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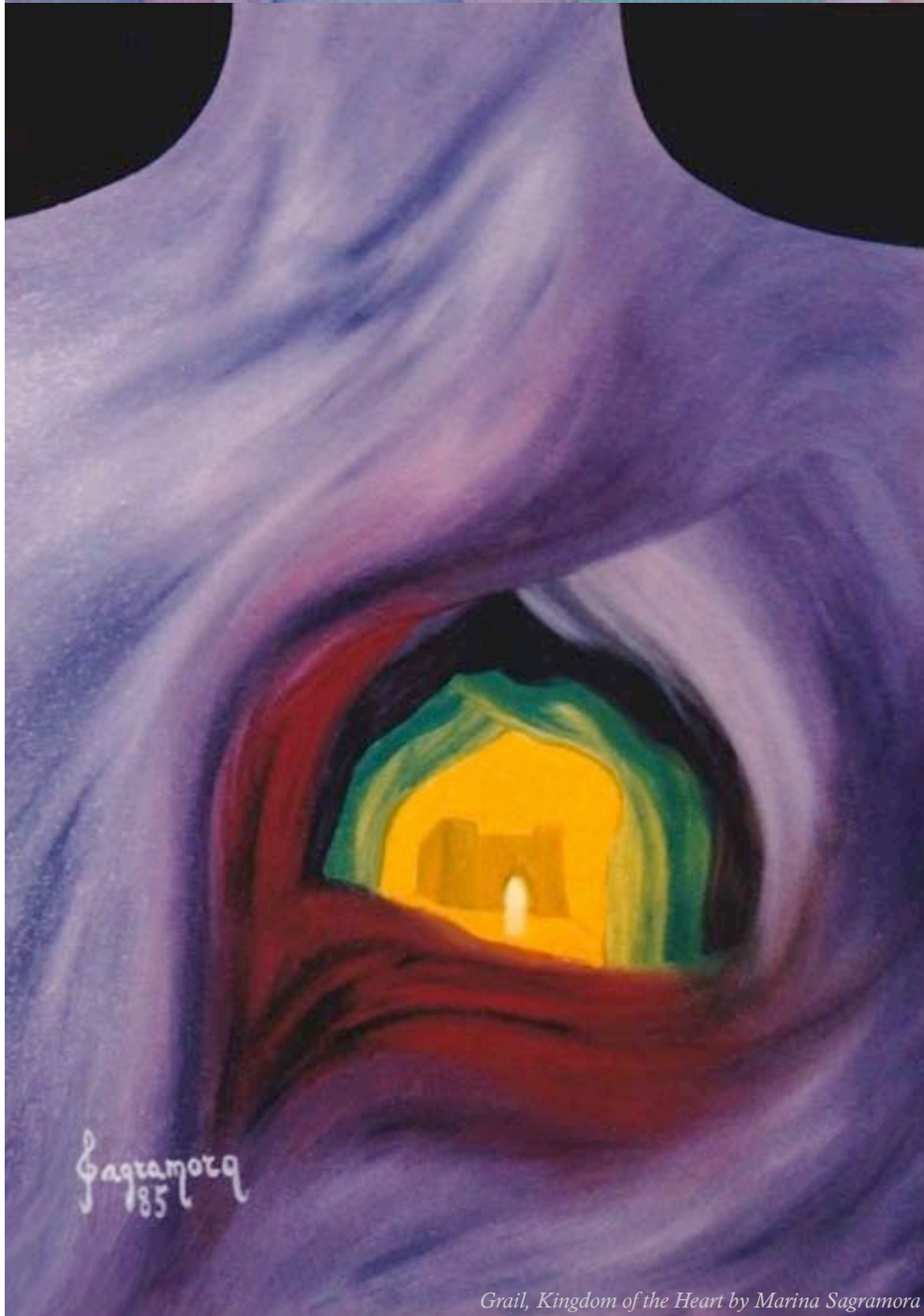
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Grail, Kingdom of the Heart by Marina Sagramora

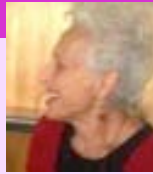
number 1

NOVEMBER 2013

INSWaP past and future

story...

By Mariam Franco



WHO... in the world of Waldorf, has not yet heard of INSWaP?

Well, here is a "première", our n°1 Newsletter! (note that at "7 years old", we have come of age to start writing in Class 1!).

