

2010 - EUROPEAN YEAR FOR COMBATING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

ECSWE Declaration: Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. 04 February 2010.

1. In 2010 and beyond, ECSWE will engage in a Europe-wide campaign to address the issues of poverty and social exclusion. ECSWE will cooperate with like-minded organisations in raising consciousness about all forms of poverty and social exclusion and seek ways to combat them.
2. Poverty and social exclusion can affect and afflict people emotionally and materially and consequently have a profound effect on an individual's wellbeing. ECSWE members recognize that poverty and social exclusion are complex problems that manifest differently on various levels of society and within diverse cultures.
3. Severe economic poverty remains a challenging problem in many parts of the world, but less so in Europe. In the countries of Europe, other aspects of poverty are becoming more apparent - problems such as loneliness, disconnection and marginalisation. Aside from the beneficial aspects of new technologies, an unintended effect of the rise of electronic media and social networking has seen the occurrence of social exclusion and bullying among children and young people.
4. Educational institutions which actively seek to nurture social and emotional intelligence can help counter tendencies to social isolation that a developing knowledge-society may produce in its wake.
5. Steiner Waldorf schools undertake their work out of respect for the individual child and young person and in appreciation of universal human rights. Generosity, tolerance and co-operation are values which can support social prosperity, economic wellbeing, environmental sustainability and creative diversity. Progressive societies consist of learning communities that call on a sense of solidarity, interdependence and support across gender, age and all social-cultural backgrounds.
6. Active support for human and cultural diversity lies at the core of Steiner Waldorf education. The educational approach and ethos focus on a practical understanding of the multi-faceted richness of human relationships. Such richness has physical, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions. Neglecting any one of these dimensions can lead directly or indirectly to corresponding forms of poverty.
7. To this end, ECSWE encourages its member organisations and schools to help increase the visibility of good and best practice and to learn from the best practice of others.