

[welt]blick

NEWS FROM THE WORK OF EMERGENCY PEDAGOGY

Spring 2022



Freunde der
Erziehungskunst
Rudolf Steiners

www.freunde-waldorf.de

FROM THE WORK OF EMERGENCY PEDAGOGY

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Dear Readers,

The last two years have been heavily impacted by the effects of the Corona Pandemic and in terms of emergency pedagogy, the *Friends of Waldorf Education* received numerous requests for support from old and new projects in spring of 2022.

Last year, emergency pedagogy activities in a prison for young people in Buenos Aires were continued online. Whether this work would have succeeded if relationships had not been built prior to the lockdowns is open to question. Our Spanish partners told fairy tales with healing pictures online at the time of the strict lockdown in Madrid. Soon, these fairy tale sessions resulted in a request from mothers with babies to create an offer for them - the mothers. In response, the colleagues developed a special programme on issues of attachment and trauma, but also on mental hygiene for the mothers themselves - because it is clear that, in these uncertain times, children, and especially infants, need stable adults more than ever.

In Colombia, in March 2021, a new project began, with several partners from the education and university sectors, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Aktion Deutschland Hilft (ADH). We will report more on this in the autumn.

In January 2022, our last project in Lebanon was completed after the devastating explosions in the summer of 2020. For our work in Lebanon, this means only a short break. In the second quarter of this year, another two-year project will begin, also funded by BMZ as well as ADH. Here, we will be able to work with children in two regions that were hit particularly hard by the dramatic socio-economic situation in Leba-

non, as well as start numerous further training courses for local professionals. We are happy that we can make a small, yet stable contribution to the well-being of the children here, despite the deteriorating situation - even if it often seems like a fight against windmills.

The war in Ukraine began at the end of February. The consequences are not yet foreseeable in detail, but it is already clear that it will be a crisis with far-reaching consequences for the people in Ukraine and in the rest of Europe. We are providing initial emergency educational support in Krakow, Poland, by training people (especially educators who work with Ukrainian refugees), in the methods of emergency pedagogy. They learn to recognise signs of traumatising in children at an early stage and work to strengthen self-healing powers with the help of emergency pedagogy, in order to be able to avert long-term, recurring effects of trauma.

Emergency pedagogy not only supports educators and children and young people and their parents in the first few days of a crisis or emergency. It opens up spaces for the initial experiences of pain and anxiety to be expressed and it offers support for self-help so that adults can be stable anchors for their children in these difficult-to-understand times. Please support us in this so that we can continue to actively support the people in Ukraine as well as in the neighbouring countries, beyond the short term.

Thank you very much for your interest and support of our work.

Lukas Mall



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FIRE, LAVA, ASH, SMOKE

The Spanish Emergency Pedagogy Team is still young, but it has already been active. During the period when Spain was hit by the severe effects of Corona pandemic, training courses were held with many participants from Spanish-speaking countries. The Spanish team completed its first mission after a natural disaster last autumn when the Cumbre Vieja volcano erupted on the Canary Island of La Palma.

Scalding hot lava flows made their way across the island of La Palma and covered countless houses. Earthquakes shook the region again and again, and a flow of lava and a carpet of ash spread across the streets. The Cumbre Vieja volcano on the Canary Island of La Palma finally came to an end on 25th December 2021 after roughly three months of activity. Prior to this, on 9th October, an emergency pedagogy team of the *Friends* travelled to La Palma to provide emergency pedagogy to the local people and trauma education to establish longer-term psycho-social structures.

It was the first emergency pedagogy mission of the *Friends* to take place during an active volcanic eruption. This placed completely

new demands on the organisation distinct from an operation after the end of a natural disaster. In this case, we had to monitor the seismic activity, the changes in air quality (soot, ash and gases can have negative effects on breathing and the skin), and to monitor road conditions (depending on the course of the lava flows and the ash fall, roads may be closed at short notice), to ensure the safety of the people taking part in the activities and of the team members leading the activities.