A unique opportunity to get to know us, to join us, to work with us, and to ignite the whole Waldorf world with an overwhelming wish to help promote our schools even farther.... so every remote corner of the planet will want to take part in this dynamic adventure! You may want to know how and when it all started...

Once upon a time... in 2007 four countries and ca 10 participants come together to re-ignite the flame of a former European Parents' Association which had disappeared. The following year, both numbers had more than doubled and enthusiasm as well... And so we travelled on from France, the first year, to England and then Estonia, Norway, Iceland, Italy and Latvia last October 2013 and getting ready for Austria in October 2014! We are now ca 13 countries strong and participation has been up and over 60 the last two years. Most certainly, we have room for MANY MORE... for we are determined to aim at uniting and thus strengthening our forces to continue supporting and promoting our schools for the sake of our dear children, of ALL dear children, for a more enlightened HUMANITY and HEALTHY SOCIETY in the FUTURE.

Do come and live the INSWaP experience with us!

The Charter we drew up the second year, for all to share...

International Steiner Waldorf Parents Network. ISWPN is a forum for the mutual support of parents through the exchange of ideas and experiences concerning Steiner Waldorf education. We encourage parents interested in Steiner Waldorf Education to participate. The main meeting point is at this website: www.waldorfpayers.net

Fundamental aims of ISWPN:

- 1. ISWPN is founded on the principle that parents have a right to choose the appropriate education for their children. In this lies the recognition that education is a cultural activity where freedom is a high ideal and also a human right!*
- 2. ISWPN holds the view that the free choice of education implies that financial support should be equal for all educational settings.*
- 3. ISWPN supports the living and evolving pedagogical impulse based on Rudolf Steiner's ideas.*
- 4. ISWPN supports the understanding that children's education relies on solid cooperation between parents and teachers.*
- 5. ISWPN is committed to developing appropriate processes and structures to support these aims.*

For more information please contact: adm@waldorfpayers.net.

N.B. ISWPN was changed in 2011 to INSWaP

"Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives"

Rudolf Steiner

My first INSWaP meeting

Latvia
11-13 october 2013

By *Márti Domokos*

I've been a Waldorf parent for the last 14 years. It started out quite by chance: when I was looking for a school for my son (in the Netherlands children start school when they are four) I couldn't find anywhere where I thought he could feel like it was an extension of home. I was quite desperate, when a neighbour told me that some 18km further there was a kind of "strange" school that she heard good things about, why didn't we try that? So we did. And it's been a pleasure to be a student at three different Waldorf schools in two different countries for these 14 years for all four of our children. Nowadays we live in Hungary and my children go to the *Fehérlófia Waldorf School in Nemesvámos*, where, although the money is really tight, I've met great people who are enthusiastic about their work – paid or voluntary – as Waldorf teachers or parents.



Fehérlófia Waldorf School in Hungary

I am the head of the board of parents at school and to be honest, the first time that I've ever heard of INSWaP in the aforementioned 14 years was last summer. Our head of school sent the invitation for the annual meeting to me (it was also the first time that it reached her). Luckily, a member of the local Waldorf Association heard about it, too, and she didn't let the subject go until it was decided that I could go to the meeting in Latvia. The trip itself was paid mainly by the parents, everyone chipped in. So that's how I got to Latvia to the annual INSWaP meeting.



Adazi Free Waldorf School in Latvia

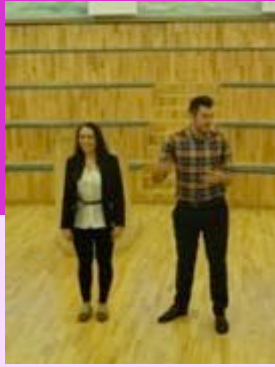
I read everything I could find about the organisation, so I felt rather well prepared. I and two other participants and speakers Nelly and Christopher were picked up from Riga airport by the lovely and friendly *Anna Margrieta*, who gave us an initial guided tour as we drove through Riga and the countryside to Adazi, to the Waldorf school there. After a pit stop at the nice Hotel Port we went to the school where they were already in the middle of introducing all the participants.

There were Waldorf parents, teachers and friends from 13 countries present. Just to show how some countries don't have a national parents' association: there were three other people from Hungary and we hadn't known that the others would be there...

