



- Excerpts from our work, financial report
- Anniversary: 40 Years Friends of Waldorf Education

Topic: Waldorf Education in Asia

- China/Taiwan: In the country of dragons
- China between tradition and modern times
- India: Fourth Asian Waldorf Teacher Conference
- Japan: An opportunity for worldwide reflection
- Malaysia: Experiences for the journey of life
- Nepal: When teachers are not just teachers
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- Japan: Shocking images and unsettled souls
- WOW-Day
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Tasks and Goals

The Friends of Waldorf Education foster Waldorf initiatives worldwide. They advise and support almost 700 facilities in 70 countries. Since 1976 the association's work has been focused on funding Waldorf schools and kindergartens as well as therapeutic and curative-educational institutions. Through the "International Relief Fund", donations without appropriation can be assigned all around the globe and to a 100% to initiatives in need of financial support. Furthermore the mediation of sponsorships allows children living in difficult circumstances to attend a Waldorf school. A key to the development of Waldorf education is the global promotion of teacher training.

In developing countries, the Friends of Waldorf Education fund school buildings together with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Since 2001, official relations exist with UNESCO. In addition "WOW-Day" is being organized as an annual fundraising campaign in cooperation with the European Council for Steiner Education and the German Federation of Waldorf Schools.

Since 1993, the association also offers international voluntary services. With some 600 deployments a year, the Friends of Waldorf Education are one of the largest organizations in Germany offering such an opportunity and are officially certified with the Quifd-Seal. The "weltwärts" program and the International Voluntary Service enable young people to volunteer in a social initiative abroad. At the same time, the incoming program allows international volunteers, to gain practical experience in anthroposophical institutions in Germany. Currently a new collaboration is being established with the Association for Anthroposophical Curative Education, Social Therapy and Social Work for the mediation of internship opportunities in Germany.

The year 2006 marked the birth of the emergency education-program, with the purpose to support trauma victims in war zones and disaster affected areas and assist them in processing dramatic experiences as well as providing psychosocial stabilization. Since then, numerous missions were conducted in countries affected by war and natural disaster.

The work of the Friends of Waldorf Education is entirely funded through memberships and free donations. If you wish to support the aims and work of the Friends of Waldorf Education, we sincerely ask you for your contribution.

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Excerpts from the work of the Friends of Waldorf Education

“Save Childhood” is the title of the German TIMES from 8 September 2011. Childhood is being taken away from children, according to the thesis, because they are misused as a market for so much. Attention, love and honesty from parents and teachers could save childhood.

Dear Reader,

They must often change, who would be constant in happiness or wisdom.

CONFUCIUS

There has certainly been change in Asia this year, filling the region sometimes with hope, sometimes with anxiety. In the autumn edition of our newsletter, you will read about selected examples of some positive changes within the Asian Waldorf movement that affect the educational work and raise new questions.

The Waldorf movement is growing rapidly. Not only in East Asia as for example in China, but also in Southeast Asia. Many small initiatives have developed in recent years, despite the difficult financial situation. More and more the question arises, as to how alternative approaches in education can be implemented in our rapidly changing consumer-oriented world. Many people are looking for places where children can perceive their own development and embrace an uncertain future. They are simply looking for healthy islands amidst the chaos.

Amazingly old traditions enjoy reinforced support, besides all the rapid changes. Two international conferences, the Fourth Asian Waldorf Teachers Conference in Hyderabad (India) and the meeting of Chinese school initiatives in Chengdu resulted in eager discussions of how Waldorf educational elements can be connected with own cultural traditions.

And the Fukushima disaster in March 2011 got many people to rethink. In Japan, there have been many reflective moments in the aftermath, with people thinking about errors and alternatives. Especially the therapeutic aspect of Waldorf education has become a central topic. Japan not only learns for itself, but also triggers a global reflection.

Furthermore, this year marks an important anniversary for us: the Friends of Waldorf Education celebrate their 40th Birthday. We feel that we can be proud for all these years. A lot has changed and many wonderful friendships have developed.

In this spirit, enjoy reading!

Your Katharina Kurz

When the first Waldorf school was founded, Rudolf Steiner took advantage of every opportunity to talk to the children of the first Waldorf school and their teachers and parents. Tirelessly, he indicated that one can only be an able man, if one follows three basic virtues in life, as well as in school life: attentiveness, love and diligence. These often-repeated words of the spiritus rector of the first Waldorf school are still relevant today. According to the THE TIMES, if these values are not considered, then the consequences of the effects of these destructive forces for Childhood become only visible for society during later decades. Rudolf Steiner emphasised the effects of these virtues, that are so closely linked to the ability of relationship building, as he wanted a school that fosters children’s skills, strengthens their life forces and teaches humaneness. For a man, who possesses skill, is healthy and has internalized humaneness, may actively shape the future of society.

On 10 October 1971 the association “Friends of Waldorf Education” was founded by Ernst Weißert and Dr. Manfred Leist, in order to serve an education, that follows the golden key words: relationship-building skills, health, attention, diligence and love. During the first

years, there was little activity. In 1976 a single school was funded with € 5,113. Only after 1976 the situation changed when some former Waldorf schools took over leading roles within the association and in 2010, 234 schools, kindergartens and special education facilities were supported with a total of € 3.8 million. During the 35 years of financial support of Waldorf education abroad, 684 institutions received a total of € 66,823,524.85 - thanks to the generous willingness to help of many, many people, especially in Germany, who share the common aim of developing Waldorf Education around the globe.