In the first few days, we held training sessions in the morning at a cultural centre in Los Llanos. In the afternoons we worked with children in the locality and taught the participants of the training course about the emergency pedagogy work in practice. In particular, the deep thundering from the earth's interior which, on some days, caused the windows of the cultural centre to vibrate and penetrated into the depths of the body was new for the emergency educators and shook the fundamental sense of trust between people and the earth. For example, body-geography tapping exercises and oil rubs for small children were helpful. The question of when volcano would quieten down again was another source of





HELPING PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES AFTER THE FLOOD DISASTER

uncertainty. Every little vibration, whether caused by a passing lorry, or by one of the numerous earthquakes, startled the people and their attention wavered and the question, "What's next?" could be read on their faces. One participant in the training said that after the practical elements (on this day, there were many rhythmical exercises with hands and feet), she was able to sleep through the night for the first time since the eruption of the volcano, because she felt that the earth was stable and reliable again.

Against the backdrop of these uncertainties, it was all the more impressive to meet people who, on the one hand, were themselves directly affected, and could no longer return

to their homes, but who, on the other the other hand, embraced the idea of emergency pedagogy with enthusiasm, took part in all the workshops and immediately joined the work with the children, in order to learn as much as possible. Since October, these people have continued to work with different groups at the weekends and help the children to experience short moments of joy and lightness again and again.

Lukas Mall

Rafael Díez Labín from La Palma took part in several workshops on La Palma. He wrote about the continuation of the work after our mission in early November 2021:

"The impulse of emergency pedagogy in La Palma is still very present. The second workshop of the local group (on 30th September) went very well. As soon as we arrived, we began straight away with the activities - the gathering circle, the chanting, the rhythms, the crosses and the songs. For the older group (11/12 years), we prepared a course of activities in the square, which resulted in some very interesting situations. A horse race was played out, with commentators, during which a bottle became a camera that 'filmed' the event, which was accompanied by a jury and concluded with a photo session. For one hour the children

were allowed to play freely and we accompanied them. Then we began a series of guided practical activities: the 'Eye of God' (handwork), painting together with the little ones, drama, sequences of more challenging crossing exercises, cooperative games, trust games, theatre games. A mural made out of cardboard was created where the older children were allowed to place their signatures. And we continued the following week with two workshops: one for families and babies and another focused on art and games for the older ones."

Shortly after the flood disaster in the summer of 2021, a team of emergency educators from the Friends of Waldorf Education began to provide educational and advisory support to the families and educators of the Waldorf Kindergarten "Pusteblume" in the Aahr Valley. Stefanie Zacher, one of the educators, looks back on the catastrophe and on the first steps of help provided through emergency pedagogy.

14th July 2021 - the incessant rainfall and worrying news from friends, alongside my own experiences, is an unpleasant memory many months later. The fact that the waters of the Ahr caused overnight devastation of unimaginable proportions, the impacts of which are still visible in the villages and towns today, intensifies this impression many times over.

The *Friends'* offer of help in emergency pedagogy had already been made before I realised that we needed help in the basics of our kindergarten life. With friendly calmness and empathetic presence, the colleagues from Karlsruhe first succeeded in dissolving the initial resistance to their presence. Only gradually did we in the cir-

cle of those responsible at the Waldorf Kindergarten Pusteblume realise that we needed help. The first seminar for us kindergarten teachers laid the foundations for good cooperation and decision-making in the immediate period of everyday life in the kindergarten. With energetic support, the Waldorf Kindergarten became a safe place for us and many others.

I noticed that with the shock I had limited access to my knowledge of everyday habits and rituals, despite my many years of experience. As our rooms became emergency accommodation for a family, kindergarten took place outside in the garden. Through donations we were able to purchase a weather protection pavilion that gave us a safe roof over our heads. The physical exertion of setting it up, with the help of many hands, and the cooking we did together for the helpers and those in need, were wholesome activities worthy of imitation by the children.

Through the empathetic contact of all emergency educators and the repeatedly asked question, "What do you need? What do you need?" we succeeded in developing a good pattern of work. So, each meeting with the most different sorts of people, who took turns to help over a prolonged period of time, proved very harmonious.





