

**IASWECE Council Meeting in
Walkringen, Switzerland
March 25 to 28**

Susan Howard



The IASWECE Council's spring meeting took place at an anthroposophical center in the lovely rural foothills of the Swiss Alps. Although we have often attended conferences and meetings in Dornach, this was the first time that the Council has had the opportunity to visit Waldorf kindergartens and meet with our Swiss kindergarten colleagues. We all appreciated the unique history and geography of Switzerland and the special quality of the Waldorf movement in Switzerland, with its love for freedom and independence.

The circle of country representatives continue to grow - Lithuania and India have joined in the past year and there are now 36 representatives from 32 countries in the Council.

In March we welcomed two new country representatives - Li Zhang from China and Sono Matsuura from Japan, who each play central roles in the development of Waldorf early childhood education in their countries.

In our Council meetings, we are studying how we can help children growing up in an atmosphere of fear and anxiety - whether from a war or natural disaster, from over-stimulation through the media, from family trauma or stress in everyday life - to develop resilience. This also includes working on our selves as adults, addressing issues in our own biographies, cultivating inner tranquility, and developing new capacities for meeting the children in our care and supporting their families. This work will continue into the future.





At our March meeting we also discussed the relationship of the pedagogy of Emmi Pikler and Waldorf education, with presentations from invited guest Brigit Krohmer from Freiburg, Germany. These two streams of education have much to offer one another, while maintaining their own unique identities. This is also a theme we will continue to explore.

The Council expressed its gratitude for the work of the Older Child Group which culminated shortly after our meeting with the Transitions Conference which took place in Dornach. Although the group has now returned its mandate, the questions of how to work with the older child in the kindergarten and support the entrance of each child into school continue, and we urge our colleagues around the world to actively take them up in their kindergartens, schools and training courses. (See the report on the Transitions Conference for further details).

Council members also said good-bye to Kai Iruma from Japan and expressed our gratitude for his active role in our association, especially in cultivating greater awareness for diversity in our movement. Through the work of the Diversity Awareness Group we have now published a statement on the Universal Human Spirit of Waldorf Early Childhood Education ([Click here](#)) as an expression of the ideals that lie behind our work in association with one another.

Our work on this theme of diversity awareness, together with other themes mentioned above, will continue in October, when IASWECE Council members will travel to Tiv'on, Israel, for an Israeli kindergarten conference and the fall IASWECE Council meeting.

