

# WALDORF WORLDWIDE

Topic

## School is more than simply lessons

Freunde der  
Erziehungskunst  
Rudolf Steiners

Kenya  
School meals  
in Mbagathi

Thailand  
A new teacher  
training initiative

Worldwide  
Holidays are not  
always holidays

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## ETHIOPIA: STARTING SCHOOL AGAIN AFTER THE WAR

**A**fter the civil war in northern Ethiopia, the small Waldorf school in Hawzien is beginning to return to normality. But during the war, some classrooms were damaged, and a large part of the equipment was stolen. **Page 5**

## SCHOOL IS MORE THAN SIMPLY LESSONS

In our cover story „School is more than simply lessons“ we look at aspects of Waldorf education which are not directly located in the classroom. **From Page 9**

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Karla-Maria Schälke

### Cover photo:

Circo Ponte Das Estrelas,  
São Paulo, Brazil



## SOUTH AFRICA: STRUGGLE FOR AN INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM

The political and economic situation in South Africa is in serious crisis. This is having an impact on the education system, and especially on the country's Waldorf schools. **From page 6**



## THE FUNDRAISING YEAR 2022

In 2022 we were able to forward more than 5 million euros to Waldorf educational institutions worldwide. With brief descriptions of 45 grants in 2022, we would like to give you a brief insight into the donation year 2022. **From page 28**

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## About us

The *Friends of Waldorf Education* have been promoting Waldorf Education worldwide for over 40 years. Our association has developed continuously, and we now work on several focus areas from our offices in Berlin and Karlsruhe.



### Waldorf Worldwide

The *Friends of Waldorf Education* was founded in 1971 with the aim of promoting Waldorf Schools, early childhood education, therapeutic education centres and social projects worldwide. It is very important to us to open up good educational opportunities for children and young people around the globe. So far, we have supported and accompanied well over 830 educational institutions all over the world. We support Waldorf Schools as well as anthroposophical therapeutic education homes worldwide in financial and legal matters and forward 100% of our donations to the recipients abroad. Our educational sponsorships enable children from disadvantaged families to attend a Waldorf School. We support the training of school and early childhood teachers around the world with scholarships. On WOW-Day (Waldorf One World) we coordinate the worldwide fundraising activities for Waldorf initiatives by students.



### Voluntary Services

In 1993, the *Friends of Waldorf Education* also became a recognized organization for international voluntary service. With the suspension of compulsory military service, the area of domestic voluntary services was added in 2011. Since then, the association has supported over 1,800 people annually during their voluntary service. Since 2006, the voluntary services have been extended to include volunteers from abroad, called Incoming. This enables young adults who have their permanent residence outside Germany to do voluntary service in Germany.



### Emergency Pedagogy

Since 2006, the *Friends of Waldorf Education* have been involved with emergency education for children caught up in war and crisis situations, and who are fleeing for their lives. Emergency education uses Waldorf approaches and methods to help children deal with traumatic experiences. With art therapy and experiential education exercises, trust in oneself and one's fellow human beings can be strengthened, and numbness can be eased. This kind of trauma work has already proven itself in numerous missions across the world. An important focus of our work is international networking and the further training of local professionals.



Ethiopia

## Starting school again after the war

For two years, a bitter civil war raged in northern Ethiopia. The conflict between the regional government of Tigray and the Ethiopian central government forced more than 1.2 million people to flee their homes. Millions of people were also dependent on humanitarian aid. The Waldorf School in the town of Hawzien found itself caught in the midst of the war's turmoil.

Shortly after the war began, the school was used by soldiers for accommodation. At that time contact with the region was lost: there were hardly any internet or telephone connections, roads were besieged and aid deliveries blocked. In the autumn of 2021, after the first year of the war and following the withdrawal of soldiers from the school building, the children were able to go back to school. But the school was damaged after being used by the soldiers: the roofs of three rooms burnt through. Almost all

the chairs were gone, and tools as well as cooking pots and other utensils from the school kitchen were also stolen. Only under the most difficult conditions were we able to forward donations to the school at this time to help with the most basic necessities.

In the meantime, aid deliveries are possible again and for the first time, the founder of the school Dr. Atsbaha Gebre-Selassie, who lives in Germany, was able to travel to Hawzien again. "It is pleasing that it has rained a lot and the school grounds are covered with colourful flowers," he reports from his visit. "This will definitely have a positive impact on the traumatised children." About 520 children attend kindergarten and grades 1 to 7 at the school. Some of the classes still have no chairs. Donations are urgently needed to re-equip the school fully once more.

**Christina Reinthal**



## South Africa

# Struggling for an independent curriculum

For almost a year now, the electricity in South Africa is cut off every day. An outdated power grid, but above all corruption and sabotage lead to these daily hour-long power outages. That the high-quality coal is exported, while in the home country only low-grade coal is used to generate electricity, serves to exacerbate the situation. Many electricity plants have been forced to close due to lack of electricity, and whole sectors of the economy are in danger of collapse. The political and economic situation in South Africa is in a serious crisis. This impacts adversely on the education system, including the Waldorf schools in the country.

William Bester, long-time teacher and manager at the Michael Mount Waldorf School in Johannesburg, has worked for the Southern African Federation of Waldorf Schools since 2022. William reports on the situation in South Africa for Waldorf Worldwide.

South Africa is a wonderful, beautiful country with positive people and great possibility for change. In this young democracy I believe that in time we will overcome the hardships and challenges currently facing our country.

On a general level the challenges facing South Africans on a day-to-day basis are deep-seated. 30 years after the ending of the apartheid regime, the degree of positive change is hard to detect. In 1994, there was a mood of hope for our nation, a coming together without a revolution. However, the country's infrastructure is in a state of collapse, with

roads and electricity supply being compromised. Load shedding occurs for anything up to 11 hours a day. There are promises of international investment in our electricity crisis which will bring relief but only in 2-5 years from now. State Health care is in disarray and there is a huge growth in informal housing as government cannot meet the needed demand. Hope has been replaced by dissatisfaction and the authorities' response is one of central control and contradiction. There is currently another wave of people immigrating, due to the poor economic and political situation.

The Current Educational landscape in South Africa is fraught with obstacles. One of the most significant being the pending changes to the BELA Bill (The Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill). This includes issues like, compulsory grade R education (from 6 years old), language policy, vaccination regulations and even curriculum requirements etc.

In the Waldorf movement all our schools are struggling to keep up with the financial demands with decreasing student numbers and huge hikes in the costs of services, Meanwhile, the state authorities are applying pressure on Alternate Curricula schools, including the Waldorf schools, to comply with education policy and curriculum standards. These are extremely prescriptive and would make it impossible to offer our unique education. It is a paradox that in a country that has a progressive, liberal constitution, the education policy is 'old' and lacks foresight. It seems to be a case of 1st World solutions for 3rd World problems.

The number of pupils at Waldorf schools fell from 5,300 before the pandemic to 3,300 after the pandemic. We are now enrolling new children, but growth is very slow. We have seen the biggest loss in the early childhood sections of our schools. There is a general teacher shortage in the country, and a specific Waldorf teacher shortage. This is exacerbated by the fact that the Centre for Creative Education is training Foundation phase teachers and no other phase. Thus, teachers rely on our in-house teacher training initiatives and mentorship



to support their Waldorf pedagogic development. The Centre for Creative Education (CCE) in Cape Town is also going through a period of upheaval and change. A process of institutional audit, review and restructuring is ongoing, pending a review from the Higher Education Council. CCE offers the only formal Waldorf Teacher training in South Africa.

During the pandemic, Waldorf schools received a letter demanding compliance to the national core curriculum. This letter was received from UM-ALUSI (the department responsible for quality assurance). This in the face of the Department of Basic Education conceding to change education policy to accommodate alternate and foreign curricula schools -an unintended omission from legislation. We have been negotiating around this topic for more than 16 years and now it would appear that we have no choice but to defend our right to independence in court. Likely compromises will mean that there will be changes to the education offered from Class 10 upwards, with a range of measurable outcomes required. A new challenge facing South Africa is the introduction of a Grade 9 school leaving certificate. The implications of this for Waldorf schools are currently unclear. In

the 0-4 Years phase, the government has shifted responsibility from the department of Social Development to the Department of Basic Education. This has tremendous implications on the curriculum framework as formal curricula is now being legislated.

Against this backdrop of challenge and difficulties, South Africans are a resilient and responsive people. The South African Waldorf Federation of Waldorf Schools is part of a strong alliance of 9 independent school associations (NAISA), who are lobbying and making representations to government. However, anything that is different on the educational scene tends to be regarded as “privileged”. Teachers’ salaries are extremely low in most of the Waldorf schools. There is a huge amount of love for the children. The current strategy for the Federation is centred around supporting the schools in their diversity. A national high school teacher training programme is being designed, which is supported by a newly created national teacher training committee. Work is ongoing on a core Waldorf Teacher training curriculum. There is also extensive work and a review of the Waldorf curriculum in our schools.

**William Bester**





Kyrgyzstan

## Karla-Maria Schälke

5th March 1943 - 25th August 2023

Karla-Maria Schälke, née Fritzsche, said goodbye to this life on 25th August after yet another bravely endured, painful period of illness. As a pupil, she entered the upper school of the Pforzheim Waldorf School in about 1960, after fleeing from East Germany. She then took Slavic studies in Tübingen and in Moscow, and later moved with her husband, Igor Schälke, to Frunze, the present and former Bishkek. So, she ended up in the Kyrgyz Soviet Republic and tried to live and work with her husband under the sharp eyes of the secret service and outwardly the poorest of conditions.

