

## Waldorf foreign language teaching in Latin America - a new initiative

Axel Föllner-Mancini & Carolina Kot

The EFA (Educación, Filosofía y Arte) training institute registered in Chile, in cooperation with the Alanus University, offers an academic further training course in the form of a three-year part-time certificate course that teaches the basics of Waldorf education and qualifies students to teach foreign languages independently. The certificate course is primarily aimed at applicants who wish to teach in a Spanish-speaking country (Spain, Latin America, etc.). In addition to the modules aimed at teaching foreign language didactics, general principles of Rudolf Steiner's Waldorf education are taught. This takes place in dialog with positions of current educational science and contemporary developmental psychology. The academic training of Waldorf teachers in Latin America is still in its infancy. In addition to the foreign language qualification, the main aspects of Waldorf education are taught at an academic level. In addition to theoretical and conceptual work, the course focuses on artistic and practical self-awareness with regard to development processes.

Head of the EFA and organizer of the course is Carolina Kot (lecturer in German as a foreign language, DaF of the Goethe Institute and Waldorf teacher). Axel Föllner-Mancini is responsible for the academic implementation at Alanus University.

The course lasts three years and comprises 40 semester hours per week (SWS). These are divided over the three years into 4 weekly online lessons, 6 blocks (one Latin American attendance block week of 13 days each and one online block week in July of 7 days each) and 4 weeks of school placement.

As Waldorf education in Latin America is still largely independent of university structures, the certificate course offers an opportunity to complete the desired qualification with a university certificate. The certificate from Alanus University will be worth 60 ECTS credits and will therefore be internationally compatible for subsequent further training or a degree course. This could lead to a network of Waldorf education courses with academic institutions in this cultural area.

The time span from the first announcement of the certificate course to its start in March 2024 was only a few months. Under these conditions, it was hardly to be expected that 33 participants from seven Latin American and three European countries would ultimately enrol. This indicates a definite interest in and need for this type of academically positioned qualification in Waldorf teacher training.

Most of the participants are active teachers of English and some with a background in *German / Italian or Portuguese as a foreign language*, who are already employed in a Waldorf school or would like to be.

The lecturers include Leslie Ramírez (Mexico), Diego Marinozzi (Argentina / Germany), Aída Montenegro (Colombia / Germany), Natasha Karachov (Chile), María José Umaña (Chile), Carla Lorenzoni (Brazil), Federico Yanni (Argentina), Laura Schulze (Argentina), Axel Föllner Mancini (Germany).

In January 2025, the first face-to-face seminar took place in Buenos Aires, which was also open to guest students. At the Colegio Rudolf Steiner in Buenos Aires, 35 participants and lecturers from various countries met for this intensive week on the subject of foreign language teaching in Waldorf schools. The densely packed seminar program was completed with great motivation.