In the stories and songs, in gardening, baking, cooking and painting, as well as in accompanying the children in free play, the ordering and healing energy was palpable. The integration of former (older) kindergarten children into the existing kindergarten group also succeeded without any problems.

For us kindergarten teachers and the parents, the daily talks and seminars were very helpful in understanding our own experiences and behaviour and that of the children. All of us at "Pustebume" are very grateful for all the help we have received and continue to receive. The

Beyond the emergency educational work in the Waldorf Kindergarten Pustebume, various other projects were active following the devastating floods. Thanks are also due to the financial help of our donors.

We are happy that we were able to donate a playground container to the community of Rech (Verbandsgemeinde Altenahr), together with Kukuk Kultur e.V. as early as August 2021. This laid the foundation for further childcare on site. In the spring of 2022, the Kinderschutzbund Ahrweiler will open a forest kindergarten next to the playground, with a fireplace for young people. The *Friends of Waldorf Education* financed the preparatory work for the installa-

tion of a construction trailer. We were able to support two other kindergartens with mobile playgrounds, one in Eschweiler, and one in Heimersheim. In addition, we will rebuild the community playground in Keuzberg (also in the Altenahr municipality), in the summer of 2022.

Stefanie Zacher

The Waldorf Kindergarten in Lessenich lost the children's dormitory to the flood waters. Renovation is costly and we are pleased that we were able to create an alternative option for the children with a yurt, and hope that they will be able to sleep well again.

cooperation with the emergency pedagogy of the *Friends* gave and continues to give us meaningful support to process what we have experienced and be able to look with confidence to the future.

Graduation Training Spain

In December 2021, the first 44 emergency educators received their certificates in Spain. Participants presented and defended their final theses and completed the last units of supervision, which are part of the training. After having to resort to online work in recent years, it was all the more gratifying that this meeting between the representatives of the Ibero-American and Caribbean network for emergency pedagogy and the participants of the advanced training in emergency pedagogy could take place in person at the end. We warmly congratulate all graduates and look forward to their future support.

Philippines: Support after typhoon

Shortly before Christmas 2021, a severe typhoon passed over the Philippines, bringing great destruction, especially to the central and western islands. Partner organisations of the local emergency pedagogy network immediately began initial support measures. On the island of Palawan, in the first few days, these included the distribution of fruit and vegetables, as well as the provision

of tools and simple shelter materials, such as nails and plastic tarpaulins. Our partner writes: "For One (an artist our partner works with), we were the first people he met after spending the night in embryo position in his bathroom - the safest place in his little art hut in the middle of the forest. Huge trees had fallen just to the left and right of his house." The need for longer-term need emergency educational support is apparent, and we are currently preparing a project.

On the island of Cebu, another partner "KidsLIFE team (Waldorf kindergarten)" worked repeatedly over three days with 100 to 120 children offering supportive counselling for their parents.

Ecuador: First mission for the local team

On 1st February 2022, we received news from the local emergency pedagogy team that some regions in Ecuador had been affected by heavy rainfall. Among them was the district of Gaspar in Quito, where there were heavy landslides and mudslides, and people lost their lives. The fledgling local emergency pedagogy team conducted its first outreach to support children and young people at the end of February.

Afghanistan: Support for Sadaf Kindergarten

A small kindergarten outside Kabul supports children in this demanding situation with a play area, a colourful exercise programme and food. Often the children lack the most basic necessities, and it is difficult for them to get regular meals. In order for the children's families to become more independent beyond childcare, we would like to support the parents' educational situation in addition to providing emergency educational support and help with daily meals. We would like to provide them with small courses in both practical activities (tailoring, and farming) and basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic. Please support us in this new project.

Save the Date

For the 11th time *Friends of Waldorf Education* is organising the Emergency Pedagogy Annual Conference. This year the conference will take place from 17.06 to 19.06.2022 under the title "Life, War, Flight - Traumatic experiences of people with special needs"..



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