

History of anthroposophical Curative Education and Social Therapy

Curative Education and Social Therapy Council, www.khsdornach.org

The beginnings of anthroposophical curative education and social therapy go back to the 1920s.

That was the time when young people came to Rudolf Steiner and asked his support in developing a centre for children and young people with disabilities. As a result, the Lauenstein home for children in need of special care was established in Jena, Germany. Steiner visited the new foundation and advised the medical and teaching staff on curative education issues. As a young man, Steiner had intensively devoted himself to teaching and supporting a boy with hydrocephalus; he also had a disabled brother himself.

The developmental problems of children were also a matter of concern to him at the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany.

A special class was created at the School to provide support for children who had difficulties in following lessons.

The Institute of Clinical Medicine established by Dr Ita Wegman in Arlesheim admitted not only patients for general medical treatment but also children with disabilities. Later the Sonnenhof Children's Home became the main centre for their care.

In those early years further curative education centres opened in rapid succession in Germany, Switzerland, England, Iceland, Finland and Holland. Political developments in Germany and the rest of Europe then impeded and threatened these early developments, and it was only after the end of the Second World War that the work began to spread to any real degree. Training for curative teachers gradually became available. The first centres for adults with disabilities opened in the 1950s. International collaboration took the form of conferences, specialist groups and organs for collaboration.

By the early 1960s, 111 centres for people in need of special care had been established in 12 countries around the world.

The 1960s and 1970s saw not only further spread but also a sound legal and social policy foundation for curative education and social therapy. Associations and additional training centres were established in many countries.

The end of the Iron Curtain brought further spread internationally. Centres have now been established in almost all the former East-Block countries.

International collaboration is coordinated by the Curative Education and Social Therapy Council in the Medical Section at the Goetheanum (Switzerland). The Council works in close touch with the national groups and associations.

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