

Karlsruhe, October 6th, 2016

Kindergarten-Founding in Gaza Long-Term Support in the Crisis Region

From October 23rd to 30th, 2016, an emergency pedagogy team from the Friends of Waldorf Education will once again travel to the Gaza Strip to support war traumatised children and adolescents. Support for this mission included many individual donations made to the volunteer team members.

For many years now, the conflicts in the Gaza-Strip have rarely calmed down; the residents are subject to on-going tensions. The last emergency pedagogy mission took place in 2014. At that time, the up to now worst Gaza war had ended. Its result was over 2,200 killed Palestinians, including 500 children. Thousands of people were injured, around 20,000 houses destroyed or damaged. Since then, the situation on the ground has hardly changed at all. Many families are traumatised over multiple generations and are strained again and again by the constant threats and conflicts, which repeatedly flame-up. The situation is particularly dire for the many children and adolescents.

The first emergency pedagogy mission in the Gaza-Strip took place in 2009, but it had to be aborted after only a few days due to safety concerns. In the meantime, many missions followed in the Gaza-Strip, which led to friendships and long-term cooperation partners.

Our long-term project partner has been contributing to re-building efforts for many years, where entire streets were levelled to the ground. Already a youth centre and a Child Friendly Space have been created. Now Reem Abu Jaber is building a kindergarten and education centre along with other helpers. The institutions open up a new pedagogical field in Gaza, in which the development of the entire person is at the centre, emphasised Peter Elsen, eurhythmist and member of the emergency pedagogy team. The building of the new kindergarten is already well underway and can now be finished with donations from a charity run, which took place as part of WOW-Day. The dedication of the building will take place this year. For this reason, the current mission in October will focus on the professional training of Palestinian pedagogues in addition to the direct pedagogical work with children and adolescents.

The new and old local colleagues, some of whom the emergency pedagogues already know from past missions, should be further trained and advised. Short continuing education units and practical examples should support them and help them to build-up the kindergarten and education centre.

The five-person team consists of two Waldorf-pedagogues, a social and experiential pedagogue, an art therapist, and an eurhythmist. They are all experienced emergency pedagogues and have already taken part in multiple missions in the Gaza Strip.

Donations Account

GLS Bank Bochum BLZ 430 609 67 Account 800 800 700
IBAN DE06 4306 0967 0800 8007 00
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*The **Friends of Waldorf Education** are worldwide sponsors of a free education system. Since 1971 they have advocated for Waldorf education and the freedom of education systems. Since 1993 the office in Karlsruhe has organized and supervised international volunteer services worldwide and has to date made it possible for over 7,000 people to complete a social service in over 350 projects in more than 60 countries. Now around 600 young people annually take part in the programme. Since the summer of 2011 it has also been possible to complete a 12-month civil service in anthroposophic institutions in Germany through the association.*

Since 2006 the Friends of Waldorf Education have been active in the area of emergency pedagogy. Following the outbreak of a war or a natural disaster, they worked with psychologically traumatized children and adolescents in Lebanon (2006), China (2008 and 2013); Indonesia (2009), Haiti (2010), Kyrgyzstan (2010), Japan (2011), and Kenya (2012-2013), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014), Greece (2015), Slovenia (2015), Nepal (2015-2016), Ecuador (2016), Gaza (2009-2016) the Philippines (2013-2016), Germany (2014-2016), Paris (2016), Brussels (2016), and Kurdistan-Iraq (2013-2016).