



Advocacy work in Brussels

The second meeting of the working group 'Quality of Childhood' in Brussels with MEP Karin Resetarits took place on 9th January 2007. Guests were Prof. Luc Stevens, University of Utrecht, Netherlands, and Prof. Ferre Laevers, Catholic University Leuven, Belgium. The theme this time was: 'Really improving the Education in the European Union requires Systemic Changes'. Karin Resetarits opened the meeting with posing the question why children start school eager to learn and, as time goes on, lose their enthusiasm for learning.

Christopher Clouder presented the view from the Alliance of Childhood and spoke about the PISA study and highlighted the stressful testing culture our children live in and the limited scope of the PISA study. Creative subjects are taking second place in many schools.

Professor Luc Stevens presented his recent research on how to create a pedagogical climate in schools that gives full scope to children to develop and blossom. His results showed that the rigid structure of the current school system leads to under achievement and that there is no reason to keep the current school system as it is today.

Professor Ferre Laevers, presented the experiential education project and its approach to improve the quality of the educational setting.

The meeting finished with a group discussions and every member took away action points to further this interesting and challenging subject.

Full text to be found on
www.allianceforchildhood.org.uk

Michiel Matthes

Study of Racist Attitudes among Waldorf School Pupils

'Waldorf schools show extremely low animosity towards foreigners'

A new empirical study by Christian Pfeiffer of Lower Saxony's Criminological Research Institute states that pupils at Waldorf schools exhibit the lowest levels of both xenophobia and right-wing extremism. At Hauptschulen (the lowest tier of the German three-tiered school system), 24.7% of pupils harbour xenophobic and 9.5% right-wing tendencies. This drops to 8.3% and 1.9% respectively at Gymnasiums (the highest tier school, the equivalent of grammar schools). But only 2.8% of Waldorf pupils can be considered to have xenophobic and 1.2% right-wing attitudes. This evaluation is based on information obtained from 9,001 youngsters attending the 9th year at schools in Germany.

According to these figures, Hauptschule pupils show three times more xenophobia than

Gymnasium pupils, and they are three times more than Waldorf pupils.

The results regarding 'macho' attitudes are even more striking, with Waldorf pupils scoring an extremely low rating: Only 0.3% of ninth-year pupils agreed with statements such as 'A man who is not prepared to react to insults with violence is a weakling', or 'If a woman cheats on her husband it is o.k. for him to beat her'. For Gymnasium pupils the figure was almost seven times higher (2.0%), and for Hauptschule pupils compared with Gymnasium pupils 'only' a bit over four times more (8.7%).

Especially in categories where derogatory stereotyping is most frequent (i.e. against women and against foreigners), the attitudes of Waldorf pupils seem to be a great deal more tolerant than those of their fellow pupils elsewhere.

*Translated from German
by J. Collis, MCIL*

Invitation to participate in a European project to implement a Portfolio Graduation Certificate Folder

A letter of invitation, to participate in a European project to implement a **Qualification Certificate Portfolio** as a folder for students who complete a Steiner Waldorf School education at the end of the secondary level (open to adaptation by other interested schools, will soon be going out to all European Steiner Waldorf Schools.

The proposal is to create and implement a European **Qualification Certificate Portfolio** folder that can document better the specific achievements of the student, as well as characterize the School where the education took place, giving reliable information on both the level of education, and the individual qualification of the student.

The Steiner Waldorf School association in the Netherlands developed and implemented a **Qualification Portfolio Certificate** folder several years ago, which is used by all Dutch Steiner Waldorf Schools, and has been acquired by every student who completes such an education

in the Netherlands. An artistically designed cover conveys a feeling of corporate identity to students as well as parents and faculty, which can be acknowledged inside and outside the school.

This inspired a group of teachers at the Waldorf School in Bochum, Germany, to design a **Student Reflection & Learning Progress Folder** as well as a prototype of a European **Qualification Certificate Portfolio** folder that may easily be adapted to the specifics of any European country.

The project goal is to further develop the certificate folder while looking for a basic framework common to all European Steiner Waldorf Schools. A detailed description of the state of the materials developed can be found on the website of IPL (www.i-p-l.info, English version in preparation).