To date we have succeeded in financing the work of our association independently of donations. We always forward all donations at 100% to the recipients, without deductions. The costs for the work of the association comprise financial management and the advisory and networking responsibilities for schools and kindergartens around the world. We entirely fund these parts of our work through membership fees, interest income and donations that we specifically receive for this purpose. We are often asked why we have chosen this way and not just finance our own work through deductions from donations. We are intentionally following this solution,



- because we advocate a conscious use of money
- because we would like that our donors tell us specifically if we may use a portion of their donation for our own work
- because we wish to avoid all promotional onset of emotion
- because we appeal to the reason of our donors
- because we wish to differentiate donations intended for purposes abroad and donations for our work
- because we want to act and report in an open and transparent manner.

An example of the work of the “Friends” accompanying the world school movement certainly is the Waldorf Teachers Conference in Asia, which was held for the fourth time in May 2011 in Hyderabad, India. Since 1995 we are closely connected with the Waldorf school movement in Asia that began to sprout at around that time. We supported its development by promoting cooperation, first by discussions at a round table and then through teacher training, held since 2005 on the seven-day conference for Waldorf teachers in Asia. With all their joy of collaboration and interest in educational matters the colleagues in Asia did not even mind temperatures well above 40 degrees Celsius. Colleagues from all four Waldorf schools in Hydera-

bad and the Friends of Waldorf Education jointly organized the meeting. The number of working groups compared to previous years, has grown again as well as the intensity of cooperation.

Some time ago, when we heard that the conversion of the Waldorf school in Tbilisi from a government school into an independently operated facility would entail the loss of property and buildings, we immediately investigated our options, then acted and now have received to our great surprise, a remarkable reaction. The city of Tbilisi has offered to sell the property far below the market price of 600,000 Lari (about € 254,000). Through the fundraising of the Friends of Waldorf Education about € 130,000 were raised to secure total financing together with a few other donations, contributions from Georgian parents and foundation funds. For this amazing result we would like to take this opportunity and once more express heartfelt thanks to our members and donors. Hopefully we can report about a successful deal in the next newsletter.

Meanwhile, we have also managed, to further help the Lesedi Waldorf School in Madietane, South Africa. Recently, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

(BMZ) approved an application, through which the Lesedi School is now able to erect a new building for its hostel. As a result, more than 80 children can now live at school. Another request to the BMZ is in preparation for the integrative Waldorf School in San Marcos La Laguna, Guatemala, which is successfully offering a common education for Indigenous, European and American children. Furthermore, the large project for the Windhoek Waldorf School in Namibia was also successfully completed and approved by the BMZ. We are extremely pleased that we are able to accomplish such projects with the help of our experienced volunteers and in financial cooperation with the BMZ.

With our educational sponsorships another field of work continues to grow and meets the growing need for establishing direct contact. More and more people wish to actively commit to a very specific situation and establish contact with the sponsored children and their teachers. Our sponsorships particularly promote school attendance and are therefore educational vouchers.

During the 40 years in which the Association Friends of Waldorf Education exists, the Waldorf movement has become truly international. Just now, in

our last board meeting we have dealt with requests from schools and kindergartens from Russia, Romania, and Slovakia, from Guatemala, Argentina, South Africa and Kenya, as well as from China and even from the Fiji Islands. In these 40 years we have learned a lot together with the growing Waldorf movement, gained many experiences and adjusted our job to better cope with the increasingly difficult social challenges. Thus our effort to contribute to saving childhood in the world has been increasingly strengthened. However, there are big tasks lying ahead in the years and decades to come and we will continue to work towards our goal to preserve the valuable childhood forces.

Nana Göbel

Financial Report 2010: How did we allocate your money?

Thanks to your help, we were able to pass on over 3.8 million euros to 234 different initiatives during the fiscal year 2010. Your contributions went to Waldorf schools and kindergartens, special education- and social therapy facilities throughout the world. Furthermore, they also included the operations of our emergency-pedagogy teams and the support for training teachers, kindergarten teachers and special educators.

In 2010 the largest proportion of money went to South America with 1.8 million euros, where the promotion of educational work in Brazil remains our main focus. This is partly due to the large number of Waldorf initiatives that operate in Brazil, but also to the intense relationship of many of our donors to the educational work in the favela of Monte Azul, to where we forwarded just below 300,000 €.

In autumn 2010, we issued a call for donations in order to help CES Waldorf to be able to continue their valuable work in Bogota. We are very pleased that in 2010 we were able to transfer an amount of € 103,000 and € 98,000 already in 2011, to the children and teenagers in the slum of Sierra Morena. This money came from WOW-Day donations, our call for donations and our own fundraising activities. On one of his visits, the initiator of CES Waldorf described the reality of young people who are confronted with violence, drugs and shootings on a daily basis: "They can either take a gun and shoot or carve soapstone at our facility." First

I had to laugh, but upon reflection I realized how aptly these words describe the unimaginable extremes faced by children and adolescents. Of course, the work of social workers comprises a lot more than soapstone carving, but this incredible picture is something I would like to share with you.

In addition, more than one million euros were transferred to African initiatives. In Kenya, the Mbagathi Waldorf School was able to expand its residential home and build two additional classrooms. We have also supported the school with a loan for the purchase of property and the planned vocational training and high school education. The highest proportion of donations went to South Africa with more than 400,000 €. Since many years we are already supporting the establishment of Educare Centres in the townships of Cape Town, working closely together with the Centre for Creative Education in Cape Town. In addition to teacher training we have also increased the available space for the care of infants by supporting smaller construction



projects. At the Hekima Waldorf School in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, we helped with the financial support of teacher training, through educational vouchers for orphans and the financing of the property for the new school building.

In case schools want to build, we enter a stage of intense collaboration. This means answering questions like: Do the planned buildings correspond with the needs of the school body, will the planned building be filled with life and is the financing proposal realistic? Only when we are really behind the concept, we turn to the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to ask for support. In 2010 there were fewer building applications that were ready for submission to the BMZ. This fact is reflected in the financial support provided by various foundations and the BMZ.

