



“Putting Waldorf Pedagogy into the Future”

The first meeting of Waldorf initiatives in Turkey, October 24-25, Izmir

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The Waldorf impulse in Turkey is celebrating the 7th year since its formation as a collective movement. The initiative started in Istanbul in 2008 and evolved rapidly after the first symposium, attended by 200 participants. This year, we came together with all kindergarten and school initiatives across the country, a gathering which we have been planning for a while, to learn from each other and share the experiences.

The meeting was hosted by Eğitim Sanatı Dostları Derneği – ESDD (The Association of The Friends of Art Education), the umbrella organization for all Waldorf initiatives in Turkey. Istanbul Imece Kindergarten Initiative, Bodrum Imece

Kindergarten Initiative, Izmir Yaka Playgroup, Eskişehir Kindergarten Initiative, and representatives of ESDD were present in the meeting. Each initiative was invited and represented by a core team of its teachers, group leaders and family representatives, a form that we particularly emphasize to support the model of self-directed leadership. Considering the wide geographical scope of the country, a significant financial and moral contribution was needed from each initiative to sustain this model, which made it a particular achievement for all of us.

Janet Klaar from Birmingham (UK) joined us as our guest speaker and generously shared her rich experiences in Waldorf education. In this first visit of hers to Turkey, she was present with us throughout the two days, accompanying and nourishing our needs as a group with her experience. We are grateful for the caring and compassionate approach in which she shared her experience.

Her inspirational speech about building trust and being a community touched every single one of us deeply.

Our dear eurythmist, Roberto Pellacini from Hamburg (Germany), who was also the eurythmist for our Istanbul Teacher Training Seminars, also participated to support us. He introduced our group to the Turkish alphabet and took us through different eurythmy themes from kindergarten through the first three grades, which gave us an incredible experience of the spiritual basis of eurythmy.

It was important for us to have this meeting in a transparent and democratic atmosphere and to share our issues open-heartedly. Vivet Alevi, who is experienced in non-violent communication, was with us as the moderator of the meeting.

For all of us, it was particularly moving to see all that has been established so far by the playgroups, kindergarten and school initiatives, with their varying levels of experience and existence, from one year to four years, and the voluntary contributions and efforts of ESDD in organizing the Waldorf Teacher Training seminars, workshops, moderation support and establishment of resources in Turkish language through translation, in order to expand this pedagogy in Turkey.



Outdoor play in the Bodrum Waldorf kindergarten

The difficulties of being a pioneer in Turkey were addressed as a major common challenge. Building a community around the philosophy that creates the basis of this pedagogy; adapting the pedagogy to our current conditions and our own culture; solutions for teacher training; establishing stability in mentoring support; enriching the Turkish language resources; creating financial resources, and licensing schools and teachers were the major issues discussed during the meeting.

The will to carry together the Turkish Waldorf Pedagogy Movement into the future was declared at this first meeting.

And as a result of this meeting we decided on the following aims:

- Forming transparent and democratic working groups as soon as possible in the areas we need to focus on, and
- Coming together once a year within the country.

We are grateful for the presence of each person and for the personal efforts and sacrifices made in order to expand Waldorf Pedagogy in this part of the world.