As early as 1982, Igor and Karla-Maria started a working group in the Druzhba bookshop in Frunze to found a cooperative school oriented towards Waldorf education. Karla-Maria brought a certain impulse with her to Kyrgyzstan. In 2014 she wrote to me about her teacher and her classmates at the Pforzheim Waldorf School: "My deepest and innermost gratitude goes to your father Thomas Göbel. Without his enthusiasm, without him as a revered class teacher, I would not have been able to initiate and support all this. And I am not the only one who thinks of him and his teaching of Goetheanism with gratitude. Two priests, two recipients of the Federal Cross of Merit and a nomination for the Nobel Prize, all in your father's class! Sometimes, only later in life does it become

clear what a teacher has given his pupils for their lives. And yet, as a class teacher, he himself had a completely different opinion of himself."

In 1988, a working group was formed within the framework of the Child Protection Association under the leadership of Karla-Maria Schälke, which dealt intensively with alternative methods of education. As part of this work, the Nadjeschda Children's Centre, a rehabilitation centre for children declared "ineducable", was founded in 1989. From the outset the basis of the work was Waldorf education. In 1991, thanks to the initiative of Rosa Otunbajeva, the Nadjeschda School (later the integrated Gert-Michael School), was included in the UNESCO schools programme and the Kyrgyz writer Tschingis Aitmatow became honorary president of the Nadjeschda Children's Centre.

The very first seminars on Waldorf Education took place at the university in 1991 and 1992 as part of the IDRIART Festival. The interest remained so great with some of the lecturers that with their support in 2007 a state-recognised in-service training to become a Waldorf teacher and Waldorf educator began and was successfully continued in the following years. In 2014, the Nadjeschda community, which had grown in the meantime, celebrated a big party for 25 years of the Nadjeschda Children's Centre.

In 2022, Karla-Maria Schälke, who had in the meantime been honoured for her Kyrgyz commitment and could look back on a strong and growing organisation, wrote: "Nadyeshda is doing well, especially with regard to the children and colleagues; we are infinitely grateful. With the support of many helpful lecturers from abroad the seeds we were able to sow together in Kyrgyzstan, in the fields of Waldorf education and anthroposophical therapeutic education have sprouted. And the children, with their radiance, are often like a miracle, along with the development of us as individuals and as colleagues too, of course."

Nana Goebel

TOPIC

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# School is more than simply lessons

When we hear the terms “school” and “education”, we first think of classrooms, teachers, learning materials and everything that is needed in the classroom. But school is much more than what happens in class. For some schools, for example, food is a very important part of the school day. Teachers need training and therefore, also training facilities. But holidays are also part of the school year.

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In our cover topic, “School is about more than lessons”, we shed light on aspects of Waldorf education that are not directly located in the classroom.



Kenya

## School meals: An important part of school life

As most of the pupils at Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi come from families with very low incomes, the school management attaches great importance to providing the children with school meals. Mercy Njoki, a member of the school staff, reports on why this is currently being given a special focus.



**T**he Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi offers education and creative care to children from disadvantaged groups in society. In order to be able to fulfil this task at all, the provision of school meals is an important factor, because most children do not have enough food at home. The meals they receive at school are the only daily meals they get. Some children come to school with empty stomachs - hunger affects their concentration and their ability to learn. Because of this, anyone who wants to can have breakfast with us: a big banana and hot milk in the morning, or warm porridge. This was made possible a few years ago through a special appeal for donations. Since the introduction of this school breakfast, the children smile and can participate much more effectively in class.

In the last five years, the number of children at our school has increased by about 21%. Our school is currently at full capacity with 400 children. The





increase came about because we decided to increase the classes in the lower school from 30 to 34 children. More and more parents are applying to enrol their children at our school, and it was our decision to make this possible for more children. We have 104 children in the kindergarten and 296 in classes 1 to 9. 120 of the children are in boarding school. Many of the children are orphans or come from broken, traumatised family backgrounds. We currently receive full school fees for only 13% of the children. Originally, about 20% of our parents were able to pay the school fees. In the current situation, many can no longer contribute the full amount. During the Corona crisis, there were many cases of job losses, which led to hopelessness and great poverty among our school families. Then came the war in Ukraine, which resulted in, among other things, a reduction of imports for important products. Prices for food, oil and fuel all skyrocketed and inflation rose sharply. The financial situa-

tion of families is deteriorating day by day. The introduction of new taxes by the government is also a big challenge for many people and affects the day-to-day running of our school.

The expenses for feeding the students make up a large part of the school budget. We are proud to be able to offer meals to the children as this is a great motivation for them to come to school and thus learn. Currently, we are struggling to feed the 400 children and 55 staff because there are not enough sponsorships and donations. Help us by contributing to feed a child at school. Just 20 Euros can provide a child with school meals for a whole month.

**Mercy Njoki**

Topic

## Holidays are not always holidays

Every year, we ask the Waldorf schools, Waldorf kindergartens, social projects and therapeutic education centres that have received donations from our WOW-Day student action day to tell us about a specific topic from their everyday lives. This is how our WOW-Day cookbook was created a few years ago and how we learnt last year what the journey to school looks like for children in different regions of the world. For WOW Year 22/23, we asked our partners in these institutions to tell us how the pupils spend their holidays. Holidays are part of the school year - in every country in the world - and they are important so that pupils and teachers have time to relax. The reports from schools show that holidays can also be problematic for some children. We present four of them here.



### After the war: lessons instead of holidays in Hawzien, Ethiopia

In the small town of Hawzien in northern Ethiopia, there has been a Waldorf kindergarten since 2006, and an associated school since September 2014. Parents have only ever been able to pay token amounts to the school, meaning that the school is almost entirely dependent on donations. The corona crisis, a severe plague of locusts, and finally, the civil war in the Tigray region exacerbated poverty in this area immensely (more on this on page 5). Olin Roenpage has been involved with the school for many years. He tells us how the children spend their holidays - before and after the war.

In normal school years, the schools are closed during the rainy season from June to the end of September. All the children at our school help their parents and relatives in the fields preparing the land, sowing the seeds, and later cutting the grass and storing the hay for the animals for the

dry season. The harvest then typically takes place in January/February, when the next holidays are, so that the children can help again. So the children in rural Ethiopia don't actually have a holiday in the traditional sense. Only the wealthy Ethiopians in the cities have holidays as we know them in Germany.

This year is different. Due to the civil war, the school remained closed for a very long time. The new school year began on 1st May 2023 - the first after the civil war. The children will catch up on the partially cancelled 2022 school year by the end of September 2023. Then - as every year - the regular school year will begin in October 2023.

## Activities outside the classroom at CREAR, Brazil

The Centro Recreativo Educacional Artístico Renascer (CREAR), set in one of the poorest neighbourhoods of Capão Bonito, was founded in 1994. In addition to the youth and leisure centre, which works with elements of Waldorf education, there is now a small Waldorf school with a crèche and kindergarten. CREAR is a social contact point for the families at the school, but also for other families in the neighbourhood. Peggy Rische Lederer, the director of CREAR, tells us about the children's holidays

**O**ur work is not easy, but we try and help our children and young people to develop into responsible, self-confident, healthy, energetic, creative, future-orientated adults who will shape their lives and work in our society in a positive way. Through activities inside and outside the classroom, we strive for healthy social interaction, creativity and harmonious human development. For example, in our afternoon programme we offer opportunities to be creative with music, drama, handcrafts, drawing and painting, or even in the garden. We also organise discussion groups and ad-

**We need support in the form of donations and food, especially for the holidays.**

visory sessions on health, law, politics and culture. We also take part in campaigns to prevent suicide, sexual abuse, depression and drug use with educational talks and various activities.

The holiday period is often difficult for the families in our centre as, for example, school meals are no longer provided for the children. This means that families have to spend more money on food, water and electricity during the holidays. In addition, the whole family, often with many members, has to spend a lot of time together in a small space. Those who have relatives in the country visit them, but very few go on holiday. There is no money for this, nor is it a habit. To escape the cramped conditions at home, many children play on the streets until late in the evening. Some parents are quite happy with this, but for others it causes great concern, as there is a very high risk of coming into contact with drugs on the streets, as drugs are openly sold,





exchanged and consumed on many street corners.

That's why CREAR is also open during the holidays as far as possible. Some children visit us and ask when the daily programme will finally start again. Mothers come to us with this question, especially during the long holidays in January, as they are overwhelmed with their children at home. During this time, we concentrate on supporting the families - through counselling, but also by providing food. The latter is a particular challenge, as we do not receive the usual deliveries of school meals during the holidays. That's why we need support in the form of donations and food, especially during the holidays.

## Particularly important during the holidays: Circus Sternenbrücke in Brazil

The Circo Ponte das Estrelas is for children aged between twelve and 18 who come from the outskirts of São Paulo. They meet daily at the circus and practise circus acts and theatre scenes, but also just live together. There is also a lot of art and music. One of the two directors, Regina Klein, explains why these activities are particularly important during the holidays.