Out of the 3.8 million euros, which we received in 2010 for the promotion of the international school movement, 126.000 € were intended to be used freely as part of the Interna-

tional Relief Fund. From these donations, we are able to help facilities that ask us for immediate support or we can assist foreign students with a scholarship. At the same time, covering travel expenses of honorary lecturers or staff members for advanced training purposes serves the quality enhancement of everyday work. Many kindergartens for example benefited from the payment of travel expenses of lecturers for the international kindergarten conference in Brazil. Often, there is a lack of capital during the founding stage of a new educational facility, in this case we can only hope for a fruitful outcome of our investment. We for example supported the advanced training of two interested kindergarten teachers in 2009 and as a result, the first Waldorf kindergarten emerged on the Fiji Islands.

In 2010 we spent 2.7 million euros directly on our voluntary service program, including travel expenses, social insurance, pocket money and pre- and post service seminars. Then there were the additional costs of our Karlsruhe office, where our



co-workers not only carry out the administration of our voluntary service, but also the political efforts, which means constantly working on the framework, thus enabling young people to devote one year of their life to working in Waldorf schools, kindergartens, special education- and social therapy facilities around the globe. A team of educators also accompanies our volunteers during their service and is available to them at all times.

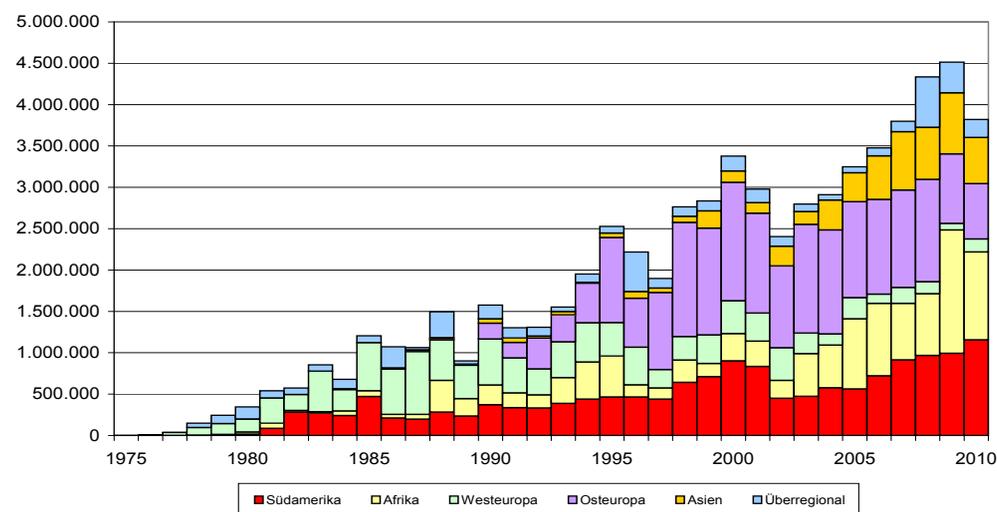
We are very proud that during another year, we were able to stay true to our core principle: our donors decide how their money is used. If you give us 100 € for the promotion of a kindergarten in Fiji, we will transfer € 100 to the Fiji Islands.

The cost of our work, for the publication of our newsletter, mentoring Waldorf facilities abroad, entering and forwarding donations, sending out donation receipts, organizing WOW-Day, etc. are covered by membership fees, income from interest rates and donations specifically intended for our work. In 2010, once again we narrowly succeeded

in doing so. We were able to cover the deficit of € 4,800.21, from a surplus fund. We are very grateful that during the last 40 years we have always had enough friends who make our work possible, because only if we find enough resources to fund our work, we are able to transfer the funds for the international school movement at 100%. Since our foundation, we were therefore able to support 684 institutions around the world with a total of 66.8 million euros. If you approve of our way of dealing with money and are willing to contribute, we sincerely invite you to support us by making a donation specifically intended for our work.

Eleonore Jungheim

Financial support from 1975 till 2010 according regions



Transition in the field of Voluntary Service

18 years ago the request of a former Waldorf student asking us to help with the financing of his social service abroad as a substitute for the civil service, set a ball rolling...which is still rolling today!

Back then, the Friends of Waldorf Education applied for an official permission to offer the governments “Optional Service Abroad (ADiA).” Since then the voluntary service went through many changes. Various political upheavals resulted in new guidelines, which often had to be implemented in the shortest possible time. We always did so mainly due to our dedicated, motivated and competent team taking on the professional implementation of the voluntary service. Many of the ideas initiated by our Karlsruhe office have proved to be consistent. An example is the “Incoming” program initiated by us in 2006, offering international volunteers to work in a social initiative in Germany during their gap year. In 2006 the Software AG Foundation largely funded the program, which was subsequently financed under private law. With the introduction of the Federal Voluntary Service in 2011, the “Incoming” program, with over 100 foreign participants per year, was transformed into a state-funded program.

All government-sponsored volunteer programs were initially targeted at young men. However, for us it proved necessary to also offer a voluntary year abroad for women. As a result, we introduced the Social Practical Year Abroad in 2007. Only now, the German state has realized the social necessity for such a program, so we are now in the fortunate position to be able to send almost all volunteers abroad as part of state-funded programs.

Political Work

Since 2003, we are also involved in political work in the field of voluntary service and played a leading role in the creation of a set of guidelines, which is the qualitative and pedagogical framework for the International Voluntary Service. In 2010, when the government announced massive cuts for the volunteer programs, we initiated a campaign against these threatened cuts. This commitment proved to be effective and brought about immediate results, as the Family Ministry started with a new volunteer program: the International



Youth Voluntary Service, which we implement through our Voluntary Year Abroad program.