My first INSWaP meeting

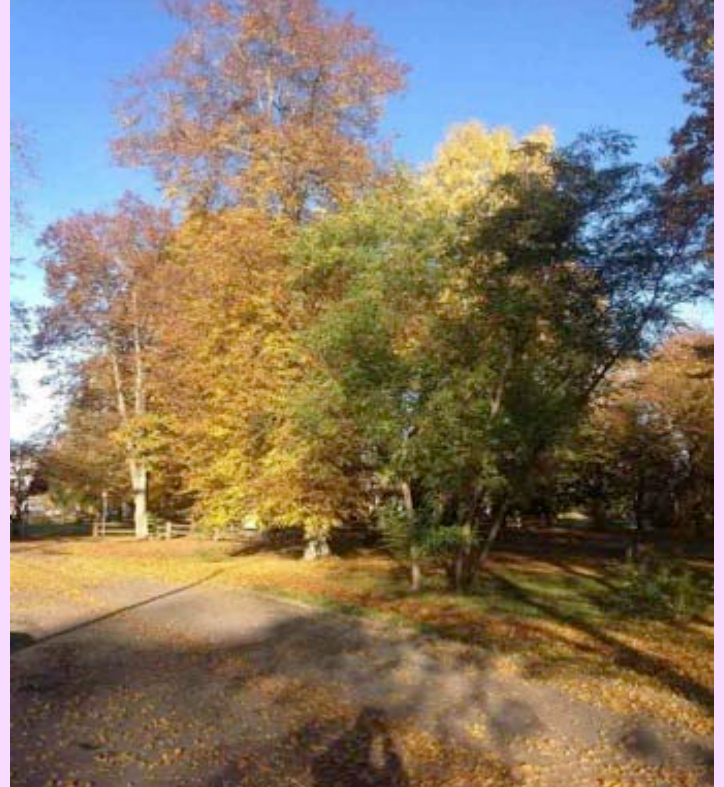
*Adazi Free
Waldorf School*

*Eurythmy with
Vinicius (right);
Natalija and
Kaspars (left).*



After an introduction to INSWaP we enjoyed the presentation of *Natalija* and *Kaspars*, two former students of the school, about what being “Waldorf children” meant to them. And after a truly great eurythmy lesson that I’d ever experienced, I really appreciated Christopher’s report “beyond Waldorf”, as he talked about issues that I had felt for some time but couldn’t quite put into words. After dinner and some getting to know each other it was time to get a night’s rest after an exhausting but good day, especially as the next morning we partook actively in Jugi’s Latvian folklore presentation. The day still held for us an inspiring and interesting presentation of the Pozzolatico project by *Monica and Christopher*, a new look at marketing by *Gitte* (since then I keep on using the image of the mountain and the pleasure island), *Nelly’s* French way of communicating with the world outside of the walls of the schools. We also delighted in the incredible weather in Latvia, the good food and especially the great company.

After a lovely walk the next morning through the autumn mist and sunshine we could enjoy another eurythmy lesson (“*Vinicius, you are welcome to give lessons to the children at our school anytime, borrowing a Gazelle bicycle included*”).



The park surrounding Adazi School

After that we had some group work on three themes. I found it a pity that we couldn’t work more on the couch surfing project and the international summer camps for Waldorf students, but I believe we can set up a network without too much discussing. We talked some about the (quite often non-) existence of national parents’ organizations. And after that we drew our plans for next year’s meeting which will be in Austria – luckily for me, as it’s only about a two-hour drive from us. After lunch it was time to say good-bye to Adazi and we took the bus to Riga to have some serious sightseeing. It was great to have a very well guided tour, and Riga is lovely. As it was a Hansa city it reminded me a bit of the Netherlands, its art nouveau quarters looked to me a bit like Budapest (as did its being divided by a river), but all of it with its own grace and style.



*Arrival of
participants*

*Christopher
Clouder
during the
conference*

My first INSWaP meeting



In the evening we had a meeting about the plans for next year and another companionable dinner. After that it was time to say good-bye to each other, with the promise of keeping in touch. Next morning I visited the local market to get a feel of the life there: the people were friendly and helpful, the produce lovely and fresh. I will definitely visit Latvia again. I'm thankful to everyone who helped to organise such a useful and lovely weekend. I liked meeting all the people that I did and I hope we will manage, next to our busy and full lives, to keep in touch. At our school here in Hungary I also made a report about everything that happened at the conference and I write a piece in our weekly newsletter every week about one of the presentations and reports that I experienced in Latvia. Hoping to see you all at next year's meeting in Austria.