In Brazil, and here on the outskirts of the huge metropolis of São Paulo, children and young people often have a hard time. Many families have been poor for generations, and although parents and older siblings struggle and work hard, their income is still not enough to gain a foothold in such an expensive city. As a result, many families live for decades by squatting on plots of land in areas where it is ac-



tually too dangerous to build – under high-voltage pylons, on drainage channels, or on rubbish dumps. There is little law and order, which allows gangs and criminal trades such as drug and illegal car dealing to gain a foothold. Police and gangs engage in shoot-outs and the people living here have to be careful not to get caught up in gunfire. To give you a better idea: there are hardly any of our assisted families who do not have a family member or friend who has died in a gunfight. Nobody leaves their child alone on the street and young people who walk to school alone are warned to stay away from drug dealing. Children and young people are often used for the dangerous business of passing drugs. Or, they may look after cars overnight for a few pennies.

Of course, we dream that all children, including children from these tough neighbourhoods have a childhood, a right to grow up healthy and protected. After all, this is the prerequisite for everyone to become a healthy, strong adult who can help shape their own world ...

At Circus Sternenbrücke, we try to fulfil these rights and needs and make up for them, where necessary. Pupils come here who have already experienced a lot of bad things. Everyone begins to learn and grow where they are. We meet in two groups every day, before or after school, and try to provide the 23 children and young people with breakfast, lunch and snacks and, if necessary, send something home with them if there is no income at all. We also provide school materials, pencils and

Many children come back to us after the holidays emaciated, with rings under their eyes and aggressive or uninterested.

the odd exercise book for schoolwork. And we also train for our tour.

There are school holidays twice a year: summer and winter holidays. The summer holidays are from Christmas to the beginning of February and the winter holidays are in July. The drug gangs don't go on holiday, of course. And most parents - usually single mothers and grandmothers - can't afford holidays either. So our pupils have to stay at home, at best in their little hut, because it's too dangerous on the street. If there are younger siblings, the young people usually have to look after them. Otherwise there is TV, mobile phones or computer games, which are, of course, no good without adult supervision, especially not in unlimited use. Many children return after the holidays emaciated, with rings under their eyes and aggressive or disinterested.

That's why we offer special activities during this time to minimise the "holiday tendencies". We train for one to two weeks in July (winter holidays) at a rural property, where we then also live together. We train and rehearse every day, put together the whole programme for the performance, and in the second week we bring it to the dress rehearsal with costumes, props and so on. We take our trailer on tour to the theatres and schools in São Paulo and the surrounding area. Of course, we use these days for much more: campfires, hiking, swimming, being with the animals, singing, painting, talking, laughing and playing.

And in the summer holidays, we go on a trip, either to friends, farm owners, or holiday home rental companies to really go on holiday; or, we go on a second tour, which is a bit longer and includes holiday days, like our tour through the south of Brazil this year.

The special thing about this type of holiday is that the students are welcomed and cared for by kind people and nature, get to know animals, people and places they never dared to dream of and learn that the world is infinitely bigger than the small, narrow slum with its everyday violence, or the four walls of the hut and computer games. Actually, we simply learn ... to be real children, to be human beings ...





## Open school gates even during the holidays: The École du Village in Haiti

The École du Village is located just outside Les Cayes in the municipality of Torbeck. It was founded by Myriam Silien and some of her friends who wanted to create a place for a love of learning; a place where children are not beaten, as is unfortunately common in many schools in Haiti. With their school, the three founders not only created a safe learning environment for their own children, but also for the children in the neighbourhood, most of whom live in abject poverty. In her WOW-Day thank-you letter, Myriam Silien explains why the school's doors remain open even during the holidays.

At the École du Village Cecile Fatima, we try to give children the best possible support in the world in which they grow up and help them to develop at their own pace so that they can fulfil their potential. We take this work very seriously; it is very important that every child can feel both free and held. It is with great thanks that we have

received the WOW-Day donation. This donation will enable us to expand certain activities such as our dance classes, which we have just opened, as well as the sewing, baking and flower arranging classes and other activities for pupils during the week and also at weekends. During the long holidays, the children spend time with their families in often very dry and hot weather and usually have to help with the daily chores or with their parents' work. These tasks are often too difficult for their age or even harmful to their health. But if they do their chores too slowly or not at all, they may be beaten. For this reason, we try to continue some of our activities, or offer extra tuition. This way the children can see themselves, and their parents know that they are learning something at school! The school is open at all times, and for all our children so that they always have a place to go and a place where they feel safe!

You can find out more about WOW-Day on page 28/29.



Thailand

# Teacher education in Southeast Asia

In March of this year, a new teacher education course was launched for colleagues in Thailand. The venue was the Panyotai Waldorf School on the outskirts of Bangkok.

The plan for this new programme is to offer two, in-person, week-long intensives each year over a three-year period. The course is designed for teachers who work in Thai Waldorf schools and starter projects. In between the attended courses, there is a programme of ongoing study and discussion that takes place online. The tutor team includes colleagues from Thailand and Europe. The course is hosted by colleagues at the Panyotai, a school which has provided a well-spring for Waldorf education for 27 years. Throughout its life, the school has received ongoing financial support from Die Freunde der Erziehungskunst.

The opening module in March took place over 7 consecutive days in hot and humid conditions. The initial group of students exceeded 70, and applications for module 2 are approaching 100. The hope is that colleagues from other parts of the region may be able to join in along the way. Each day began with a course on human development – questions of anthropology and anthroposophy – led by Dr Porn Panosot. The programme continued with a focus on geography through the lower and middle school. Sessions on form drawing opened the afternoon programme and following cups of iced coffee, fresh fruit juice and copious amount of water, the students and tutors ended the day by sitting outside, in the shade of the school hall, and discussing aspects of the teacher's inner and outer development. The presentations and small-group discussions concentrated on the topics of



stress and anxiety in modern-day life. 'Overcoming Nervousness' – a lecture given by Rudolf Steiner in Munich on 12th January 1912, formed a launchpad for the late afternoon exchanges and contributions.

The different elements of the programme flowed through the week thanks to a small team of willing and able interpreters. This enabled the module to have a bilingual quality, which was helpful not only to the large majority of Thia-speakers, but also the small and diverse band of English speakers from Australia, Mexico and France. The next module will take place in October. According to 'traditional' weather forecasts, the rains will begin to recede and the level of humidity dips as the October progresses.

Accompanying the continuing study concerning the place of the human being in the world, there will be daily sessions focusing on curricular topics of the human being and the animals, and questions and perspectives on history in the lower and middle school. Blackboard drawing and ongoing discussions concerning the life and work of the teacher will carry us to the close of each day.

**ขอบคุณ!** (Thank you)

Trevor Mepham

# Promoting human competence



Nana Göbel

... every day I have to choose  
between essential and non-  
essential ...

One of the skills we owe to a good education at all levels is the ability to distinguish the essential from the non-essential. We need this skill every day. On a day-to-day level, I don't necessarily need to know who Hammurabi was, or who Zheng He was, although that wouldn't be a bad thing, but every day I have to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential, and it would be helpful if I knew the reasons or points of view that led me to make this or that decision. This decision is a fundamental human task. If it were taken over by artificial intelligence, humans would give up their human competence and would base their work on criteria that many others have fed into the artificial intelligence. In other words, my life would be determined externally.

One of the many reasons why we promote Waldorf education worldwide is to support each individual child in such a way that they can acquire this basic human ability – distinguishing the essential – themselves, and then to use it as an adult. In view of the challenges for education and upbringing in

Students of the Aregnazan  
Waldorf School in Yerevan,  
Armenia



the current world situation, it is important to focus on the essentials in this field too. And once I have learnt what contribution Hammurabi or Zheng He, for example, made to the development of humanity and with what consequences, my viewpoints are broadened. With every piece of knowledge I acquire, my view widens. It is, therefore, not the case that general knowledge can simply be abolished, but rather that it must be thoroughly strengthened and expanded so that the viewpoints of my decisions and actions have as broad a basis as possible.

In the day-to-day international cooperation of the Friends of Waldorf Education, we are dealing with the complex challenges in the world. After completing our campaign of aid and support during the coronavirus pandemic and helping numerous schools in over 40 countries, we turned our attention to those schools that provide children with a hot meal a day but need support from our donors to do so. This is an ongoing task which, of course, cannot be accomplished in one year. After all, we only support Waldorf schools that educate children at schools where the parents are disadvantaged. In addition to the challenges posed by the war in Ukraine, we were, of course, also confronted with other challenges, such as the reality of life in Lebanon. Money is no longer worth anything there. While the Lebanese pound was still worth USD 46 at the beginning of 2019, it was equivalent to USD 1 at the beginning of February 2023. The government is only in office on a caretaker basis and is not solving a single problem. The teachers at the First Step Together school in Beirut are now paid in so-called “fresh dollars”, which, like the “blue dollars” in Argentina, are a currency that has been created in the meantime and must first be obtained. With salaries paid in Lebanese pounds, the teachers can no longer even pay for the bus to school. They can only get to school if they receive additional transport allowances. Life happens from day to day and there is no longer any security. It changes people when planning is no longer possible and inner stability has to be found in the present.