Going with the flow of time

40 years after the foundation of our association, we are still very much committed to responding to current needs: we therefore quickly responded to the request from the “Association for Anthroposophical Curative Education, Social Therapy and Social Work” and expanded our already internationally oriented volunteer service by implementing a domestic service. Only a few months later, a team of already five co-workers responsible for the Voluntary Service in Germany, assists about 150 dedicated young people, participating in a voluntary service at anthroposophical and Waldorf educational institutions in Germany. This kind of voluntary service is set to grow in the future.

Up to today, over 7000 volunteers have participated in our voluntary service in anthroposophical institutions around the globe. Every year, some 640 German volunteers

begin their service abroad. As part of the “Incoming” program, some 100 international volunteers work in anthroposophical facilities in Germany. Soon they will be joined by an additional 500 German volunteers working in remedial education- and social therapy facilities, kindergartens and Waldorf schools, for a period of usually twelve months as part of the new domestic program. Often these (young) people are without Waldorf educational background. In 2011 about 800 volunteers came into contact with anthroposophy and Waldorf education through our voluntary service programs. After such a year, full of enriching experiences, many choose a career in social work. However, most importantly the worldwide Waldorf movement is continuing to gain popularity and support through these active and dedicated young people.

*Christian Grözinger,
Michaela Mezger*



40 Years Friends of Waldorf Education

“The truth of the matter is, however, that the school movement is a large and whole entity (...) The new tasks of the school movement can no longer be handled by the local Waldorf school associations and teachers (...) The idea of shared responsibility and participation is a concern to more and more people of our time. On this level, the Waldorf movement appears to us as a unique field of cooperation. With educational issues one is invited to directly participate in our social future (...) it is therefore important to create a school of the future that focuses on the human aspect, focuses on freedom and responds to the essential demands of the social organism. The idea of our new association is to establish a movement for independent education, for an autonomous spiritual life, for a school of the future.”

With these words, Ernst Weißert invited people 40 years ago to become members of the new association “Friends of Waldorf Education”, which was founded on 10 October 1971, in order to support the growing Waldorf movement. The initiative had developed out of the German Association of Waldorf Schools, which had previously taken over tasks of international cooperation. However, neither Dr. Manfred Leist nor Ernst Weißert, senior leader of the German Waldorf movement, found the necessary time to do so. Therefore, new impetus for the association’s development came only

in 1976, with the initiative of former Waldorf students. Out of their commitment emerged the International Relief Fund, a pool for independent donations, which remained the main focus of our work up to today. Thus the “Friends” were able to address the most urgent needs within the worldwide Waldorf movement. As the movement continued to grow, so did the International Relief Fund and as a result the possibility of financial aid increased as well. Working with this fund we always focused on two essential tasks: to directly help schools and kindergartens overcome their financial distress and simul-



taneously to ensure that there can be independent education, which covers all the remaining space, left in-between the constraints of state and economy.

Until today we were able to support nearly 700 different schools and kindergartens as well as curative education facilities. The Friends of Waldorf Education have significantly contributed to the development of new independent Waldorf schools, particularly in economically weak areas. For example, all buildings of the African Waldorf schools, with only a few exceptions, were constructed with the help of the Friends of Waldorf Education. Many teachers from Latin America or Eastern Europe were trained with the help of scholarships provided by the Friends of Waldorf Education and are now leading individuals within the Waldorf movement of their respective country. Furthermore, we have always adhered to the principle that Waldorf schools develop from local initiatives and are not founded out of Germany or Europe. In this respect, the work of the Friends of Waldorf



Education serves people, who out of their own impulse, want to establish a facility for independent education in their respective country. By the end of 2010, 684 schools, kindergartens, teacher training facilities and curative education institutions received financial aid, totalling nearly 67 million euros.

Such work is only possible through the combined efforts of a great number of people. We are therefore extremely grateful to all our donors, sponsors and supporters who have made it possible in the course of many years, that individual institutions of the global Waldorf movement received the necessary support, just when they were no longer able to help themselves. A significant factor was also the growing cooperation with other sponsors, such as the German Federal Ministry for Development and Cooperation, several foundations and the Educational Section at the Goetheanum, as well as many individuals who made all this possible. Today, we handle many tasks as joint ventures, because the



challenges are beyond the means of a single organization.

The Friends of Waldorf Education have established a vast network that reaches into the most distant corners of the earth. Today, when a new Waldorf school is about to be founded in Ethiopia, Nicaragua or Bangladesh, we are connected to it in some way. In this respect our work is a very real contribution to a social future.

Building on this truly global network, many new initiatives have set out over the years to serve the future, because essentially this is what working with children means. In 2001, we have published our festschrift "Waldorf Education Worldwide", reflecting on the state of development of Waldorf education during the first 30 years of our association. Since then, new Waldorf initiatives have joined the movement in many countries, such as in China or Central America. In Brazil for example the number of schools has increased significantly.

Yet, everywhere the educational challenges have become more dif-

ficult. And, given the restrictive school laws and the increased performance requirements for even the youngest children, it is now more than ever necessary to create spaces, in which a healthy childhood and a meaningful education is possible. All of our various initiatives pursue this goal, to work in practical situations for the sake of the children – and that implies in a healthy, meaningful and truthful way – whether it means raising funds for a single school, as recently in Tbilisi (Georgia), or sending a young volunteer into a distant country, for example to a Waldorf school in Kenya, or helping people to cope with a trauma, as we do for example in Gaza. The more people interact, the more we can achieve with our combined efforts.