The project is to initially run for three years. The project will run under the umbrella of the ECSWE, supervised by a European Initiative Group from the Council that has emerged from the preparatory

work undertaken over the last three years. This group currently consists of Ariël Krijger (NL), Helmut van Renesse (NL), Xavier De Keyser (B), Jeppe Flummer (DK), Roland Muff (CH), Oddbjørn Birkeland (N), Dr. Thilo Koch (D), Dr. Detlef Hardorp (D) and Klaus-Peter Freitag (D). IPL ("Institute for Process-oriented Learning") was recently founded by the Bochum-based team and will manage the project, in cooperation with the various European schools as participant members.

Parallel to this practical project, a working group within the ECSWE will attempt to find ways in order to recognize or otherwise accredit the **Portfolio Qualification Certificate** in order to provide individualized access to tertiary education based on a validated competence and skills assessment procedure that includes this folder. This will entail work well beyond the scope of this project, which, however, has a value in its own right.

Detlef Hardorp



above is the first group of tutors and students

Masters Program for Eurythmy started in Järna February 2007

The first 4 year master course for eurythmy teacher training has started in Järna, Sweden. 20 Students, all qualified eurythmists and working in the field, have started the program. The students come from Sweden, Hungary, Georgia, Germany and Austria. Orjan Retsler, CEO of the Rudolf Steiner Högskolan, Goran Krantz, head of the Eurythmy department at RSH and Dr Gordon Taylor, Dean of Education Faculty at Plymouth University officially opened the course.

The masters program is a co-operation between the Rudolf Steiner Högskolan in Järna and the University of Plymouth, England. Plymouth will bring in research elements based on the working situation of the students, resulting from the three year Comenius Master Program in which ECSWE also participated.

The students will get their degree from Plymouth but the teaching modules will be given in Järna twice a year. All other teaching is via the internet and by tutors in the home countries.

Orjan Retsler

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Socrates Project: Landscape and Art

Student exchange with Class 10 Klagenfurt Waldorf School in Austria and Class 11 Ostrava Secondary Waldorf School in the Czech Republic.

Students from Ostrava visited Klagenfurt in February/March 2006, and together they devised a performance called 'school exercises' which was executed in English, German and Czech. The performance's aim was to inspire a new experience of the space and architecture of the school buildings and its surroundings.

The teachers from Klagenfurt were involved in leading and organizing the rehearsals, set design, music, workshops, preparing traditional cuisine and language preparations.

The exchange concluded with three successful performances, much enjoyed by all the participants.

The Klagenfurt students visited Ostrava in May/June 2006 and took part in a surveying course. The course consisted of two parts, the first was a surveying practicum in collaboration with VITA, a civic

organisation in Ostrava. The second part was the surveying of a mansion and its grounds, in cooperation with RUCE environmental centre in Křínice

To fully understand the local environment, the Austrian students visited Broumov Rocks, Adrschpach Rocks and the Broumov monastery.

Alongside the surveying the students also enjoyed performances, workshops and singing.

The visit ended with a two day trip to Prague.

The Socrates Programme paid all the travel costs for the two exchanges, including preparation visits and teachers accommodation. They also contributed 3,500 for equipment, administration and presentations.

The most important outcome of this exchange was the change in the students' attitude. Through experiencing each others' different cultures, prejudices disappeared, and a growing awareness and wish arose to become a true European citizen.

Bret Kozusnik

Legal recognition for the Waldorf School in Bellaterra, Barcelona

On Thursday February 1st, Christopher Clouder had a meeting at the department of Education with the Education Minister, Ernest Margall, and two representatives of the Department, Joan Badia I Pujol and Pere Darder I Vidal.

It was agreed that there should be much more communication and collaboration between the Waldorf movement and the Government and steps were undertaken to put this into place the following week.

Following this meeting the widely read newspaper 'La Vanguardia' interviewed Christopher Clouder. This interview was printed the following day on 'La Contra' which is the back page of La Vanguardia. This particular page is very popular, and it was the first time that Waldorf Education in Catalonia came to the attention of a large part of the population.

Christopher Clouder also gave an introductory public lecture about Waldorf Education to at the Catalan University of Oberta de Catalunya.

Since these events the school has received the good news that it is now legally recognised by the Catalan Government.

Fernando Garcés Blázquez

The European Parliament

has adopted a resolution about promoting gender equality in education on the 1st February 2007. The resolution aims to promote more women into decision making positions, greater attention for gender in educational content, and higher accessibility with the use of ICT for women who combine motherhood with education. *From the ECNAIS newsletter*

The views expressed are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of ECSWE

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