The situation is similarly challenging for our col-

... it would be advantageous if I knew the reasons or points of view that lead me to this or that decision.

leagues in the therapeutic education schools and centres in Georgia, whose salaries we were able to pay this year thanks to monies raised in our latest appeal for donations. However, we can do nothing for our colleagues in Armenia, who have to endure the fears and uncertainties associated with the starvation of the people in Nagorno-Karabakh and the deployment of the military on the borders through Azerbaijan. Everyone fears war. Nevertheless, a colleague from the Aregnazan Waldorf School continues his weekly television programme in which he tells the children the fairy tales of the Caucasian peoples. This brings up other images in their minds, which hopefully helps them to cope better with their fears. In comparison, the requests we receive from western and southern Europe seem minor. And at the same time, Waldorf facilities in western and southern Europe are always existential, because without meeting certain requirements, schools in Spain, France or Greece will not be authorised. In this respect, we work every day on the existential issues of the Waldorf movement and are extremely grateful that our donors enable us to mitigate the consequences of these challenges. We would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



## From the work of voluntary services

**C**ordial invitation, dear reader, to some flashlights of the work of the voluntary services, to what has been achieved, and to the current issues and challenges.

Applications and diplomas for volunteering abroad are exactly on target, and almost 700 volunteers will leave last summer to provide valuable support to institutions in many countries. and at the same time undergo an enormous development boost. In Germany, numbers of applicants are stable, in contrast to a decline in many institutions. As every year, our primary placement phase runs until late in September.

Recruiting volunteers for service in Germany continues to be a central issue in our work. We make it possible for people from abroad to volunteer in Germany at a very high cost. Without international volunteers, the local places in the nursing professions would no longer be available. In contrast, the satisfaction of the volunteers, especially of social therapy, is above average.

Very remarkable is the difference in the characters, in the personality development, in the maturity of the volunteers depending on the volunteer format. For most international volunteers, volunteering involves existential questions, many hopes and expectations. At the same time, we experience personalities who are a wonderful enrichment for the workplaces. For many domestic volunteers, volunteering is a time of transition and orientation, often linked to the question of which training, which course of study is the right one. At the introductory seminars they experience a great relief because it does not feel like school.

Prof. Dr. Michael Zech, lecturer in Waldorf education and member of the supervisory board of the Friends, characterized the current generation of

young people as “struggling with issues of delayed developed and an underlying sense of anxiety.” 91% of 16- to 26-year-olds agree that good friendships and close relationships with other people are particularly important and desirable. In the calendar year 2022, 630,000 or seven percent of young people in the age group 15-24 were not in education, employment or other training in Germany. The abbreviation of NEETs is “not in employment, education or training”.

It is worth highlighting that we have developed a youth brand for those interested in volunteering under the umbrella of the Friends. After very intensive preparation, we were able to present the pages of the volunteer services on our website in May with a new look.

We are looking forward to the political developments and the final budget negotiations. The voluntary services and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFS-FJ) are facing enormous spending cuts. At the same time, rising prices in many areas are a challenge in view of a noticeably higher burden on volunteers, especially in Germany. ?

In addition to Baden-Württemberg, we have now received approval for the Voluntary Ecological Year (FÖJ) in Hesse. With the support of GLS Treuhand, we were able to start a small project that enables former Russian Waldorf students with very limited language skills to volunteer in Germany.

**Stefan Wurster**

## From the work of Emergency Pedagogy

**E**mergency pedagogy means first aid for the soul. The wounds of the soul arise when the world collapses and from one day to the next, nothing is as it was. Natural disasters, such as the earthquake in Turkey in February this year, cause deep wounds. When families are torn apart, the home is destroyed and normal daily life, with school and leisure activities, can no longer take place, it shakes the soul. In constant tension, it can no longer come to rest in the body.

Hishyar Obeid, a long-time emergency pedagogy worker in northern Iraq, travelled to Turkey with an emergency education team just four weeks after the earthquake. He was also part of the follow-up mission in June and July 2023. "It was important to me that the children should be able to live in a reliable rhythm again, that they should feel safe, that they should feel taken care of and that they should be able to relax again," says Hishyar after his second mission.

First aid for the soul is not always enough to cure the pain and to support the children sufficiently in being able to develop, having experienced trauma. Sustainable structures are needed that the children can rely on; local people who join the team and continue the emergency education work from the perspective of trauma education.

This has happened in recent years, for example, in the refugee camps in northern Iraq. There, the local people now independently conduct the pedagogical work. Hishyar Obeid also founded an organisation and together with his team opened a child protection centre in the refugee camp. A training mission for an Iraqi College is currently being prepared. In addition, in Ukraine, pedagogical and therapeutic specialists completed their advanced training in emergency and trauma pedagogy in August and will integrate what they have

**Sustainable structures are needed that the children can rely on; local people who join the team and continue the emergency education work from the perspective of trauma education.**

learned into their practical work in war zones. Similarly, long-time emergency educator Reinaldo Nascimento is working with his Association for Emergency Education in Brazil: until the end of the year, he will be training local people in emergency and trauma pedagogy methods so that they can work with children on the outskirts of Brazilian metropolises in a stabilising way. At the beginning of September, colleagues from Turkey travelled to Hatay to prepare teachers there to reopen the doors of their kindergarten six months after the earthquake and to help the children cope with their trauma.

In the past six months, we have also achieved our goal of placing the work based in Karlsruhe increasingly in the hands of the local people. We support them in terms of content, conduct training events and support them in setting up their own teams. We pass on donations that we collect directly, or through the Aktion Deutschland Hilft fundraising alliance. The result is a personal, and at the same time professional collaboration, that is always geared towards the common goal of enabling children around the world to achieve a healthy development in their lives!

**Raphaëla Logemann**

## Voluntary services

# Compulsory social service for all: opportunity or imposition? A debate

It's been thirteen years since compulsory military service in Germany was suspended, and with it the civilian social service. However, since Federal President Steinmeier's plea for its reintroduction in the summer of 2022, the debate about compulsory social service for all is once again boiling over. Wouldn't it be the solution for more recognition of social professions and, ultimately, the shortage of skilled workers? Or is it an offence to the younger generation? Eva Weingart discusses this area of tension in the podcast, *Unter Freunden - Gemeinsam unterwegs auf deiner Reise ins Leben* - with Finja Werker, a former volunteer, Ulrich Crüwell, freelance filmmaker and editor of the ARD documentary, "Ein Jahr für Deutschland" - the controversy about compulsory service - and Claudio Jax, Managing Director of Volunteer Services Worldwide of the Friends of Waldorf Education, and Deputy Chairperson of AKLHÜ. We have summarised an excerpt from the podcast for "Waldorf Worldwide".

**EVA:** Finja, last year you did voluntary service at an outdoor camp in Canada. How did that time shape you?

**FINJA:** I learnt a lot on many different levels; for example, 'How do I deal with people who have a completely different social background?' The camp was held in the summer for underprivileged children, and I would say that I come from a very privileged situation. I'm a white woman from Ber-



lin, my parents have enough money to make a lot of things possible for me, and for me it was all totally natural. It's really blatant, but I never thought about it before. Now I'm very aware of my own privileges.

**EVA:** It's exciting that you're talking about privileges because Ulrich thinks that volunteering abroad is a pretty privileged thing in itself.

**ULRICH:** It's a privilege because it's simply not that well paid. You have to be able to afford to do voluntary service - even at home. The income clash is relatively high. I think you earn €1,200 in the German Armed Forces and around €200 in the Ecological Year. Volunteers tend to be young adults from academic households and less from so-called migrant backgrounds.

**CLAUDIO:** That's a crucial point you raise. I believe that in addition to the accessibility that is needed, there is also the question of how is the whole thing funded? We currently have a situation in which the funding available is very limited. We actually need something completely different; we need a major programme - something like, voluntary service or a social year for all.



**EVA:** Ulrich, in your 45-minute documentary, you dealt with the issue quite intensively. What was your original intention?

**ULRICH:** The issue was clear: the debate over compulsory hours. And while researching alternatives, I found the voluntary services and had to say, 'Wow, that's really difficult, there are 1,000 providers!' I then asked the managers of care facilities, and they said: "We really miss the civilians. We would be totally in favour of such a compulsory period". While the professionals take care of the nursing care, those doing community service back then and the volunteers today are responsible for the social side. That's a great thing, and I think nine out of ten taxpayers out there agree.

**CLAUDIO:** And the wonderful thing, of course, is that it really does influence people's lives. In Finja's case, the voluntary service crystallised her desire to go to university, while others first orientate themselves professionally. I can imagine that it makes a huge difference to how you stand in life afterwards.

**ULRICH:** In my documentary, I interviewed Campino (Die Toten Hosen), who said: "That was the most valuable time of my life. For the first time, I felt useful for something." I mean, this is a world-famous punk rocker. I think it was an important time for most people.

**EVA:** On the other hand, the comedian Kurt Krömer admits quite openly in your film that he went into hiding for two years to avoid doing civil or military service and says quite clearly that he doesn't want to be cared for by young people in his old age unless they do it voluntarily.

**CLAUDIO:** Yes, those are the reasons why I favour voluntary service in the end. At the same time, we want the same thing, essentially: to strengthen cohesion as a democratic society and preserve democracy. So how do we get to the point where a social year becomes something completely normal?

**FINJA:** I just think this compulsory thing is a total deterrent. I think it's much more valuable if you can decide for yourself when you want to get involved, and I think it's very important that you have your own motivation behind it.

**ULRICH:** I say, "Yes" to the obligation because I think the debate would otherwise get bogged down. You don't have to think of duty the way you used to; like, if you don't go, you'll go to prison. Maybe we need to find another word for "duty".

