balance between creating a reliable community while remaining open to new impulses. Parents, however, are equally a central and essential part of the school. Without them, there would be no school. Understandably, they hover on the periphery; they rarely enter the school building and the older the children get, the less the parents know about school life. Their physical distance, to the school and to other families, leads to the impression of them being somewhat fragmented. However, in the best of worlds they support the school not only financially but also spiritually. This invisible involvement is absolutely essential for the teachers.

A way forward

In many schools it has proven beneficial to lead parent partnership into a new phase by asking a series of questions: in which phase of school development are we now? What is important for our school's current situation? What visions do parents and teachers have for this school? In the pioneering years of a school we can count on the initial energy and enthusiasm. After a few years we might notice a certain disillusion and weariness. Furthermore, focus groups and processes have become firmly established. This can allow for some calm after the chaos of the first few years, but we might miss the energy of the pioneering generation. What skills and forms of cooperation are now needed? Who should be part of which focus groups and participate in decision-making? Discussions around some exiting new ideas for the upper to school or plans to build a new playground, provide opportunities to ask how parents can be involved in the planning and implementation of such a venture. Should parents be consulted when new teachers are employed and if so, how would this be organised? Could parents be involved in drawing up the criteria for new positions? How do we create open opportunities in which the individual, the situation of the child, the parents, teachers and class community all have their proper space?

In the same boat

If we consciously want to be involved in a school, we also have to say yes to cooperation. However, we might encounter some pitfalls: The participants in a parents' evening are people who have not necessarily chosen each other to work with each other. It is indeed possible that one person's views are not appreciated. It is possible that we do not agree with the manner in which someone brings

up their children; sometimes there is a clash of life-styles. And so it may happen that I sit there, in 'my' focus group, in 'my' parents' evening or committee with people who seem rather peculiar to me. And my child goes to school with their child! The worried mother in me sees the dreaded invitation to a birthday party at MacDonald's and the abhorrent iPod appears before her inner eye. There I sit with people whose comments I might consider intrusive, people who are too straightforward, too egocentric, too shy, too modern or too intellectual. Anger wells up because I wish for an open atmosphere at school so that the new, the future, can come about. How do I find a way forward in such a situation?

Learning to listen

The most basic skill we need is the skill of listening. We think that the purpose of listening is to find out something from our interlocutor which we don't know, something which will be useful for us. However, the philosopher Natalie Knapp points out that the biggest potential of listening lies in finding out something "that the speaker does not know herself". The ability to listen empathically enables my partner to find clarity in her own thinking. As a pupil once said, "only when I speak do I know what I think." The most important task at a parents' evening or in a focus group is to create space for other people's thoughts. This in turn enables further contributions, ideas and visions to emerge. Thus, a dynamic process starts which – according to Natalie Knapp – "awakens the intelligence of a group". Only then, new steps can be taken. Having said that, we are all children of a world which becomes increasingly individualistic. Empathic listening, mutual thinking and true cooperation do not come easy to us. It means we have to make an effort to hold back our opinions, our personal agendas and the ever-present 'I know best'. Parent partnership is a landscape with an endless variety of features; only a few of them have been mentioned here. Sometimes, the hike is pleasant, an easy ramble, but sometimes it feels like a walk in the jungle or in a minefield. Empathic listening is compass and staff for us all.

I want to thank the participants of the focus group "Holistic schools – parent partnership today" with Florian Osswald and Claire Wyss, Swiss Congress for Further Education, WBT 2014.

Since 2003, Karin Smith has been involved in parent partnership in the double role of mother and teacher at Rudolf Steiner School Ittigen, Switzerland. Sometimes, she seems to be hearing the words of the old Joni Mitchell song "Both Sides Now".

What Our Children Need from Their Elementary Schools to Prepare Them for Their Future

by Gitte Lassen



Is the world different from when you were a child? Do you think the world will be different when your child enters the job market? As conscious, loving parents caring about our children, we must ask ourselves what kind of elementary school best prepares our children for the new world yet to be.

Once upon a time, schools for the general public existed to provide factory workers with a standard basic education and so the school system created clones while subduing students' ability to think for themselves. Later, for decades, schools made people for 'the same job for a life-time'.

However, in this day and age, our children need a very different kind of school because most of them will not be factory workers and will not have one job for life. In fact, the average adult now has three careers according to some studies, which require something completely different of the adult than what the school system prepares them for.

I happen to know that there is a lot of beautiful changes going on with the general school system worldwide; many of those have received media attention, but I'm not sure they are enough, and soon enough. To paraphrase Sir Ken Robinson: "It's too late for a school evolution, we need a revolution!"

Employers are crying out that they can't use the young people coming out of today's school systems because they are educated for a world that no longer exists. They have a lot of information, most of which is useless, but don't know how to apply the information in a meaningful way that makes them a valuable addition to a work place. In fact, even having a college or university education is no longer a guarantee of employment, as is seen in the worldwide rise of unemployment in young people.

What is it, then, that the schools absolutely need to teach our children? Two things are glaringly obvious:

Creativity. Creativity is not about art. Creativity is the ability to come up with something new, to think outside the box, to combine old information in new ways, to explore what's possible, *to think for themselves*. In today's world the ones who do well are the ones who can adapt and come up with something new as the world is changing. The ones who can't change are left behind. This is true no matter what your work situation may be. The most popular TED-talk addresses this exact issue and I encourage you to watch it.