Nana Göbel

In the Country of Dragons

Since the very beginning in 1994, Waldorf education has spread like wildfire in the Chinese-speaking world. In Taiwan, Waldorf education became publicly known after a national kindergarten conference in 1994.

With the help of founder Chuen Sue Chang a first Waldorf class was opened in Lo Tung (Taiwan) in 1999, with seven children, one teacher and two subject teachers for English and arts and craft. Ci Xing is the only publicly funded Waldorf school in Asia, and with its over 600 children (excluding kindergarten), it is the largest Waldorf School in East Asia. In 1995 the first kindergarten started out in Tai Chung in central Taiwan. Today there are three more small Waldorf schools in Tai Chung and several kindergartens. Furthermore, small school- and kindergarten initiatives have emerged in various other places.

The preliminary work of the Taiwanese colleagues was and is extremely important for the further development of Waldorf education in this area, as they developed the basis for a Chinese curriculum, translated many texts and gained practical experience. Today the Taiwanese Waldorf movement hosts teacher observations, teacher training and conferences. The well-functioning cooperation in the Chinese-speaking

world is surprisingly untouched by the political situation of the two neighbouring countries.

In China, Waldorf education became generally known by the activities of Eckart Löwe, a former student of a Waldorf school in Hamburg, who first founded a school for blind people in Nanning and then worked with children and adolescents in a remote mountain area. The media praised him for his work. In Chengdu, the first kindergarten finally started in 2004, when Li Zhang returned from her training in the United States and together with her husband, built up a Waldorf initiative under very simple circumstances. Today, Chengdu offers six kindergarten groups, eight school grades and educator and teacher training.

Through communication via Internet a lot of interest has developed for Waldorf education, so that kindergartens and schools now extend throughout the whole country, from Maoming to Urumqi, from Chengdu to Qingdao. The movement has grown so that now there are four



three-year training courses and the region has its own coordinator (who consults with ten employees), seeking to strengthen the cohesion and quality of work. More growth is already predictable (in September, the number of kindergarten groups increased to 172), however, a lot of cooperation among colleagues is still necessary in order to really achieve further growth.

We have also launched an own team of translators, with the task to ensure that the work of Rudolf Steiner, is translated from German into Chinese and is therefore accessible in a reasonable, but not simplified language. Fortunately, we were able to find translators who have a deep understanding of the Chinese language and culture, and of German philosophy, but who also have the necessary skills to tackle the challenge of translating Steiner's work. Soon we will certainly continue to report on changes. For, as our colleagues say in China, one year in Europe is equivalent to one month in China.

Nana Göbel



China: between tradition and modern times

Looking at China today, one gets almost dizzy from the frantic pace with which the country is progressing. The working group "China Waldorf Forum" (CWF) was founded in 2010 with the aim, to meaningfully deal with the speed of our time and to focus on the quality of the educational work. Out of the impulse of the Forum, a meeting was held for the second time in July 2011, with representatives of 80 Chinese educational initiatives and some guests from abroad.

In Chengdu, where the Chinese Waldorf movement initially began, the pioneers met to investigate current issues of Waldorf education in China. The main idea was, to find out how Waldorf education in China can gain a foothold and develop in a healthy way. Some of us were also surprised at how fast the Waldorf movement in China is growing.

The Waldorf movement in China is already seven years old. Meanwhile, there are more than 120 kindergartens and nine primary schools, whose numbers should rise to up to 18 schools this year. Although many parents only got to know Waldorf education through the Montessori approach, a real craving for Waldorf Education has developed over the years out of an initial curiosity.

Due to the fact that China dissociated itself from its cultural roots for a long time, a great desire to return to the old traditions has now developed in its modern society. Often this enthusiasm leads to great polarisation between the old and the newly created knowledge as for example

anthroposophy. How different would it be, if we would realize that we can neither "own" the one nor the other. This cultural knowledge is a gift to the world. Without being in competition with the Chinese heritage, the work of Rudolf Steiner is an example of a global understanding - it unites the many cultures and religions. One might also wonder whether Confucius works do not include much more, possibly also a timeless description of the development of the human soul that we go through since thousands of years?

I therefore perceived an interesting interplay between lectures from European and Chinese cultural backgrounds during the Forum. This became most impressive in a description of the internal perceptions in Goethe's Faust and a lecture about the confrontation of Eastern philosophy and anthroposophy.

During our meeting, a clearer idea came up of how we want to develop educationally. One has to think about how to connect the new and the old. This will certainly not occur



in the form “replace old by new educational content.” No - it will more likely be a continuing development process, in which every individual will shape his own individual path. Fifteen years ago, one would have hardly believed that a Waldorf movement would ever develop in China. Today this movement is growing steadily and it is now apparent that it has already formed a small but vibrant community that wants to help shape this growing development.

Ben Cherry coordinator of teacher training in China and a member of CWF



Fourth Asian Waldorf Teacher Conference 2011

The evening before the start of the AWTC, as the conference is known in Asia, where people seem to like acronyms, it was terribly hot. With crowded buses, people arrived at the conference centre just outside of Secunderabad and behind them lay the zigzag through the crowded city, with its market stands illuminated by a single light bulb, the screaming traders, the beggars, the dust and the noise.

Not only conference participants arrived, but also dressed-up guests of a Muslim wedding, with golden bracelets shining under the floodlight, with precious silk saris shimmering in the most vivid colours and guests who behaved according to ancient traditions despite the ultra-modern music: Women sitting on one side, men sitting on the other side of the large lawn, celebrating in spiritless exchange.

The next morning the Asian Waldorf Teacher Conference began at the same place. AWTC is seven-day advanced training event for kindergarten- and schoolteachers, taking place every other year. The conference began in a very different mood, also quite noisy, but with a lot of talking, welcoming, embracing and rejoicing over the reunion with colleagues from different countries.