**CLAUDIO:** I'm very happy that we're having this debate again. I come from a practical background and I'm very enthusiastic about the idea of a four-pronged approach: firstly, we need a very official invitation from the Federal President (or the future Federal President), to every young person at the end of their school years, i.e. a letter with the federal eagle and a signature - scanned, of course - that warmly invites everyone to do social service. Secondly, we need clear and well-prepared information. The service needs to be subsidised more by the state; I would say to the same extent as civilian salaries were back then. And fourthly, I believe we should make it a legal right, meaning that every young person would have a right to a subsidised and attractive place to serve. If we were to implement this four-pronged approach, we would have doubled the number of volunteers to at least 200,000 within one electoral term.

Interview: Eva Weingart

- ⋮ You can listen to the entire interview on
- ⋮ Spotify or via the QR code:





Emergency Pedagogy

## After the earthquake in Turkey: parents worry about the future of their children

During our second emergency pedagogy programme in Turkey in June and July, funded by Aktion Deutschland Hilft, we worked with the parents as well as the children. Many parents took up the offer of emergency pedagogical work from the Friends of Waldorf Education and reported on their experiences, worries and fears.

From 24th June to 8th July 2023, an international team from the Friends of Waldorf Education consisting of seven Turkish, three German and two Iraqi emergency pedagogues went to Hatay province. “The destruction in the region is overwhelming,” reports the head of operations, Fiona Bay, “some areas have already been cleared, but rubble still dominates the overall picture.” Months after the quake, many people are still living in tents in front of, or next to their destroyed homes, as well as

in large tent and container camps. After an initial circle with parents and children, our team split up so that the parents could talk about the situation and share their experiences in the absence of their children.

“It was mainly mothers and a few fathers who took part in our work with parents in Hatay province,” reports Turkish emergency pedagogue Filiz Karahasanoğlu. “Many men work abroad and come home once or twice a year for a month.” This means that the mothers are almost solely responsible for the family. The advantage is that the jobs abroad have been preserved, while many people in Hatay have lost their jobs as a result of the earthquake. However, it is difficult for the women who live alone with their children in the tent camps: “Many women don’t feel safe and only want to go to the communal toilets accompanied, especially at night,” reports Karahasanoğlu.

As part of our work with the parents, we talked, among other things, about the trauma suffered and grief processes, and gave advice on parenting issues, particularly in relation to dealing with fears and nightmares. We also carried out stabilisation, body awareness, breathing and concentration and movement exercises and offered craft and hand-work activities.

**Not only the children  
but also the parents have  
experienced severe trauma.**



“The parents were very open, they had a lot to say and a great need to communicate,” reports Filiz Karahasanoğlu. “They told us how they experienced the earthquake, how they reacted and how they got the children to safety. They also talked about the mistakes they made. One participant blamed herself because she had placed a cupboard near the front door, which toppled over in the quake and blocked the way.” The biggest issue for the parents was their children’s fears. Some still refuse to sleep alone. Many do not want to leave or even enter certain places such as the house or a tent. Some became very quiet after the earthquake, no longer wanting to talk, withdrawing. Some became unusually aggressive. As many relatives died in the earthquake, there were also great fears that the surviving parents could also die. One six-year-old child asked his mother: “Mum, what should I do if you die too?” We worked with the parents on how to deal with the children’s fears and worries.

Not only the children but also the parents have experienced severe trauma. They have lost family members and other loved ones and have not been able to grieve properly because other issues and processes have taken centre stage. They look to the future with fear and anxiety as they face another winter in the shelters.

We worked with them to strengthen and expand their resources. What am I good at? How can I

reactivate my skills? What opportunities might I have? How can I organise my life, which at the moment, is very much determined by others? What can I do myself?

After we had made dreamcatchers together, the participants wanted to continue with the handcrafts,” says Filiz Karahasanoğlu. “One woman remembered that she still had some beads, so she brought them along, and the whole group made bracelets. More ideas came up and everyone looked for other materials they could find and brought them along. One participant knew how to crochet bags and taught the others. They were happy to create something together and became so productive that they even considered making and selling something.

Due to the high demand for psychological support, we contacted the Turkish Psychologists Association in Hatay to facilitate and ensure long-term psychological counselling. The families are now offered weekly counselling or therapy on an ongoing basis.

A group of Turkish emergency counsellors went back to Hatay at the end of August, and an international team is expected in October to provide further support.

**Christina Reinthal**





The start of the new school year also marks the beginning of the new WOW Day season. WOW Day is a day of action (a free choice as to when in the school year), on which Waldorf students get involved in other Waldorf projects around the world with a lot of creative commitment. On our website you will find an overview of the Waldorf initiatives that need financial support for various projects. We would like to introduce you to one of the projects here: the Vale de Luz Waldorf School in the mountains north-east of Rio de Janeiro urgently needs to renovate its school kitchen.

## **BRAZIL: Renovation work to keep the Vale de Luz Waldorf School in Brazil open**

Vale de Luz is a Waldorf school in the town of Nova Friburgo in the mountainous region north-east of Rio de Janeiro, which has been providing its pupils, most of whom come from low-income families, with a holistic education since 1991. A total of around 125 children and young people aged between 4 and 12 attend kindergarten and primary school up to class 5. In addition to the official curriculum, the school also offers artistic activities such as painting, drawing, music, theatre and cooking.

Almost all of the children come from underprivileged neighbourhoods in the city of Nova Friburgo. Most of the families do not have a stable structure. Many mothers are very young, many fathers are completely absent, either because they do not look after their children after giving birth, or after separation, or because they are in prison - a common scenario, as the community is characterised by drug dealing



and many of the families are victims of this environment. Currently, 50 per cent of families are dependent on state support in order to survive. Around one in five pupils at the Vale de Luz Waldorf School has special needs (for example, children with autism or cognitive impairments).

Due to the pandemic and various new government regulations for the operation of schools in the country, the Vale De Luz Waldorf School had to conduct some renovation work, which was already supported last year with WOW Day donations. Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to raise the total amount required to complete all the renovation work. Therefore, this year's WOW Day donations will also go towards the renovation work.

Every day, five meals are prepared in the school kitchen at Vale del Luz School for all pupils, teachers and other school staff. With the completion of the renovation work, it will be possible to fulfil the legal standards and finally obtain the necessary documentation for

the full operation of the school, without the risk of the property being closed or fines being imposed.

The school community hopes to raise a total of €7,550 through WOW Day activities.

Johanna Ruber



- WOW-Day is a global day of action under the motto "Education for Future". Think of a fundraising campaign! Whether big or small: with every action you take, you make a contribution to improving educational equality worldwide.
- **Get involved! You can find information and ideas at [waldorf-one-world.org](http://waldorf-one-world.org).**

## FINANCIAL REPORT

# Funding and support in 2022

In 2022 we were able to pass on more than 5 million Euros to Waldorf Schools, Waldorf Kindergartens, therapeutic education and social therapy institutions, as well as to teacher education institutes for Waldorf teachers, and state associations of Waldorf Schools and Kindergartens. In 2002 we supported a total of 230 Waldorf educational institutions. In addition to support from foundations and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), this is primarily made possible by your donations. We have been able to pass on donations from our International Waldorf Fund, into which free donations for the worldwide Waldorf movement are channelled, as well as from various targeted appeals for donations to institutions in recent years. These include our appeal for school meals and, of course, the appeal to alleviate the consequences of the coronavirus crisis. We would like to give you an insight into the 2022 fundraising year with the following brief descriptions of 45 fundraising projects that were supported in 2022.

Funding overview by country on p. 38/39



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## EUROPE

**FRANCE:** The École des Trois Cailloux in Resson is a village school with 36 children from first to sixth grade. Fortunately, the mayor of Resson made a vacant school building available for three years so that the school could establish itself. As it is very difficult to set up new Waldorf schools in France, we decided to make an exception to our rule and provided the school with €12,000 for the current school year.

**GREAT BRITAIN:** The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF) organises cooperation between British Waldorf schools and represents them in dealings with the ministries in Great Britain. Following the closure of a number of Waldorf schools in England for various reasons, the SWSF is fighting to preserve the British Waldorf school movement. The key issues are school licences, inspections by a body appointed by the Ministry of Education and the recognition of curricula. As the financial contributions from the remaining schools are not sufficient to fund the work of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, we supported them with €30,000 in 2022. (Image 1)

**CROATIA:** The Ozana remedial educational institution in Zagreb had to cope with an economic crisis because the city of Zagreb cut its subsi-





dies, arguing that it could no longer make funds available due to the corona crisis. In order to be able to maintain the toddler group at least until the end of the school year, which is what the Ministry of Education demands, we supported the excellent work of Ozana with €20,000.

**SLOVAKIA:** The Waldorf School ZivoZem in Borinka is only the fourth school initiative in Slovakia and is being established in a forest area not far from Bratislava by a group of young parents. The young parents are on the pioneering road, working with a lot of enthusiasm and little money. We therefore decided to approve the application to finance a wooden building for the next classes and supported it with €15,000.

**SPAIN:** When the Catalan Waldorf School La Font in Vic received permission to run the intermediate level (grades 7 to 10), it quickly became clear that the school could not meet the necessary renovation costs alone. Like all Spanish Waldorf schools, it does not receive state subsidies and works with the parental contributions for the 92 children. The school rents rooms in a former Catholic seminary, which provides enough space for the middle school; only, these have to be rebuilt. We provided €20,000 following help in previous years. (Figure 2)

The school has gone to great lengths to build the kindergarten and cannot manage the costs of relocating the kindergarten to a building still to be renovated on the new school grounds. We provided €55. 000. (Hungary)

**HUNGARY:** The Hungarian Waldorf movement has been growing strongly for many years; especially around Budapest there are many Waldorf schools and Waldorf kindergartens. One of these is the Waldorf School in Fót with its own upper school. Recently, the school was able to put up a new school building, for which it secured financing of almost €2 million (including public subsidies). Now, unfortunately, the kindergarten in Fót has to move out of its previously used building. It is beautifully located in a state-owned park, which is now going to have a change of use. The school has gone to great lengths to build the kindergarten and cannot manage the costs of relocating the kindergarten to a building still to be renovated on the new school grounds. We provided €55. 000. The precondition for this was the achievement of the overall financial target.

