

## **International Survey of the Status of Waldorf Schools**

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This survey of the status of Waldorf schools was conducted to determine whether Waldorf principles and Rudolf Steiner's indications were being followed and implemented in Waldorf schools throughout the world. The purpose of the survey was to gain insight into how the schools are functioning and what Waldorf faculty and personnel think and feel about Waldorf education. The following subjects were included: teaching practices, curricula, outcomes, and the positive aspects and problems perceived by those working in the schools. The role of Anthroposophy and its esoteric aspects were examined in relation to teaching processes and influences on the students. I purposely made no comments on the results; readers can make their own interpretation. The survey instrument was reviewed by David Alsop, former Chairperson of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, Gunther Althege, Director of the Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen, and others.

Data were collected by means of surveys of 520 Waldorf schools in 31 countries, and the response rate was 45 percent. Findings indicated that 57 percent of respondents felt that the goal of Waldorf education was to change society. Seventy-four percent thought that teachers, knowledge and implementation of Steiner's educational ideas and methods were good. Over 80 percent of respondents indicated that their school program included the following practices: balanced school day, teaching in a main lesson format, student-written and illustrated notebooks, meditation/prayer at the beginning of the day, form drawing in grades 1 to 5, and a continuous teacher from grades 1 through 8.. Sixty-three percent described the working climate as democratic, and 67 percent reported that faculty morale was good. Over 80 percent thought that a Waldorf education was compatible with the times. About 90 percent thought a Waldorf education developed free-thinking individuals. Seventy percent thought that Waldorf education influenced students to be open to the spiritual world and Anthroposophy. Almost half the schools were founded by parents. Major issues identified as affecting at least 40 percent of the respondent schools included financial support, school, and student discipline problems. Results are summarized and also presented for 19 individual countries or continents

The survey provides insights into the philosophy, attitudes and opinions of faculty, staff and administrators concerning the function and operation of Waldorf schools. It is hoped that the findings will be examined and discussed by Waldorf faculty, staff, and parents regarding the milieu, practices, and issues in their school.

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Copies of the survey may be obtained from  
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