During the seven days, Christof Wiechert periodically held lectures on the pedagogical principles of general human nature. These lectures were followed by advanced courses for the various grade levels as a preparation

for the next school year.

The work of kindergarten- and schoolteachers in Asia was fortunately not divided into two separate areas. This joint work is urgently necessary given the threat that is endangering a playful childhood.

With each day, the number of appointments during breaks increased. The pleasure of collaboration grew and the European colleagues just opened up, upon experiencing the unprejudiced openness and enthusiasm of their Asian counterparts. They have carried us with them in their enthusiasm and their dedication. It became very clear that the cooperation with the young circle of colleagues of Asian schools and kindergartens is something of great importance for the European Movement in order to redeem some of the consolidation. We look forward to the World Teachers' Conference in 2012.

Nana Göbel

An opportunity for worldwide reflection

On March 11th, 2011, the biggest earthquake and tsunami in our history hit Japan. It brought numerous tragedies and damages, and it created a massive impact on our economy and hearts. However, none of the Waldorf schools had direct physical damage except a few nursery schools in the northeast of Japan. Thankfully, no children were harmed in these locations. Among all the damage we have had, the on going threat of nuclear contamination has been spreading without respect for boundaries of time or space.

Andrew Wolpert, who recently visited Asia in Japan, shared his insights over this recent crisis. There is no chemical solution for cleansing the earth of this radioactive contamination. However, the earth can be transformed through human activities. By recognizing the earth as a spiritual being, because matter IS spirit, we help transform the earth. Also, by conscientiously ingesting and digesting the fruits of the earth, we change the nature of the earth. Perhaps most importantly, we must strive to connect with each other. He reminded us that we are tightly connected in the spiritual world, but that our physical bodies here on earth separate us from each other. However, we are still part of one, common humanity, and by meeting each other openly, we transform the earth.

However there have been some positive outcomes in this crisis. As educators, we have new responsibility towards our children for their physical and emotional well being, because these younger children are most susceptible to radiation. During these difficult times, we have renewed our sense of identity as Waldorf educators because we experienced the value of movement, rhythm and art as therapeutic effects. Indeed, these elements are the very foundation of Waldorf education. In addition, the nurturing of each child's imagination helps to sustain a positive view of the future. The Emergency Intervention

group led by Mr. Ruf visited the epicentre from April 27th to May 9th. Their work in local elementary schools was most appreciated

Finally, some politicians, scientists and economists have awakened and realize how fragile our current social structures are as a nation and they recognize the need for an alternative life style. At the Kolisco meeting, which consists of the Kindergarten Association, Medical Association and all Steiner Schools in Japan, the wish developed of handling these (also political) issues in a more unified way. Waldorf education in Japan continues to mature despite these circumstances. Kyotanabe Waldorf School has celebrated their 10th anniversary this year. Three of the schools are accredited as UNESCO schools. And Fujino Steiner School is in the critical process of high school accreditation. If accepted, the Fujino Steiner School would be the first accredited high school in all of Japan. We expect the result from the Kanagawa Department of Education by the end of October.

In closing, we are encouraged by the on going work of many colleagues. Our daily life becomes a true celebration of St. Michael. The events in Japan stimulate reflection - perhaps not only here but worldwide.

Rieko Hata
Eurythmist, Fujino Steiner School



Experiences that prepare for the journey of life

Malaysia is a country with diverse cultural traditions. Sandwiched between largely Buddhist Thailand, predominantly Muslim Indonesia, Hindu India and the predominantly Catholic Philippines, extends a nation that historically was subject to different religious and cultural influences, but was always able to retain its own identity. The country's administration is therefore British by colonial tradition. In the post-colonial period the United States became Malaysia's largest trading partner and in the region, Communist China is the emerging power. Although there are many old and new external influences within the country, its culturally diverse society is striving for its own way, a way of preparing their children for the future.

The Malaysian parents meet Waldorf Education with keen interest. Since private institutions are frequently attended during early school age, Waldorf kindergartens are very attractive, but also because they, as opposed to government and private institutions, teach in several languages, have collaborative interaction as a key principle, avoid the strict state curriculum - which is mandatory from kindergarten onwards - and offer a child

appropriate education.

The Malaysian Waldorf Movement began by the end of the 1990's. In 1997, Junko Suzumoto and Ong Kung Wai established the first Waldorf initiative, Nania, in Penang. Through the support by the Friends of Waldorf education the initiative grew steadily over the years. Expatriate families dominated early enrolment, but from 2002 onwards, interest from Malaysian parents increased. In 2004, another initiative, Taska Lin, was established in Penang. In 2008, the third initiative, Kelip-kelip, was established in Klang Valley, in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur. Of recent, interest in play oriented pre-school education is growing. Several initiatives have emerged, some new, some incorporating Waldorf methods to their existing system.

Nania took its name from the "Narnia" stories by C. S. Lewis. Like 'Narnia', Junko Suzumoto wants Nania to be a place children want to visit and return again and again. Where they encounter self-development challenges and experiences that prepare them for their life journey. However, the enrolment of local and foreign children, with multi ethnic and various national and cultural backgrounds was a challenge at the beginning. What is fitting and relevant for all? Junko Suzumoto then realized that adopting festivals from different cultu-



res can facilitate nurturing of different moods and establishment of a more seasonal rhythm. Whilst maintaining their moral context, festivals are celebrated as cultural events without their religious tones through the introduction of universal prayers, songs, poems and stories. Nania operate at full enrolment of 52 children with a yearlong waiting list.