**HUNGARY:** Also in the vicinity of the capital is the Waldorf School in Tök, which we helped with €8,000 to purchase teaching materials.

**HUNGARY:** The Zugloi Waldorf School on the eastern industrial outskirts of Budapest planned to redesign its schoolyard with a playground and lots of plants to attract the bees, and to counteract the industrial boredom of the area with something beautiful. We gave a grant of €10,000.



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**HUNGARY:** The Waldorf School in Eger succeeded in signing a contract with the municipality under which it can use the municipal school building free of charge but has to pay for the renovation. We provided €15,000 for the roof renovation and plan to convert it into a donation if a lease agreement with right of pre-emption is available.

**HUNGARY:** The young Waldorf School in Pilisborosjenő, also located near the capital, asked for support in equipping the next classroom with furniture. For this we provided an amount of €9,000.

**HUNGARY:** A eurythmy school has been operating in the centre of Budapest for about thirty years and has produced many outstanding eurythmists, who helped make eurythmy a popular subject in Hungary, unlike in many other countries. In 2021 alone, seven graduates completed their training and now teach eurythmy. That this school of eurythmy still exists today is a miracle because every year it has to fight anew to finance its budget. The Friends have been supporting the Eurythmi School for many years and continued this in 2022 with an amount of €20,000.



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## AFRICA

**EGYPT:** The Hebet-el-Nil school in Luxor was established from the outset so that it could only function with donations from abroad. Regardless of how one assesses the situation, there are now 240 children who like to come to school every day. And that's only possible if the salaries can be paid. We supported the school in the first half of 2022 with €12,000 and in the second half with €10,000. (Figures 3, 4)

**GHANA:** The Cosmos Centre in Dormaa is a residential educational institution with a school. The older children need a life perspective, which is why the Centre wants to set up workshops (we reported in the last issue of Waldorf Worldwide). Thanks to the local chief, the rights to the neighbouring property were acquired. He even paid for the partial disposal of the illegal dump on it. We provided €30,000 for the purchase and the remaining disposal of the landfill, and cleaning up of the soil, so that workshops can be built on the site from 2023. (Figure 5)

**KENYA:** The Rudolf Steiner School in Nairobi-Mbagathi now takes care of 375 pupils from kindergarten to ninth grade. 120 children live in the school's own boarding hostel. The Friends are particularly closely linked to this

school. All the buildings were financed by the Friends; the sponsorship donations (more on page 42,) contribute significantly to the running of the school. At the beginning of the school year, the children in the boarding school are equipped with the most necessary things for school and bodily care. The cost is €80 per pupil. From the WOW Day donations we were able to contribute €10,000 for these most needed things. (Figure 6).

Preparing the school meal, which is the only meal of the day for most children outside the boarding school, costs €50,000 per year. The costs would be even higher if there were not so many vegetables, milk and eggs from the school's own garden. The school is entirely dependent on donations for its financing, as almost all children come from very disadvantaged backgrounds. We supported the school lunch with €25,000 from the school lunch fund (more on page 10/11). In order to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education, additional toilets had to be installed in the boarding school. The construction of a new sanitary block was estimated at a cost of €63,500, which we supported with €30,000. After the costs had increased considerably due to external cost increases, we provided another €25,000.

**SIERRA LEONE:** Attempts by land grabbers to evict the Goderich Waldorf School from its property in Rokel on the outskirts of Freetown have so far been successfully thwarted. The property, which we financed years ago, needed urgent protection. We supported the fencing of the property with a wall with €9,800.

**ZIMBABWE:** The Waldorf Early Childhood Center in Harare purchased a plot of land with our support last year and built a house to run the kindergarten training course and set up a Waldorf kindergarten. The participants of the kindergarten courses come from 24 locations throughout Zimbabwe. For the completion of the house and the roof we provided an amount of \$14,000. In addition, we supported the purchase of a solar system, a water tank and the drilling of a well with €10,600. (Figure 8)

**SOUTH AFRICA:** The Lesedi Waldorf School in Madietane is located far from a conurbation with reliable power supply and suffers from frequent power outages. By purchasing a solar system, the school can reduce supply insecurity, which is important for operating refrigerators and water pumps. We financed the purchase and installation of a solar system with €27,500 from the fund Rural Schools in Africa. (Figure 7)



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**SOUTH AFRICA:** The deficit caused by the Corona crisis at Gaia Waldorf School in Cape Town - the only rainbow school with mixed families in the city - could not be met by the school alone in 2022. We supported the Gaia Waldorf School with €32,000 from the Corona Fund.

**TANZANIA:** The Mwanangi Special School in Vikiindu, south of the greater Dar es Salaam area, runs a social initiative together with doctors for children with severe disabilities, in particular spina bifida and hydrocephalus. After the operation, the children can live in Vikiindu and go to school, with their mothers taking turns caring for everyone. We supported the training of teachers, the completion of a sanitary house for the treatment of children with spina bifida with €8,600 and running costs of €10,000 for 2022 and €6,330 for 2023.

## ASIA

**ARMENIA:** The Waldorf Kindergarten Gelbe Lerche in Yerevan has also developed into a regional training centre. The kitchen, which has been used for many years and is actually overloaded, and the yard where the children play, all had to be renovated, which we subsidized with €11,700 (Figure 9)

**ARMENIA:** At the Waldorf Teacher Seminar at the Aregnazan School in Yerevan, two class teacher courses and one upper school training course are currently being held. Since the beginning of the war, Armenia and Georgia have been in an even more difficult economic situation because of the many Russians who have fled. The Russian refugees have far more money than the Armenians and Georgians and drive up prices. Neither the students of the teacher education seminar nor the school are in a position to cover the entire cost of the training. However, the education is urgently needed for the continued existence of Waldorf education in the Caucasus. We therefore supported the teaching fees with € 15,000.

**GEORGIA:** The large and successful social therapy facility Qedeli in Signnaghi is facing major financial difficulties since the death of a major donor. The state subsidies and the meagre payments of the parents are far from sufficient to keep the establishment alive with three houses, agriculture and workshops. We try to find dedicated donations between €50 and €70 thousand per year and provided €15,000 from our own funds. (Figure 10)

**ISRAEL:** The Yasmin Waldorf School in Bin-



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yama, which has been known to us for some time, asked for support for investments in its new location. Due to the good cooperation so far, we gave another interest-free loan of ILS 100,000 from the Israel Fund. (Figure 12)

**LEBANON:** The Step Together remedial school in Beirut suffers from high inflation and rising costs like almost everyone else in Lebanon. Costs continue to rise; there is no end in sight. The state structures have already collapsed and the subsidies for the Lebanese pupils in the school are not paid by the state (the 27 children of other nationalities, for example from Syria, Palestine, etc., are not financed anyway). Only the so-called “fresh dollar” is valuable. In addition to earmarked donations, we provided €30,000 for the ongoing operation and transport costs. (Figure 11)

**MYANMAR:** Foreign teachers at Lotus Garden School in Pyin Oo Lwin left the country during the pandemic. The salaries of local educators proved too low to cover the increase in food prices. During the pandemic, the school building was severely damaged by termites and needs to be restored. We gave €3,000 for salary subsidies and €22,800 for the restoration of the school building.



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**TAJIKISTAN:** Outside Chudshand there have been Waldorf school classes within a state school for 20 years. These are the only Waldorf education classes in the country. And it is a miracle that the founders are able to persevere to this day and defend their Waldorf classes. Now, a therapeutic pedagogical room is to be built, for which furniture and equipment are needed. We initially subsidized their purchase with €2,000.

**TURKEY:** The Waldorf Kindergarten Her Çocuk Bir Evren in Istanbul's Beşiktaş district, which cared for 90 children, planned to move because long-term rental costs were too high and there were no long-term development opportunities at the Beşiktaş site. Due to the high inflation in Turkey and the decline in parental contributions on account of corona, a deficit in operating costs arose and the kindergarten could not cope on its own. We supported the kindergarten with €12,000 from the Corona Fund. On the other hand, due to inflation, the conversion costs got out of hand, so we mitigated the problems with €30,000. (Figure 13)

**TURKEY:** As in previous years, we supported the Istanbul Association Friends of Waldorf Education (BSDD), which organizes cooperation in the country and conducts a Waldorf kindergarten and Waldorf teacher training in

Istanbul, with €30,000 to enable the trainings to take place. In addition, we supported the further training of a colleague at the Goetheanum with €7,000, who is to take over the art lessons in the future.

**VIETNAM:** In Ho Chi Minh City, a eurythmy training programme began in September 2022 with 19 students, some of whom have moved to HCMC from other cities. Some need help with the financing of course fees. The 39 Waldorf kindergartens and ten Waldorf schools in the country all hope to have teachers for teaching eurythmy in the future. That is why we supported the training with €20,200.

