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EAST AFRICA ASSOCIATION OF WALDORF/STEINER SCHOOLS

Newsletter December 2024

Editor: Judith Brown

EAST AFRICA ASSOCIATION OF WALDORF STEINER SCHOOLS

In 1990, the first Waldorf School started in Nairobi, Kenya. Since then Waldorf Education has expanded in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, the three mother countries that engineered the formation of the East African Community.

The East Africa Association of Waldorf Steiner Schools is held by the five pillar schools which form the Council that meets twice in a year. These pillar schools include;

Rudolf Steiner school Mbagathi from Kenya

Hekima Waldorf School from Tanzania.

Nairobi Waldorf School from Kenya

Zanzibar Steiner School from Tanzania.

Waldorf Woodlands School from Kenya.

There are numerous schools in Uganda whose teachers have attained a Diploma in Waldorf pedagogy who are successfully working in many such Creative schools. We have the Nambeeta Nursery and Primary, St. Peter's Nursery and Primary, Golden Treasure Nursery and Primary, Kisakye Primary, Kibirige Memorial Nursery and Primary Hidden Gory school and the Bright Future Kindergarten and Primary school.

In recent years there has been mushrooming of Waldorf initiatives in the region. This is due to the fact that the people in the region are coming to the realization that the Waldorf pedagogy is such a significant approach to education when it comes to a healthy growing process of the child. We are grateful to the amiable cooperation that the EAAWSS receives from the wider Waldorf community.

Kasmir Msigwa – East African Association Chairperson

CONFERENCE 2024 and 2025

*Our last conference in the region was the Anthroposophical Conference held in April 2024. The Conference was successfully conducted in conjunction with the **World Social Initiative Forum, WSIF**. As that was a mark for a new round of Conferences in the region, following the long silence since Covid, we are happy to announce that we are expecting the 2025 Pedagogical Conference to take place in 2025 in Dar es Salaam Tanzania! Further details will be shared through our schools' and country's reps to the Association.*

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ZANZIBAR STEINER SCHOOL

TANZANIA

The Zanzibar Steiner School is located at Kidichi spice farms at the western district B in western Region of Zanzibar. It is a fully Waldorf primary school and Waldorf inspired secondary school at around 150 students in total.

Most students are orphans of about 95%, and others are school neighbours and others are from disadvantage families. It is a non profit school and run through donations and sponsorship. Most students live around the same district and a few live far away, this is because some families do not have permanent shelters. The school bus catches each one at the bus stop via two trips in the morning and two in the afternoon.

There is one kindergarten, class 1, class 2, class 4 and class 6 in primary and form 1, form 2, form 3 and form 4 in secondary. As fully Waldorf primary school and secondary Waldorf inspired school we offer a lot of art in secondary especially painting, music, drama and drawing.

We practice biodynamic farming and animal husbandry such as cattle, goats and chicken. We have 3 cows, 400 layers and 50 free range chicken, all are grown up organically/ biodynamically.

We are celebrating two main festivals together, Ramadan/ Eid festival and Maulid festival and other small festivals like swahili culture festival and fruit festival. Both primary and secondary teachers study together two times a week and share their understanding and deepening anthroposophy in pedagogy meeting and other meetings.

Mussa Mohamed



BIOGRAPHY OF THE IN-HOUSE WALDORF TEACHER TRAINING COURSE

The first Rudolf Steiner School, Mbagathi in East Africa, was started in Nairobi in 1989 .

The school provided in-house Waldorf teacher-training.

Initially, the call for a Waldorf Teacher Training Programme in East Africa, came from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

Adeline Mlay, her husband Rashidi Mbuguni and two relatives, visited the Netherlands in search of funding to develop Tanzanians to be able to create and run their own businesses, in order to overcome poverty, and then to become part of bringing many more Tanzanians to be able to own and run their own businesses. While there, they heard about Waldorf Education, and visited a Waldorf School in the Netherlands. They were inspired to find a way to develop Waldorf Schools in Tanzania.



This brought Adeline, Rashidi and their relatives to visit Cape Town, South Africa, to find Waldorf teacher trainers with experience in African settings. They met Ann Sharfman (a kindergarten trainer) and Peter van Alphen (a primary school trainer) and invited them to help start a Waldorf Teacher Training Programme in Dar es Salaam.

Peter and Ann were delighted to meet this delegation from Tanzania! Little did they know that this was to become the beginning of a 25-year experience of developing Waldorf teachers in East Africa!

Adeline made connections with the Rudolf Steiner School, Mbagathi in Nairobi, because her intention was that the training should be an East Africa training. Adeline invited many people in Dar es Salaam to attend introductory meetings. Enthusiasm was high, and the first training modules began. Sadly, Adeline became seriously ill and was unable to organise further training modules in Dar es Salaam. She died soon after, and it seemed as if the training in East Africa would fade away into history.

However, the Rudolf Steiner School, Mbagathi, in Nairobi decided to host the training. Nairobi would be a more central venue for East Africans, and the school had the infrastructure to accommodate large numbers of teachers from the rest of East Africa to stay at the school.

Ann created the Kindergarten training, and Peter the Primary School training – both still in use today! The training programme is rich in practical work and in the arts of eurythmy, singing, speech, drama, storytelling, movement, painting, drawing, handwork and craftwork. The rich heritage added by participants from the various cultures of East Africa enriched the programme (and Peter and Ann!) further.

Over the years, the number of participants in training grew and expanded to include participants from countries other than Kenya and Tanzania. The first were from Uganda. Ann and Peter were amazed to see them enter the Mbagathi school gate, carrying all their luggage (which included mattresses), exhausted after their long journey.

Later participants from Zanzibar, Ethiopia and further afield from Madagascar and Zimbabwe, joined the training, adding to the diversity of schools offering Waldorf Education on the African continent - even two French-speaking men, from a Kindergarten in Ivory Coast! For Peter and Ann, trainers in the three modules of each year, the experience of Waldorf in Africa was further enhanced by visiting schools and kindergartens in Kenya, Tanzania and Zanzibar to mentor trainee teachers in their actual interaction with the children in their classes.

Every three years the Rudolf Steiner School, Mbagathi, organised a three-day Conference to bring all the teachers in East Africa together to deepen our experience of Waldorf Education. For some years Peter and Ann organised a Training-the-Trainers programme in preparation for handing over the training to East Africans, who showed potential to take this on. In the current ten-module programme, due to be completed this December, East Africans have presented the entire training programme under supervision.

After 25 years, Peter and Ann have completed their time working in and for the East African Waldorf Teacher Training, leaving the entire teacher development programme to the teachers of East Africa, knowing that their depth of insight and dedication will continue the development of Waldorf Education in Africa. From April 2025, East Africans will be providing the full training programme themselves! Peter and Ann know that they will keep the flame alight, continually spreading Waldorf Education!

FROM ANN AND PETER:

Our time in East Africa was a big part in our lives. It became our second home! We came to know and love so many East Africans, and will miss the warmth of heart that they all carry so abundantly. There is no doubt that we will continue to carry in our hearts all those that we have come to love and admire!



EAST AFRICA WALDORF TEACHER TRAINING

Mbagathi, Nairobi Kenya.

The East Africa Waldorf Steiner Teacher training was established in the late 1990's. Peter van Alphen and Ann Shafman, both from South Africa, have been running the programme tirelessly. Their heartfelt incubation of the programme has led to a multiple number of qualified Waldorf teachers in the region. In December 2021, the TT programme began a new circle under a specific financial support from the Government of Germany, the BMZ. The circle aimed at making a transition from Peter and Ann's supervision of the programme to Local Teachers. Thanks to the Freunde der Erziehungskunst for playing a vital role in making sure that the transitional period happens.

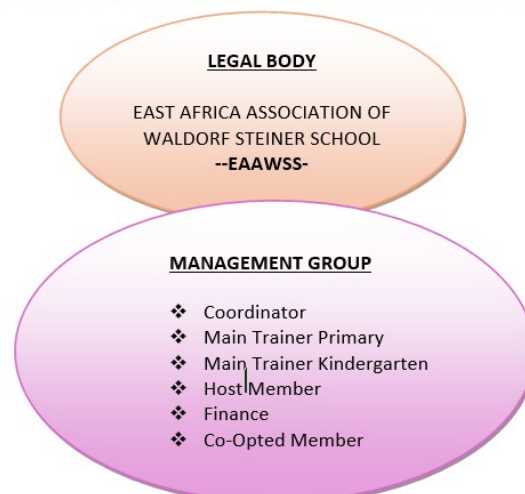
On 19th December 2024 was the culmination of the handing over of the Teacher Training Programme from the hands of Peter van Alphen and Ann Sharfman to local teacher trainers. The handing over celebration was accompanied by a number of activities which included lighting the candle and planting of the tree as symbols for livelihood continuity of the programme. Now the Teacher Training will be led by two main trainers. Ruth Thuku from Nairobi Waldorf School will be the main trainer of the Kindergarten Cohort while Kasmir Msigwa from Hekima Waldorf School will be the main trainer of the Primary Cohort. Behind the two main trainers there is a group of resourceful teacher trainers who will be part of the teaching team.



Handing over Ceremony

We would like to convey our heartfelt gratitude to the BMZ for their financial assistance which made the circle possible. We acknowledge and appreciate the Freunde der Erziehungskunst who have been hand in hand with the TT. Trevor from England and Maria Msebenzi from South Africa who both mentored the whole transitional period. We feel so much indebted to Peter van Alphen and Ann Shafman for their wonderful work that they have done to bring the training to where it is today. We wish them life full of beauty and love as they bare farewell to the East African Teachers after having done their wonderful job as main trainers for more than twenty five years. Kasmir Msigwa

TEACHER TRAINING MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



LEADERSHIP COURSE WITH TROELS USSING

Leadership Training.

The administration in Waldorf schools is unique in that teachers should not only provide quality education to the children but should also be centrally involved in decision-making and administration.

The decisions about education and the school should flow out of a deep engagement with the children and their educational needs. The leadership training course has provided great insights to the school leaders and teachers in the following areas;

- *Decision-making process, shaping meetings, creating good and fruitful meetings. The leaders have learned how to separate orientation, hearings, discussion and decision-making to avoid confusion and endless meetings.*
- *Conflict escalation and de-escalation. The leaders were able to learn that disagreements can't be avoided, but we can learn how different thoughts can serve a common goal.*
- *Vision building. Developing images and imagination.*

The course has further sensitized school leaders to appreciate the importance of all the school community members' freedom to work together towards a common end. Many teachers and parents struggle with understanding how Waldorf school works, how leadership, governance and decision-making are exercised. Through the leadership course, the leadership and administration of Waldorf schools continue to become clear to the teachers and the parents.



With the evolving educational needs, Waldorf schools should be at the forefront of building capacity among school leaders so that the unique curriculum can be effectively implemented to continue meeting the children at their various developmental stages.

James Kioko

ANTHROPOSOPHICAL INTRODUCTORY COURSE

The first of 7 modules took place on 9th, 10th and 11th of December 2024 with 27 participants

Anthroposophy as a personal journey

Anthroposophy, founded by Rudolf Steiner, is often viewed as a holistic philosophy that integrates spiritual science, education, agriculture, and the arts. For many, engaging with anthroposophy is not just an intellectual pursuit but a personal journey of self-discovery and development.

Key Aspects of the Personal Journey in Anthroposophy:

Spiritual Development: Anthroposophy encourages individuals to explore their spiritual lives, cultivating a deeper understanding of their own existence and purpose. This journey often involves meditation, self-reflection, and inner work.

Holistic Education: Steiner's educational philosophy, particularly through Waldorf schools, emphasizes nurturing the whole child—head, heart, and hands. For parents and educators, engaging with anthroposophy can transform their approach to teaching and learning.

Artistic Expression: Anthroposophy values the arts as a means of spiritual expression. Many individuals find personal growth through creative endeavors such as painting, music, and drama, which can serve as pathways to deeper understanding and connection.

Connection to Nature: Biodynamic agriculture, rooted in anthroposophy, fosters a relationship with the earth. Many practitioners experience a profound personal connection to nature, which can lead to a more sustainable and conscious way of living.

Community and Social Engagement: Anthroposophy promotes community-building and social responsibility. Engaging with like-minded individuals can enhance personal growth and foster a sense of belonging.

Lifelong Learning: The philosophy encourages ongoing exploration and learning, pushing individuals to ask questions, seek knowledge, and remain open to new ideas throughout their lives.

Personal Reflection

For many, the journey with anthroposophy is deeply transformative. It encourages individuals to examine their beliefs, values, and relationships, leading to a richer understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Whether through practical applications in education, agriculture, or the arts, anthroposophy can inspire a lifelong quest for personal and spiritual growth.

It is in this light that through the Forum For Anthroposophy in Kenya made it possible to commence the first ever anthroposophical course that will offer profound insights into human development, education, and spiritual growth. By starting this course in Kenya, we will create a community that explores these ideas together and applies them to local contexts. The major intention is to make the course effective, interactive and as practical as possible. This will include elements like:

Foundational Concepts: Introduce key ideas of anthroposophy, such as the spiritual science approach, understanding human nature, and the interconnectedness of life.

Practical Applications: Focus on how anthroposophical principles can be applied in education, agriculture (like biodynamic farming), and community building.

Interactive Learning: Encourage discussions, group activities, and hands-on experiences to deepen understanding and engagement.

1. **Local Context:** Integrate local cultural perspectives and challenges to make the content relevant and relatable.
2. **Guest Speakers:** Invite experienced practitioners to share their insights and experiences.

Supportive Community: Foster a sense of belonging among participants, encouraging them to share their journeys and support one another.

We encourage the different Community of Practice to join in this worthy course to build our knowledge and more so, our understanding of anthroposophy.

Esther Nyagah

On behalf of Troels Ussing, Patrick Karanja, and Judith Brown



IASWECE: International Association for Steiner Early Childhood Education (IASWECE)

It is an Organization founded to foster and nature cooperation amongst colleagues and activists of Waldorf Kindergartens around the world. Mostly, deepening Waldorf education and offer support for Waldorf Early childhood Education. IASWECE spearheads the essentials and aims of Waldorf Early Childhood Education. It had been active in recognition and overseeing Early Childhood Training to teachers and teacher education, seminars and training Centres. We are available in organizing and planning worldwide Early Childhood educators and teachers conferences. We advocate the care and protection of the child from birth to three years of age as the main foundation for life. We explore how on to protect the child from impact of digital media and its effects on the development of the child. We are awake in the awareness of cultures, religious, gender and geographical diversity.

IASWECE PROJECTS

Throughout the world, IASWECE engineers the possible collaboration and support needed in development of new Waldorf Early childhood Education activities. In East Africa, IASWECE had supported the mentorship projects of our graduates under Ruth Thuku as our teacher trainer.

MEMBERS:

IASWECE has 37 active representatives from country Association Councils. Whereby, council meetings happens twice a year in the months of April and October. In these meetings representatives reports are delved and delt accordingly for the sake of the wellbeing of a child. IASWECE is self-sustained by its active Members world-wide. And, for this we are profoundly happy and grateful for all genuine efforts and support we receive from all.

Thanks!

Sarah Dickson

Representing East Africa-IASWECE

SCHOOL UPDATES

NAIROBI WALDORF SCHOOL



A Milestone Achievement: Our First IBDP Cohort Completes Final Exams

We are delighted to celebrate a significant milestone in our school's journey – our inaugural International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) cohort successfully completed their final exams in May 2024. This first cohort comprised six dedicated students, five of whom pursued the full Diploma Programme while one opted for the Course exams.

*The **Diploma Programme** (DP) is a rigorous two-year academic curriculum designed for Classes 11 and 12. It includes comprehensive assessments in six subject areas (two languages, mathematics, one science, one humanity and one art subject), an Extended Essay (EE), active participation in Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS), and completion of the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course. To earn the IB Diploma, students must meet strict deadlines, adhere to the program's rigorous requirements, and achieve at least 24 points out of a possible 45.*

*In contrast, **Course Exams** allow students to take specific IB subjects without fulfilling the entire Diploma requirements. This pathway provides an excellent opportunity for students to focus on areas of personal interest or align with individual academic goals. Course students earn certificates for the subjects they complete.*

*This cohort demonstrated exceptional commitment, working tirelessly to meet the IB's strict deadlines. The students embraced the program's demands, honing their time management, research, and organizational skills. They also upheld the IB's core value of **academic honesty**, adhering to ethical practices throughout their assessments and coursework.*

The results were promising, with the students performing remarkably well, particularly in the core components of the program – TOK, EE, and CAS – showcasing their well-rounded development and understanding of the program's principles.