My very first flight. *Destination: Lettonia (Latvia)*

By Cristina Carpani

*These are the words at the beginning of a travel diary that Alice - my daughter - started to write on our departure on Oct. 10th, heading to Riga, to attend the INSWaP 2013 meeting. We, the whole family: Luca, my partner, Alice and Anna, our daughters, and I. A small delegation from the **Steiner-Waldorf School of Bologna**. We met parents, teachers, grandparents and children from other Waldorf schools of Europe. We got acquainted with Latvian traditions and way of living. INSWaP is most of all this: sharing experiences and getting to know each other's reality. The enthusiasm of contributing our energies for an international network of supporters of the Waldorf pedagogy gains new strength, because what is most valuable is the multiculturalism that underlies our pedagogic ideal. This "universality" is also what makes Waldorf pedagogy so recognizable independently of the regional physical location of each school: its inspiration by an anthropological view that really seeks what is most human in a human being.*



Anita Legzdina,
organizer of the
Latvia meeting,
dressed in the
traditional costume
of Latvia

"It was wonderful to see fields turn into a chess-board... now I can see the most beautiful thing of the whole flight: clouds that look like a mattress on the foreground of a light blue sky".

Wonder in the eyes of a 11 ½ years old at the sight of a landscape from an airplane, in 2013, when children have almost seen and "experienced" everything. The simplest and most effective way of helping a human being grow with the ability to learn from life what it needs to be happy and fulfilled: safeguard the power of wonder and imagination innate into young humans. And it seems that it is still possible, even in these complicated times, thanks to the amazing adults that day by day nurture and support the precious spiritual institution that is the Waldorf School: teachers and parents above all.
"When I looked out I saw no blue sky anymore because a wall of clouds was out of the window and I felt a bit scared. But then I understood: the plane was slightly inclining to turn. The blue sky was there more brilliant than ever.

Preparing the next meeting

2014
in Austria...



Hello,

I am Karin Daurer from Austria. I've been a Waldorf mother for two years now, my sons are attending 2nd and 7th grade in the Steiner school in the south of Vienna, the only such school in Austria situated in the countryside.

I became a new member of the INSWaP committee at our last meeting and my wonderful task now is to organize next years meeting in Austria! I'm very honoured to invite you all to come here on the **10-12th of October 2014**, to join our meeting of Waldorf parents from all over the world. We will offer you a varied program, including plenty of different and interesting topics, such as the development of the Waldorf movement, overview from each participating country, and some more marketing, parent involvement. Of course you will also get a taste of the Austrian countryside, its traditonal life, its extraordinary culture and its cordial atmosphere. The meeting will take place at two different schools: www.waldorf-mauer.at and www.waldorf-schoenau.at

I will do my best to make your stay here as comfortable as possible. If you have any questions feel free to contact me: karin.daurer@hotmail.com.

Looking forward to seeing you all,

Karin Daurer

Rudolf Steiner Country School, Schönau



Gustav Klimt (Vienna 1862-1918): Häuser in Unterach am Attersee



Why a national parents association?



Albert Steffen (1884-1963)

According to the UN convention of human rights, parents are entitled to choose education and upbringing for their children.

This means that parents can choose an alternative school for their children if they so wish. The parents in the Waldorf schools have made such a choice. The teachers in the Waldorf schools have made a choice for their professional life and will often be perceived as idealists, but when they fight for the right to uphold and run such schools, they will always first and foremost be regarded as fighting for their jobs. The parents on the other hand, will be perceived as fighting for a human right.

Waldorf schools in any country need to work together to improve the understanding of the Waldorf-pedagogy in political circles and thus also improve the practical and economical support of the schools on a national basis.

To achieve this understanding for, and support of the Waldorf-schools, it is of great importance that schools don't work separately, but that they form national associations that can represent the schools. ***To support the work of the national association of schools, it is of vital importance that the parents be active co-players.*** Due to parents' right to choose education for their children, politicians and bureaucrats will in most cases have more focus on the parents than on the teachers.

The fight for the schools and their position in society are therefore much more likely to succeed when parents take an active part in this work.

A national parents association will be perceived as representing all the parents in the Waldorf schools and thus representing a large group of the electorate and therefore worth listening to.

It is of great importance that the national parents association be an autonomous association not handpicked by the school association, but chosen by the parents in the schools.

In everyday work, the parents association and the school association must work closely together. When meeting politicians, parents should always be part of the delegation.

Oslo 26th april 2010

Helle Rosenvinge and Finn-Einar Kollstrøm



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Austria, France, Finland,
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Brasil, Estonia, Great Britain,
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Contact:

postmaster@waldorfparents.net

www.waldorfparents.net