Another home-kindergarten project called Taska Lin is also located in Penang and was founded by Lee Swee Lin and her husband Yang. Together with their daughter and son they lives upstairs in the nursery building. Lin got to know Waldorf Education 15 years ago through Junko Suzumoto. Her visit to Nania was so touching that Lin chose to be an assistant teacher, instead of a more commercial job. In 2000 Lin took up study at Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Teacher Training College. At Taska Lin, there are currently 38 children from age 1 1/2 to 4 1/2 years. The children are mainly from expatriate families from different countries. About 20% are Malaysian. At Taska Lin, the children play and sing not only in English, but also in Malay, Mandarin and Japanese. During Family Day at a public indoor playground other visitors with young kids are often impressed with Taska Lin's children for being so confident and playing well together.

Klang Valley, located in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur, is the centre of the Malaysian Waldorf movement. It all began with Kelip-kelip in 2008, when the founders and married couple Da Vid and Wan Yee, graduates from Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar, started out with 10 children. This all lead up to early 2011, when Da Vid started Kelip-kelip Waldorf School, the first Waldorf school in Malaysia. Today, Kelip-kelip needs a bigger premise to accommodate the children wishing to enrol. A parent has therefore purchased land to build a new school. According to the plan of the initiative, 6 classrooms will be built in the initial stage. However, this will depend on whether the required € 360 000 can be raised. Da Vid plans to set up an Association to run the school on a non-profit basis. Fortunately there is hope, as the interest in Waldorf Education increases among the school's environment.

Two years after Kelip-kelip, two other Waldorf kindergartens started up in Klang Valley, including a Waldorf doll making class. In Malaysia, there are many challenges to overcome. However, the group believes it is on the right path, doing the right thing for the children, for society, for the world through Waldorf education.

Ong Kung Wai, founder of Nania Waldorf Kindergarten

When teachers are not just teachers

The Waldorf Movement in Nepal has its inception at the Tashi Waldorf School in 2000, when Ms. Meryav Mor gave up her job at the Bal Mandir Orphanage and took the initiation to set up a school targeted for the under privileged children following the Waldorf curriculum. Since then the journey has been very interesting for all of us, a journey, that many would probably not have started on their own. It certainly has endowed us with the ways to live our life in a better and a significant way and to hand it over to our pupils- the future generation.

Tashi Waldorf School began in a carpet factory with thirteen children and two teachers. At first, the tasks were not easy as there was a bit of struggle and hard work necessary to carry on the new system of education, which was not known to many teachers, who brought along different teaching methodologies. Now the number of students has reached almost hundred, and most of them are under privileged students from poor economic background. Drastic changes have been seen in some children. Here teachers are not only teachers, but they act as parents

who teach them as if they were their own children. Emotional bonding between them has been greatly emphasized so both the teachers and students enjoy coming to school where there is healthy interaction amongst themselves. Even the shy children build up their confidence and do not hesitate to ask questions, something that is usually hardly ever encouraged in Nepalese schools.

A school that follows a different system of education brings with it tough challenges. In the beginning, many parents preferred the mainstream system rather than Waldorf education. They had this concept that only books and books render qualitative education that would help develop their children's skills for a bright future. But now, the responses have become very positive because they have begun to see positive changes in their children and this in turn encourages more and more parents to send their children to Tashi Waldorf School.

The school feels proud to see many students do well after leaving our school in order to join the mainstream schools for high school. There is a wonderful story about our former student Birbal Sunar that definitely needs a mention. As a young boy he initially was very aggressive by nature and was not co-



operative with his friends and even with the teachers. His bad temper always saw him fighting and arguing. Then we as teachers started trying to understand the background he was coming from. It became clear that he was not living with his family so that was one of the main causes behind him being aggressiveness resulting from the depravity of homely love and care. He was born in a large poor family in a remote village in Humla so he lacked a proper upbringing. Then, to add more misery to his life, there was the Maoist insurgency that made life in village a living hell, since many children were forcibly recruited in the so-called Maoist army. Birbal was one of them. Luckily he was rescued and brought to Kathmandu. There were many such rescued children along with Birbal, all victims of malnutrition and scabies. Later, a foundation found these suffering children and brought some of these children, amongst them Birbal, to our school. Slowly as he grew up, he began to share his stories with me and though being a teacher, I always consulted him as his parent. In this way improvements could be seen and then the once aggressive child turned out to be one of the most caring students that this school as ever produced.

Thus, the above story is strong evidence to show the impact of the Waldorf movement in Nepal, which is definitely profound on all those who have been affiliated to it. I feel very fortunate to be a part of it. Waldorf Education has not only changed Birbal's life, but also mine.

*Nima Sherpa
Teacher at Tashi Waldorf School*

Healthy Islands amidst the chaos

“There is a knighthood of the 21 Century, whose riders do not ride through a physical forest like in the old days, but rather through the forest of a darkened mind. They are equipped with spiritual weapons, and an inner sun makes them radiant. Out of them, shines healing power, healing that comes from knowing that man is a spiritual being. They create internal order, internal justice, peace and persuasiveness in the darkness of our time.”

Under this slogan, coined by Karl König, a meeting of the Anthroposophical Society in Thailand took place in July last year. Lectures, exercises and artistic performances gave the approximately 100 participants from all over the country a strong impression on the global connectedness of the Thai anthroposophical movement. During this meeting it was encouraging to see the variety of new impulses, as they showed an increasing sense of initiative and the need for training and development.

The above-quoted slogan seemed quite fitting in my eyes for Bangkok, the country's capital city, which is a huge metropolis distorted by commerce. The “dark” is reflected in the rapid dissolution of traditional values in everyday life. It is considered modern, to give birth to most babies by caesarean section in a “clean” way, and breastfeeding and intimate physical contact between mother and child is being assigned to employed nurses. This will have fatal consequences for future generations.

