

Abstract:

The Globalisation of Steiner Education. Some Considerations

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Over the past ninety-five years, Steiner education has moved beyond its European roots into evermore-diverse settings. Children in Peru, Namibia, Moldova, Tajikistan and the Philippines are all being educated in Steiner schools (Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners, 2014). In China, new centres are opening weekly (Cherry, 2014; James, 2014). At the same time, classrooms in Europe are themselves become significantly more diverse (European Commission, 2011). To date, there has been no defined process for the development or expansion of the Steiner curriculum in non-European settings (Rawson, 2010, 2014). Very few research projects have been undertaken which investigate what may be involved (Boland, 2014a, 2014b, 2014e; N. Boland, & Puckeridge, 2014; Denjean, 2014). Although it has been claimed within the Steiner movement that “for some time Waldorf education has ceased being a Eurocentric education movement” (Kullak-Ublick, 2012), established (European) traditions still play an over-large part in pedagogical practice in Steiner settings which is at odds with their widening geographic and cultural diversity (Boland, 2014c, 2014d, 2014f; Hougham, 2012; Sagarin, 2008; Wiechert, 2012, 2014).

Auckland is the second most diverse city in the world after Toronto (Bruce, 2014). A fully-funded, Steiner-inspired, Maori-language school is being established in an underprivileged area of South Auckland in February, 2015 (Manukau Urban Maori Authority, 2014). This raises fresh questions as to what the Steiner curriculum means here in Aotearoa New Zealand. It has to take many things into account: multiple cultures and worldviews, a different geography, as well as complex and sometimes conflicting histories. It involves working in a post-colonial context in a bicultural country with a multicultural society (Boland, 2014a, 2014e, 2014g).

This presentation builds on prior research presented to this congress (Boland, 2013) to explore possible international approaches to the globalisation of the Steiner curriculum.

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