**VIETNAM:** Founded in 2017, Nila Waldorf School in Hanoi is the only Waldorf school recognised by the state authorities. It offers primary education and also managed to survive the Covid period. Around the middle school (in Vietnam: 6th to 9th grade), the available funds – mainly private donations from the founders – are no longer sufficient. We have therefore been asked to support the establishment of the intermediate / middle school level. Because it is a pioneering school and the construction must succeed, we decided to allocate \$20,000 for the school years 2022/23 and 2023/24 and \$10,000 for the school year 2024/25. (Figure 14)



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## AMERICA

**ARGENTINA:** The Waldorf School El Trigal in Villa de las Rosas received €7,500 from us in 2021 to compensate for a liquidity shortage caused by the lack of parental contributions triggered by the Corona crisis. In 2022, the demanding situation caused by the pandemic did not improve significantly, which is why we supported the ongoing operation of this, the oldest Waldorf school in the Traslasierra region with €8,000.

**ARGENTINA:** The Waldorf School Valle de Sol in Neuquen, Patagonia, is growing, which is a good thing. Only the buildings don't grow so fast. We therefore supported the purchase and installation of a container with four classrooms with €30,000.

**ARGENTINA:** The rather young Waldorf kindergarten Colmena Azul in Pampa del Infierno, a county town in the province of Chaco in northern Argentina, was supported by Corona grants as early as 2021. In 2022, we supported the running costs again with €5,040 from the Corona Fund. (Figure 15)

**ARGENTINA:** The Waldorf School Semilla Dorada in the east of Buenos Aires now supports 44 children in kindergarten and 119 in school. Planning for a building for the upper school has advanced. We supported the construction of two classrooms (phase 1), with €20,000 and offered a loan of €15,000 from the South America Fund.

**ARGENTINA:** The Waldorf School Raices, also located in Hurlingham in the east of Buenos Aires and supported by a highly committed group of mothers and teachers, also needs to build the next classrooms. We supported the school with €12,000 for the building, which is now completed and is being used extensively.

**ARGENTINA:** The kindergarten in Capilla del Monte is attended by children from many families who have moved from the Buenos Aires metropolitan area to the province west and northwest of Cordoba, since life in rural areas is easier to finance under the current economic conditions of Argentina. The city donated a plot of land to the kindergarten, which is now being built on. We provided € 40,000 for the completion of the five-room building.



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**ARGENTINA:** The Waldorf School El Bolson in Lago Puelo in rural Patagonia, which had to overcome many hurdles in its first twenty years, received a piece of land from the school's parents, on which the school is now being built step by step. We supported the construction of classes 7 and 8 on the new plot with €35,000.

**BRAZIL:** The Vale de Luz Waldorf School in Nova Friburgo is one of the few publicly subsidized Waldorf schools in Brazil. The state finances the salaries but not the buildings. We supported the implementation of the stricter construction requirements imposed by Corona with €15,000. (Figure 16)

**GUATEMALA:** In the last two years, due to the corona pandemic, the number of students at Escuela Waldorf El Caracol in San Marcos La Laguna has declined sharply. Most of the parents who moved from the United States, Canada and Europe left the country. Today, mainly children from the Mayan families living in the area attend Escuela El Caracol. In previous years we supported a mentor from Colombia, an experienced colleague of the Waldorf School Luis Horacio Gomez in Cali. In 2022, we provided the school with \$11,700 to bring this mentor to Guatemala to work on the further qualification of the college. We also donated €2,000 from the school lunch fund to fi-



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nance school lunches, and €6,000 to repair a leaky roof. (Figure 17)

**COLOMBIA:** The collaboration of class teachers in Colombia took place during the pandemic by zoom. After this longer break, a four-day conference of 120 Colombian Waldorf teachers took place in October 2022 at the Luis Horacio Gomez School in Cali. In order to make this important collaboration possible, we gave a grant of \$5,400 towards the costs.

**COLOMBIA:** Before the pandemic, the Inti Huasi Waldorf School in Bogotá had a serious prospect



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of using a plot of land on the outskirts of the city for long-term work. Unfortunately, in the post-pandemic landscape this prospect evaporated. The school couldn't finance its budget. We supported the school from the Corona Fund with €25,000 for salaries and some necessary renovations. (Figure 18)

**PERU:** The educational and social initiative Estrella del Sauce near Tarapoto in the Peruvian lowlands has always worked on the minimum subsistence level. Lourdes Jibaja and Martin Stevens have been caring for neglected children and adolescents, and pregnant young women for many years, but they also offer courses for illiterate grandmothers and do whatever is needed. This social work works mainly thanks to our regular support, in 2022 with \$10,000.

**PERU:** Teachers at the exemplary Colegio Waldorf Micael in Lima financed the two-year school closure caused by the pandemic with radical salary cuts. Since this could not be continued for years and given that parents are still unable to pay contributions, in 2022 we gave a monthly salary subsidy of € 6,000, a total of € 72,000, from the Corona Donations Fund.

**PERU:** The Sonqo Kusichyi educational and social institution in Lima received support

from the Corona Fund as early as 2021. In 2022, it needed money again, because it was only able to maintain its operations during the pandemic with our help. We supported them with €8,500.

**URUGUAY:** The Rudolf Steiner School Del Bosque in Lagomar was able to acquire a plot of land for the construction of an upper school from an inheritance from Lucia Beltran, one of the anthroposophical pioneers in Uruguay. Since 2020, classes 7 and 8 and a kindergarten have been working on this property. Now the primary school classes are to be added, for which rooms have to be built. In addition, a dining room and a multipurpose room have to be built, as they are required for the school permit. We supported the project with a grant of €15,000 and an interest-free loan of €50,000 from the South America Fund.



Our annual report with complete financial report and reports from all departments of the Friends of Education can be found on our website at [freunde-waldorf.de/transparenz](https://freunde-waldorf.de/transparenz)



# Financial Report: Support by country



## North America

Costa Rica . . . . .	400,00 €
Guatemala . . . . .	67.954,58 €
Canada . . . . .	135.542,00 €
Mexico . . . . .	16.114,49 €
USA . . . . .	94.693,83 €

## South America

Argentina . . . . .	136.288,00 €
Brazil . . . . .	468.657,92 €
Chile . . . . .	25.100,00 €
Ecuador . . . . .	12.037,50 €
Columbia . . . . .	55.511,60 €
Peru . . . . .	200.031,79 €
Uruguay . . . . .	15.000,00 €

## Africa

Egypt . . . . .	39.876,76 €
Ethiopia . . . . .	47.000,00 €
Botswana . . . . .	1.580,00 €
Burkina Faso . . . . .	350,00 €
Ghana . . . . .	15.000,00 €
Kenya . . . . .	341.306,87 €
Namibia . . . . .	185.804,32 €
Sierra Leone . . . . .	29.186,72 €
Zimbabwe . . . . .	62.801,44 €
South Africa . . . . .	380.695,96 €
Tanzania . . . . .	95.643,61 €
Uganda . . . . .	4.000,00 €

## Europe

Bosnia . . . . .	11.760,00 €	Latvia . . . . .	1.105,42 €	Russia . . . . .	62.982,17 €
Bulgaria . . . . .	700,00 €	Lithuania . . . . .	10.200,00 €	Switzerland . . . . .	78.192,00 €
Estonia . . . . .	18.260,00 €	Moldova . . . . .	50.407,35 €	Slovakia . . . . .	15.000,00 €
France . . . . .	37.180,00 €	Austria . . . . .	7.750,00 €	Spain . . . . .	26.343,40 €
Greece . . . . .	5.550,00 €	Poland . . . . .	53.319,44 €	Czech Republic . . . . .	16.200,00 €
Great Britain . . . . .	43.700,00 €	Portugal . . . . .	425,00 €	Ukraine . . . . .	921.872,47 €
Croatia . . . . .	31.289,00 €	Romania . . . . .	45.414,00 €	Hungary . . . . .	83.692,76 €

## Asia

Armenia . . . . .	99.602,93 €
Georgia . . . . .	112.391,20 €
India . . . . .	31.130,58 €
Israel . . . . .	17.551,20 €
Kyrgyzstan . . . . .	15.010,00 €
Lebanon . . . . .	139.273,34 €
Myanmar . . . . .	37.000,00 €
Nepal . . . . .	77.493,51 €
Philippines . . . . .	49.997,00 €
Sri Lanka . . . . .	19.285,00 €
Thailand . . . . .	5.173,72 €
Turkey . . . . .	93.284,47 €
Vietnam . . . . .	18.504,93 €

# Donate and help

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With our online donation tool you can use PayPal or your credit card for your donation.

[Klick here to get to the donation form.](#)

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Erziehungskunst  
Rudolf Steiners**

**Friends of Waldorf Education  
(Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners e. V.)**  
Weinmeisterstr. 16, 10178 Berlin, Germany  
berlin@freunde-waldorf.de

→ Ausschneiden und  
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per Fax schicken



## How can I help?

With unrestricted donations to our International Cooperation Fund, the *Friends of Waldorf Education* can respond to urgent requests and support initiatives worldwide. With earmarked donations, you can provide targeted support for specific Waldorf institutions. As a sponsor you can give children the opportunity to attend a Waldorf School and thus support the school. With your involvement in WOW-Day, students support disadvantaged children in a Waldorf initiative abroad.

## Will my donation go where it should?

We forward 100% of sponsorship donations, donations for the International Relief Fund and earmarked donations as well as the proceeds of WOW-Day to the institutions without deducting administrative expenses.