The ability to learn and re-learn. The world has changed drastically, and so our school models must adapt and change. Schools are still focused on imparting information, something that has little relevance to today's world where all information is available with the click of a button. (Do you remember the pointlessness of some of the things you had to learn? I had to learn Latin in 9th grade!) Rather, a good school teaches children how to become life-long learners, and how to enjoy learning.

This is, of course, easier said than done and will take years, as teachers must be re-educated, the curriculum re-created; and the sad thing is, that by the time this is all done, it may very well be outdated again due to the speed of the changing world.

Creativity and the ability to learn and re-learn are just two of several things conscious parents must consider when choosing the best school for their children according to modern research on educational pedagogy.



ENSWaP Conference October 2015

Stockholm

9-11 October 2015

Theme:

Measuring Knowledge vs. Learning for Life

Dear Waldorf parents and friends of Steiner-Waldorf education!

We are pleased to invite you to our annual conference, which will be held in Stockholm this year. Here is some practical information for you. In case you have further questions please don't hesitate to contact:

Mikael.cederqvist@gmail.com,

tel.: + 46 (0) 70 896 35 32

Lena.johansson.dechateau@gmail.com

tel.: + 46 (0) 709 99 12 33

Registration: please fill in the registration form attached and return to fredrikafredmark@gmail.com

Registration fee: €120,- / adult, payment at the latest by **15st of september**. The fee includes 2x lunch, 2x dinner, all beverages, guided tour in Stockholm, programme for 2 ½ days.

Children/teenagers:

Childcare facilities and an activity programme for teenagers will be on offer for a small additional charge

Accommodation:

Please contact and book directly. 3 hotels are available at special conditions for INSWaP

participants until 31st of July. Keyword "Rudolf Steiner Schule". See attached file.

Meeting location: The meeting will be held at Kristofferskolan (<https://www.kristofferskolan.se>), Bromma, in the western part of Stockholm. An excursion will be made on Saturday to the Antroposophical village in Överjärna, south of Stockholm. There we will see the play "Pinocchio"

Arrival:

By car: Krisofferskolan, Bromma, Marklandsbacken 11.

Arlanda International Airport :

Arlanda - Stockholm Central Station, Arlanda Express (fast train) (<https://www.arlandaexpress.se>). Underground **green line**, direction **Hässelby** to **Brommaplan**.

Or a cheaper alternative is Arlanda bus, (<http://www.flygbussarna.se>). Arlanda - City Terminal (Central Station). Underground **green line**, direction **Hässelby** to **Brommaplan**.

You can see prices and order tickets ahead on their websites.

Underground: More information on <http://sl.se/en/fares--tickets/>. Contact SL-center at the Central Station.



ENSWaP's steering committee

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organiser conference 2015

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newsletter

You can find more information about ENSWaP on our website: www.waldorfparents.net
For questions, information and comments you can contact our secretary on the following e-mail address: marta.domokos@feherlofiawaldorf.hu

ACCOMODATION

You can choose between the following three accommodations which are close by. Please contact the hotel and book directly.

Scandic hotell, Bromma: 30 single rooms pre-booked for participants of the ENSWaP conference until the 9th of September with special offer.

Price per person/night: € 76,00 (Single room)
Double room / night € 86,00

3 min. walk from hotel to the school. Send your booking to:

meeting.bromma@scandichotels.com including the following data: name(s), credit card number, expiring date of credit card, special offer number: 45474271, Dates: 9-11 October

Flyg hotel: Only 8 single rooms available pre-booked for participants of the ENSWaP conference until the 9th of September with special offer.

Price per person/night: € 70,00 (in single room)
Double room per night: € 92,20, 10 min. walk from hotel to the school

Send your booking to: info@flyghotellet.se including the following data: name(s), special offer code: ENSWaP. Dates: 9-11 October

Kovikenyouthhostel
(<http://www.koviken.se/>). 33 beds. 2 or 4 beds in the rooms.

Price per person/2 nights: € 21/ bed. About 7 min. by car, 8km (transfer will be organised).

Bring own bed linen. Send your booking to: mikael.cederqvist@gmail.com
Name(s), Country, Payment:

Kristofferskolans Föräldraförening.
IBAN: SE89 9500 0099 6042 6451 0969
BIC: NDEASESS



ENSWaP Conference 2015 Stockholm, October 9th-11th
Please fill in and return to fredrikafredmark@gmail.com

Number of adults:

Name of adults:

Number of children:

Names of children and age:

Family name:

Country:

Phone:

@-mail:

Food restrictions: (Ex. intolerance, vegetarian)

Registration fee: € 120,- /adult

Incl. 2x lunch, 2x dinner, all beverages, guided tour in Stockholm, programme for 2 ½ days

Payment: at the latest by 9th of September

Kristofferskolans Föräldraförening

IBAN: SE89 9500 0099 6042 6451 0969

BIC: NDEASESS

Accommodation:

To be booked separately: 2 hotels and one hostel are available at special conditions for participants of ENSWaP (see accommodation information sheet)

Childcare: Childcare facilities and an activity programme for teenagers will be on offer for a small additional charge. Please let us know if you want to avail of these.

If travelling by plane please inform us of your time of arrival at and departure from Arlanda Airport

What else should we know: