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EAST AFRICA ASSOCIATION OF WALDORF/STEINER SCHOOLS

Newsletter November 2023

The East Africa Association of Waldorf Steiner Schools (EAAWSS) continued its important role through 2023 connecting the East African Waldorf/Steiner Schools and initiatives together. They meet approximately three times a year.

The Current members are:

Kasmir Msigwa – chair – rep for Hekima and Tanzania
Patrick Karanja – Deputy Chair and rep for NWS and Kenya
Judith Brown – rep for RSS Mbagathi
Janet Kimandi – rep for the teacher training
Sarah Dickson – rep for kindergarten
Mussa Ali Mohamed – rep for Zanzibar Steiner School
Faith Wambua – rep for Waldorf Woodlands School
Troels Ussing co-opted member

James Olang and Mary Mwaniki resigned from their position.

Under the care of the Association is the Waldorf Teacher Training course which takes place at Rudolf Steiner School, Mbagathi, Nairobi. The course is run three times a year. Teachers attend modules which run for two consecutive weeks.

A leadership course also runs under the umbrella of EAAWSS, lead by Troels Ussing.

A new developing initiative is emerging – an introductory course in Anthroposophy through Troels, Patrick and Esther Nyagah.

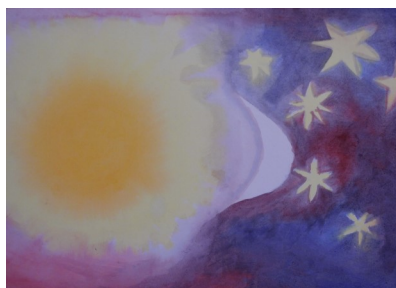
The chairman of the Association is Kasmir Msigwa who also represents the schools in the International Forum.

It is important to share that the East African Schools have been facing severe financial struggles, threatening their very existence and this is important to keep in mind as we read about them.

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Editor: Judith Brown



CONFERENCE 2024

*At last, we get to a space relatively calm enough to plan and actualize our long awaited in person **Anthroposophical Conference**. We have been planning behind the scenes and we bring the good news that between **1st and 5th April 2024** we will have an East Africa gathering for this purpose, coming together again. The Theme of the Conference will be **"Encountering Self and the Other in the Spirit of Ubuntu - Anthroposophy in Africa."***

This conference is organized by the East Africa Association in Collaboration with WSIF. Are you an interested party in Anthroposophy? Welcome One, Welcome All!

Janet Kimandi

This 2023 edition is introducing four out of the five member schools, which are:

- *Hekima Waldorf School—Tanzania*
- *The Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi—Kenya*
- *Nairobi Waldorf School—Kenya*
- *Waldorf Woodlands School—Kenya*

Zanzibar Steiner School will be introduced in the next edition



HEKIMA WALDORF SCHOOL - TANZANIA

*Waldorf education in Tanzania was pioneered by a group of dynamic Tanzanians who formed the **Waldorf Education Trust [WET]** as an NGO in 1997. These dynamic parents were the late Hon. MP. Richard Nyaulawa, the late Rashid Mbuguni, together with their spouses.*

The Trust was registered in 1997, with the objective of promoting creative, modern education in the country based on the Waldorf pedagogy. The WET in Tanzania is under the Board of Trustees which is the custodian of the Waldorf Education mission in Tanzania.



*In the same year (1997) the Waldorf Education Trust established **Hekima Waldorf School**. The latter is the first Waldorf School in Tanzania whose curriculum is child centered which seeks to address the **physical, emotional, spiritual** as well as the **intellectual** aspects of a growing child.*

*The school consists of two cohorts: The Kindergarten Cohort and the Primary School Cohort. The school is run by the College of Teachers who work hand in hand with the Board of Directors who represent each class starting from the Kindergarten. **Casmir Msigwa***



THE RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL MBAGATHI - KENYA

The Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi is situated south of Nairobi National Park based on a 20 acre plot. The school has a total of 400 children. The kindergarten has four groups and the primary goes from class 1 to 9. Our classes are full, with children waiting to join.

The school has a Board of Trustees, and the idea to have a Steiner School came from our trustee Nani Croze. The mission of the school is to help children through Waldorf Education with life challenges, therefore our school runs on 80% sponsorship and 20% fee paying. Our sponsor children come from socially and financially challenged backgrounds with difficult family situations.



We have a boarding facility now capable of housing 132 children who are lovingly taken care of by our boarding parents. They receive regular healthy meals and recreation time over the weekends. We strive to support these children with Steiner education, healthy meals and a secure and loving environment to learn.

*The school also has a farm with milking cows and a large vegetable garden. The farm has been organic for many years and is now following the bio-dynamic practices. It is a very important part of the school, offering healthy products and a green environment. **Judith Brown – School Leader***



NAIROBI WALDORF SCHOOL (NWST) - KENYA



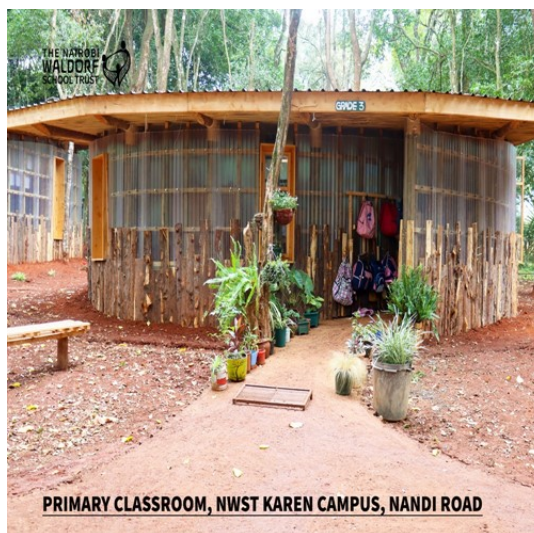
A Seamless Transition: School Successfully Relocates to a New Campus

Nairobi Waldorf School has successfully completed its move from the familiar surroundings of its old campus to a brand-new facility. The transition was marked by meticulous planning, dedication from staff and students, and the excitement of embracing a fresh chapter in the school's history.

The jewel of the new campus is undoubtedly its 17 newly constructed classrooms. These homely classrooms are designed to foster a conducive environment for academic excellence. As the school settles into its new home, the buzz of anticipation surrounds the much-anticipated pioneer Class 12. This special cohort is set to make history as the first graduating in the history of the Nairobi Waldorf School campus. With their final exams scheduled for May 2024, these students are not only preparing for academic success but are also paving the way for future generations of students who will benefit from the school's enhanced facilities.

The move to the new campus has been a collaborative effort, involving the dedication of not just the teaching staff but also the administrative team, parents, and the students themselves. The new campus symbolizes more than just a physical move; it represents a commitment to providing an enriching educational experience for all students.

Patrick Karanja



WALDORF WOODLANDS SCHOOL

With hearts full of excitement after a long break, we embarked on the new school year 2023-2024 through our enchanting Rose Ceremony. This beautiful beginning set the stage for a series of memorable events and work, including parent meetings, the Festival of Courage, Costume Day, Cross Country and more. Our small, close-knit community, comprising 16 children from Kindergarten to Grade 5, along with a dedicated faculty of 5, is now fully immersed in our academic rhythm.

Our festivals continue to offer a great opportunity for parents not only to take part in their children's education but also to make many exciting memories to celebrate their children's educational journey.

In our Playgroup and Kindergarten, our emphasis is on practicing gentle hands and kind language, while Grade 1 explores the wonders of the alphabet, Grade 3 delved into tales and legends of indigenous people and Hebrew stories, while Grade 4 is uncovering local history and geography, and Grade 5 embarked on a journey through ancient history.



To the advantage of our practicable numbers, we have recently taken to more outdoor adventures for grades 3, 4 and 5 in line with our core curriculum to foster the development of important practical skills, including putting up shelter to keep warm and dry, camping, crafting with available materials, plant observation, basic orienteering (drawing and using a map and compass in the wild), farming, wildlife identification and observation as well as other outdoor survival techniques.

As we approach the end of term one, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to every member, mentor and friend of our community for contributing to the magical memories that define Waldorf Woodlands School. We especially want to give special thanks to Gisela Hildegard who has brought our community the gift of eurythmy this term and Geraldine Emejom for her continued support with our teachers.

Our founding team, consisting of both parents and teachers, that successfully came together in September 2017 has to date transitioned three classes to other schools in Nairobi and SA. As the school enters a new chapter, saying goodbye to some founding members and welcoming new ones, we are truly enthusiastic about what the future holds and the additional contributions we make to growing Waldorf education in East Africa.

Faith Wambua – School Co-ordinator



IN-HOUSE WALDORF TEACHER TRAINING COURSE

TRANSITIONAL CYCLE SUPPORTED BY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT

This cycle kicked off after the Covid situation eased with module 1 in December 2021. In the year 2022 and 2023 the thread has worked out uninterrupted, so we have managed to have 3 modules, in April, July and December in both years taking us to Module 7 in December 2023. The trainees come from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe.



- The Objective of this Cycle is to prepare East African Trainers to take full charge of the training after 2024. Under the mentorship of well abled Trevor Mephram [UK] and Maria Msambezi [SA], fifteen trainers [15] have got a chance at least once to have a practical session of training and be mentored on the specific content they handled.
- The content of the modules has been spiced up by making some additions to the programme like Games, Music and Gardening.
- Peter van Alphen, Ann Sharfman and Simon Shirley have been very instrumental too in the first half of the cycle in supporting the trainers in training from near and far when need arose.
- We are grateful for the financial support given by all funders and sponsors; BMZ through Nana Göbel of Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners e.V. who made this project possible, GLS, IHF, and all the schools' managements from which the trainees come. This way we have enough supply of learning materials and meals.
- We would have no training without the space, thanks to RSSM for being a kind and generous host and for its management for helping in the running and the structuring of the EATT.
- We pride in the completion of the trainers' house funded by BMZ and acquisition of some new IT materials which includes 2 laptops, projector, projector screen and visualizer. These items are of great help in class presentations during the training. The EATT Webpage is up and in use though still work in progress.
- We are building on EA mentors to work from within, and mentor trainees in the region are already in the training in readiness for their graduation. Ruth Thuku and Silviah Njagi are the identified local trainee mentors already doing a good job in this field. The kindergarten mentorship is fully supported by IASWECE. We are currently looking for financial support to enable us to send out local Primary school mentors to different schools.

Janet Kimandi—Teacher training Co-ordinator - Janet.kimandi-ttcoordinator@steinerschoolmbagathi.co.ke



East African teacher trainers 2023 module

THE WORLD TEACHERS CONFERENCE DORNACH , SWITZERLAND APRIL 2023

Theme : Affirming , Nurturing , Trusting An Education For Today And Tomorrow

The 11th World Teachers' Conference took place at the Goetheanum in Dornach from 10 to 15 April 2023. Almost a thousand teachers and educators from 62 countries, including teachers from EAAWSS, transformed the Goetheanum into a quivering playground. It was a wonderfully inspiring festival of encounter!

During the conference period various sub-topics were presented. For instance we had a sub-topic that read 'The house that exists because of the storm, storms need protection'. On this theme the focus was on schools which are places that provide space for education. It was said a school is a place where Life is experienced. It is a place of personal encounter. The things of the world can be revealed through space of the school. We need to develop the sense of humanity as we go along with educating the pupils. Different places other than schools provide us with the possibility to think about what is humanness in the human being! The sense of humanity is in danger and so we need to deepen our knowledge of the humanity in the human being.

*This year's conference left a remarkable testimony for every participant due to its content and the flow of activities and participation of each participant. We are grateful for the preparatory team for the great work. **Casmir Msigwa***



What is IASWECE ?

IASWECE is an International Association of Waldorf Early Childhood Education

IASWECE is running through donations from membership fees and fundraising, which give financial support to the projects and committed activities around the world. In East Africa the IASWECE supports kindergarten mentoring activities. As a representative of East Africa I contribute and share views with other members in pedagogy, political, social and economical activities. I am mandated to approve the mentoring funds.

To date there are 37 members from 41 countries around the world. This year we held our council meeting in Hamburg, Germany from 10th to 14th April where we had discussions and diversity studies which brings us to understand the need to develop changes from within and not from outside. As Early Childhood Educators, Gender, War, Races, Abuse - all these need INDIVIDUALITY Growth.

Sarah Dickson, Rep East Africa

LEADERSHIP COURSE

The first part of seven took place at the Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi in October 2022. The course developed to gain leadership skills and meet the needs of the East African Waldorf Schools. This course is led and run by Troels Ussing. In the third part held this October there were 26 participants from leading roles in the Waldorf Schools of East Africa. The course brought together not only leading teachers but leading management personnel.



Leadership course participants October 2023

I am a leader of my class, a teacher, especially a Waldorf Class teacher. We are all leaders in our classes as Waldorf teachers but in our schools we are more than being a class leader, and where do we get these leadership skills?

EAAWSS is offering this leadership course in an amazing way. The course is more of sharing and exchanging different ideas and experiences among Waldorf Schools around East Africa. All recognized Waldorf schools and initiatives, teachers, administrators, parents and different faculty members are on board. What a great opportunity to be on this course.

Any question considering Waldorf school and Waldorf aspects in different spheres are discussed in this leadership course offered under the EAAWSS. I am happy with the timing of the course since each participant has room to attend due to fair scheduling which align with our school calendars.

I am happy with the programmes where we participate in different activities, artistic work, movement, singing and discussions. The venue is wonderful and the meals are yummy. It's more than a leadership course, its a place to find yourself as a leader in a broader imagination.

Mussa Ali Mohamed – Zanzibar Steiner School