The IBDP program at NWST is offered in Classes 11 and 12, following the Waldorf curriculum in Classes 9 and 10. This unique combination allows students to build a strong foundation in critical thinking, creativity, and social responsibility through the Waldorf approach, which complements the academic rigor and global perspective of the IB curriculum.



This blend prepares students not only for the demands of the IB but also for life beyond the classroom. The Waldorf education instills a deep sense of self-awareness and emotional intelligence, which students carry into their IB studies and beyond.

The experience of teaching the IBDP and preparing the cohort for their final exam has been a valuable learning opportunity for the school. We are eager to build on this foundation to support future cohorts.

Patrick Karanja



HEKIMA WALDORF SCHOOL, Dar es Salaam

The year 2024 has been very transformative. Besides we have maintained the number of staff. We have successfully taken the grade seven to another level. All the 33 pupils are well qualified to join secondary schools in January 2025. We had a wonderful visit by our friends from Latvia Waldorf School. Apart from other good things that they did for the school, they also painted our grade four class. We are grateful for extending their support to that level.



Since ninety percent of our children depend of school transport, we are working very hard to make sure that the transport system is stable. We are grateful that before the year ends we were able to purchase one min bus which is of much support. We are now on holidays till 13th January 2025.

In our effort to make our school grow, we have friends and partners in this journey. We are grateful for the kind support that the Freunde der Erziehungskunst is offering to the school. Our plan to establish Primary school buildings under the latter's support has taken a new shape. More steps towards the plan are expected as the new year 2025. We are also thankful to the International Help Fund from the Netherlands for extending their hand in support for the purchase of the mini bus for the school. Kasmir Msigwa

RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL MBAGATHI, NAIROBI

Reflecting on the year coming to an end, there is so much to be grateful for.

Our school continues to navigate the integration of Waldorf education with the new national curriculum, and conquer the challenges that come with it. This integration is not only required in the curriculum, but the human resource and infrastructure required. We continue to increase in numbers- of children, faculty and support staff, as well as expand our learning facilities.



Our funding partners and friends remain at the forefront of ensuring our school community continues to offer the holistic Waldorf education in a nurturing environment and have provided the financial and social support to bring this to fruition.

A walk in the school compound reveals a number of construction works going on- a new science laboratory and a new classroom for the incoming Class 10 to complete the Junior Secondary School, and an adjacent spacious teachers' room. Further on, you note a number of beautiful houses coming up- an upgrade of the living quarters for our resident staff. A big thank you to our funders for our building projects are Friends of Waldorf Education and Future Foundation for Development, and Merck Family Foundation.



To serve our community better, the office space was expanded to host the new Sponsorship and Fundraising offices, as well as an expanded administration office. Pay us a visit soon... we hope to have the guest seats ready for you then.
Neema Kahiga

FORUM FOR ANTHROPOSOPHY IN KENYA

Anthroposophical activities

In Kenya there is a monthly study work, there are several study days every year, there are anthroposophical conferences, there are meetings for members of the international anthroposophical society and an introductory course in anthroposophy. There are also teacher training, biodynamic training and leadership training.

The Forum

Therefore a forum for anthroposophical work has been founded in an anthroposophical meeting on the 25th May 2024. The main tasks for the Forum are to serve, support and protect anthroposophical work. The Forum is a meeting place and will also form a bridge from existing anthroposophical work to a future Anthroposophical Society in the East African region.

*The Forum for Anthroposophy works in close contact with
the **EAST AFRICA ASSOCIATION OF WALDORF STEINER SCHOOLS**
Esther Nyagah is the liaison person.*

The Forum consists of:

- 1. The initiative group leading the Forum: Esther Nyagah; Judith Brown, Patrick Karanja, Troels Ussing*
- 2. Core group: Members carrying responsibilities within Anthroposophical work.*
- 3. Members: A List of persons interested in Anthroposophy (Are invited for arrangements, discussions etc., receive newsletter)*

If you would like to be on the list of members please contact the Secretary:

Judith Brown judith.brown-school.leader@steinerschoolmbagathi.co.ke

For the Initiative Group - Troels Ussing