## How do I make a difference as a supporting member?

As a supporting member you support our budget. This means that 100 percent of the donations we receive can be forwarded on to Waldorf educational initiatives. We can support institutions in difficult situations and report on Waldorf initiatives worldwide in our publications. As a supporting member you will receive our journal *Waldorf Worldwide* and our monthly e-newsletter several times a year, which will provide you with information on new impulses from our work. We are thrilled about every support that benefits our important work!

### Privacy policy for sponsors

The protection of your data is important to us and we treat your data with strict confidentiality. In order to send you a donation receipt, we record your address data. We will not share your address with unauthorized third parties. In addition, we inform you about our work four times a year with our journal "Waldorf Worldwide" and the appeals for donations. If you do not wish to receive information from us, you can notify us at any time. We provide the institutions with data on sponsors so that the institutions can thank their sponsors directly. Data is thus transferred to third countries, if the sponsored institutions are located in these countries. The donation projects are not authorized to pass on the data to third parties. You can object to the transfer of data at any time.

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Kenya

## My sponsored child at the Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi

In March 2023, with help from Mercy Njoki, the school's sponsorship coordinator, and with the support of the Friends of Waldorf Education, I arranged to visit my sponsored child C. at the Rudolf Steiner School in Mbagathi.

When I arrived, Mercy greeted me joyfully and took me on a tour of the entire school grounds. First, she showed me the kindergarten and the school's boarding accommodation, which houses the children whose families live further away from the school. I was particularly taken with the large school garden and the eurythmy and work rooms on the extensive grounds.

Afterwards, during the breakfast break, I met C. with her class and the class teacher. All the children of the lively school community had gathered in the large dining room and to everyone's delight they had chocolate porridge that day. The children sat class by class at large wooden tables with benches. During lunch, the headteacher and some of the teachers answered all my questions.



In the afternoon, my sponsored child's class had watercolour painting on the timetable. Next door, the sixth grade had handwork - knitting, embroidery and sewing. The handwork teacher explained patiently, and the children were enthusiastic. Waldorf education is alive here

**Antje Scheerer**





**W**e were very happy about Antje Scheerer's visit. The children and their teachers proudly showed Antje the large school garden where biodynamic agriculture is practised. How important and sustainable the cultivation of fruit and vegetables is started to become clear during lunch together at school.

Many parents cannot feed their children sufficiently, so the school lunch is often the only warm meal of the day. Despite financial constraints, we

attach great importance to ensuring that the children not only somehow get their fill, but that they receive a healthy and rich diet. Eating lunch together strengthens the children's social skills and promotes community. After lunch, the children presented their artwork from the painting and handwork lessons.

**Mercy Njoki**  
(Sponsorship Coordinator at Rudolf Steiner  
School Mbagathi)





## BILDUNGSPATEN- SCHAFTEN

### DEAR READER,

Rudolf and Emil Molt founded the first Waldorf school with the intention of admitting all children regardless of their parents' economic situation. It is close to our hearts that Waldorf schools are able, through educational sponsorships, to educate children from socially and financially disadvantaged families over the long term. Emil Molt's impulse is a model for us.

With your educational sponsorship, you enable hard-pressed Waldorf schools around the world, with little or no state support, to live up to this principle.

The minimum contribution for an educational sponsorship is €20 per month. The amount of the real school fees is usually between €35 and €200. As a sponsor, you will receive a letter, or short report twice a year with a photo of your sponsored child or class.

We would be delighted if you would consider becoming an education sponsor! Simply fill out the form "Donate and Help" (p. 34), and write down the name of the child, or the sponsored class, as well as the school. Every educational sponsorship is special. If you have any questions or requests, we are happy to talk to you personally in advance.

### KENYA, NAIROBI

#### RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL MBAGATHI

Currently about 400 children attend the Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi and its kindergartens. 120 pupils live in the school's own boarding accommodation. The staffing body consists mainly of Kenyan teachers, whose work is often supported by international colleagues.

A small biodynamic farm provides the school community with nutritious meals and offers opportunities for all kinds of educational activities. Since 95% of the families cannot pay the school fees in full, the staff are grateful that many of the parents living in the immediate vicinity actively help to maintain and care for the school.

Sponsor a child at the Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi in Kenya now!

- Fabian Michel
- Phone + 49 (0) 30 617026 30
- sponsorships@freunde-waldorf.de

**GUATEMALA****ESCUELA CARACOL**

**Teo (5)** was quite shy at the beginning of the school year, but now he greets his teacher confidently and plays eagerly with his friends. He sings along happily in class and when he comes home, he sings the songs he learned in class.

**SOUTH AFRICA****IMHOFF WALDORF SCHOOL**

**Zeeva (5)** comes to kindergarten in the morning with sparkling eyes full of excitement. She usually starts the day with some needlework; she has already sewn a fish and a cat doll. She also lovingly takes care of the plants in the school grounds.

**SOUTH AFRICA****HERMANUS WALDORF SCHOOL**

**Ayola (9)** is lively and helpful. She is very ambitious and carries out her work with great care. Ayola enjoys participating in lessons, especially in role plays. Her creative ideas are always an enrichment in class.

**PHILIPPINES****GAMOT COGON WALDORF SCHOOL**

**Gino (8)** is always on the move and plays energetically with his friends. His hearty laughter can be heard throughout the schoolyard. Gino loves storytelling especially; you can literally see the stories come alive in his eyes.

**RUSSIA****WALDORF SCHOOL ROSTOK**

**Leonid (12)** has a close relationship with his twin sister. He spends a lot of time reading and loses his shyness when he tells others about the adventures of the characters in his books. Leonid enjoys playing board games with his friends and family.

**PERU****SONQO KUSICHIY**

**Christopher (11)** loves music and playing the guitar. He is very curious and loves adventure. Waldorf education offers him an excellent framework to develop his skills and strengthen his talents. In the schoolyard, Christopher likes to play harmless pranks.

**RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL MBAGATHI, Kenya, Nairobi**

**Brenda (7)** is a bright and quiet girl with a lot of imagination. She maintains close friendships with many of her classmates. In her free time, she likes to read stories, which she then relates to her mother with fascination.



**Amani (6)** is the eighth of nine siblings. He has many friends in class and is always up for a joke. Amani likes to move a lot, especially swimming and playing football.



**Tamara (7)** is a friendly and polite girl. Her young mother lost her job during the pandemic and has been dependent on her family for support ever since. Tamara is very independent for her age and helps with simple household chores at home.



## CLASS SPONSORSHIP

# Ho Chi Minh City: Dieu Giac Waldorf Kindergarten

The Dieu Giac kindergarten began its work in 2002, in a building located on the grounds of the Dieu Giac Buddhist monastery in Ho Chi Minh City. Of course, there is also a temple there. What is not self-evident is that the nuns run an orphanage as well as a vegetarian restaurant. The kindergarten is located in a corner of the orphanage's courtyard and has a separate kitchen. The children do not have their own playground but use the communal courtyard as an outdoor play area and visit the green temple garden on special occasions.

**T**he kindergarten group is made up of children from the orphanage as well as girls and boys from surrounding families who cannot afford the fees for other kindergartens. Even the state schools and kindergartens in Vietnam charge high fees. In the Dieu Giac kindergarten, the children are taught every day.

The teachers and the cook grew up in the Dieu Giac orphanage themselves. They now live outside the complex with their young families and come to the kindergarten every day to give something back to the large family they come from and serve the community.

- ⋮ **Take on an educational sponsorship for the**
- ⋮ **Dieu Giac kindergarten now!**



## Dear Readers,

In this issue we report in detail about children who live in relative poverty. Poverty comes in many forms. For example, we tell you how the children of a Waldorf school in Ethiopia are faring after their school was damaged during a two-year war in the Tigray region (page 5). We tell of children who cannot rely on receiving regular nutritious meals at home (page 10). Then there are children who work in the countryside during the holidays and do not get to go to the beach (page 12). We also tell of children and young people who live in such dangerous areas that every walk out of the house carries a certain risk (pages 13-16). And we write about children who have been traumatised by an earthquake in their home country and who lived in the rubble of this tragedy for many months (page 24).

I can imagine that this can sometimes be quite depressing for you, dear readers. I often feel this way when writing or editing texts. You want to help everywhere and yet; you know that you can't help everywhere to the same extent.

But the beauty of my work and your donations is that every gesture and every thought make a difference. A small donation can mean a hot meal. A letter to the child you sponsor can bring shining eyes. A thought for people who have to live in war and your own striving for peace can make a real difference. And it doesn't always have to be a donation or practical help. Awareness of these situations can already change the world.

I would like to thank you for walking these sometimes-difficult paths with us. Great things can come from many small gestures.

With a big thank you for your support of our work,

Christina Reinthal  
*Public Relations*  
*Friends of Waldorf Education*  
*c.reinthal@freunde-waldorf.de*  
*Tel. 030-617026-35*



## Forwarding 100 % and financing our work

Since 1971, we have succeeded in forwarding abroad 100 per cent of all earmarked donations! In order to ensure that this can also be achieved in the future, we would like to ask for your support.

There are many possibilities:

- Participate in the campaign 10% and donate an extra 10% to the work of the *Friends* in addition to your earmarked donation.
- Become a supporting member and support us regularly with a freely chosen amount. In this way you create a secure basis for our work.
- Help us with a single donation for our work.
- An effective way to secure our work for future generations of children is a legacy in your will

We can only help thanks to contributions from people who have confidence in our work.

**Hence our heartfelt request:  
Stay committed!**

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