However, also in Thailand, the need for open spaces for a healthy child development becomes more and more important for an ever-widening circle of educated young parents. Instead of focusing on cognitive performance at the earliest possible stage, there should rather be enough space for children to

develop their human potential and this may be accompanied by caring love. The anthroposophical movement has settled right into this environment and is enjoying increasing popularity. For the parents, the opportunity to get together as a community and to assume the responsibility of developing a new school becomes a source of personal strength. This is especially important in an age in which the decisions about the welfare of ones child is left rather to “experts” and parents feel very uncertain in their own assessments about the welfare of their child. The anthroposophical movement in Thailand is a wonderful example of this phenomenon of a courageous alternative community, trying to build healthy islands amidst all the surrounding chaos.

In Bangkok there are two large established Waldorf schools, where children from kindergarten through 12th Class are being taught. Both started out small and grew steadily with an increasing number of students. Founded in 1996, the Panyotai Waldorf School is the oldest Waldorf School in Bangkok, and is very committed to the preservation and care of the spiritual roots. One aim of the school is to connect anthroposophy with traditional cultural values and actively create something new. The second Waldorf School, the Tridhaksa

School, also grows continuously since 2000. Approximately 250 students are currently attending the school, which holds social justice as one of its core principles. Therefore the school wants to be accessible to children coming from all kinds of backgrounds, even if the parents cannot afford the school fees of 100 € per month. Furthermore, the issue of the inclusion of children with special needs is being developed specifically. At the school there is already a special class, with fifteen children, who are taught according to their varying needs.

Another anthroposophical initiative that ventures into unexplored realm is the “Tonrak Foundation for Children with Special Needs,” since the spiritual and intellectual education of people with disabilities is not a common practice in Thailand. In this respect, there is a lot of information and public relations work that needs to be done to educate parents and teachers and to convince potential funders of the specific approaches of anthroposophic curative education. The aim is to build up a socio-therapeutic community. Just outside of Bangkok a property was donated and is now being used by the community of parents, teachers and friends, and of course by the young people themselves. For their dream of a socio-therapeutic community, they get involved, for example at the “Family Network”, a public radio station as well as at various universities and companies.

In addition, during the last three years, a pilot project emerged for a remedial education teacher training. This was implemented in collaboration with the Johanna Russ School in Siegen and the Friends of Waldorf Education. Fifteen participants from Thailand and Singapore, dealt with the meaning of teaching and pedagogical issues, practiced child discussions, came up with ideas for a funding plan and enjoyed the variety of



artistic activities.

After the military coup in Thailand in 2006, there were reoccurring political demonstrations, clashes and violence. The “I do not care” (Mai pen rai) attitude of people is gradually changing due to the political and economic changes. The last political crisis in 2010 has left deep wounds. What happened to our people, asks Anchana Soontornpitag, who is part of the Tonrak Foundation. Why can we not save ourselves by wisdom, clear thinking and an awakening awareness of our suffering, as Buddha has taught us once?

The political crisis of recent years shows that it is time to seriously and deeply think about how we teach children today, to live more consciously, more sustainable and self-determined. Thailand is rich and fertile, says Soontornpitag, but so far we have abused the country and failed to consider it as a living organism. Thus, the Knights of the 21st century in the sense of Karl König are quite busy and build new structures and viable networks for the future. We can feel connected to them and support them with advice and assistance.

Edith Bulle, Development Consultant

Shocking images and unsettled souls

11 March 2011 became Japan's black day. At 2.45 pm local time, the most severe earthquake in its entire history hit the north of the country. About 40 minutes later, a massive wall of water, flooded the northeast coast of Japan, leaving behind apocalyptic destruction. Between 27 April and 10 May, a ten-member emergency team of the Friends of Waldorf Education in cooperation with anthroposophical doctors, therapists, teachers and educators from all over Japan, conducted an emergency crisis intervention in the affected areas around Sendai. Traumatized children, teachers and parents were assisted in processing their horrible experiences and the emergency group tried intensively to prevent the development of trauma disorders and psychopathological developments.

When the earth trembled in Japan, the lessons were just finished at the Ookawa Elementary School in Ishinomaki. That day, about 40 children were picked up from school by their parents. Three teachers were finished with their lessons and left the premises. The remaining 70 students gathered with their 11 teachers and followed a long-practiced drill and walked in a single file to the safety zone of the school's outdoor playground. This refuge that was supposed to shelter them in case of an earthquake became their death trap. Without warning, the monstrous wave swept in, demolishing what was left of the school and sweeping away most of the students. Only one teacher and three children, who defied the instructions and had fled to a mountain, survived the disaster. The Elementary School Ookawa of Ishinomaki became a national symbol for Japan's black day.

The survivors are not able to enjoy their salvation. They are indifferent, apathetic and feel empty inside. Many feel guilty. The surviving teachers are depressed and many parents blame themselves because they did not pick up their children from school that day.

Tsujoshi (7) attended the Ookawa Elementary School. Through the tsu-

nami, he lost his three cousins, several classmates and all of his neighbours. He himself was saved because his mother picked him up from school. Since the disaster Tsujoshi is constantly riding his bicycle. “The bike belongs to my friend. He does not need it anymore. He is dead”, were his first words when we met. Initially he would not participate at the emergency education activities. However, within short time he drove along the outwardly winding spiral on his bicycle, worked intensively on drawing exercises and participated with increasing joy in ball games.

Since most children are not able to speak about their experiences, thoughts and feelings, it is important to provide them with opportunities of alternative, non-verbal expression. When drawing, children put their experiences on paper and they resolve their feelings in singing as well as in painting. Even in acting, dancing or clay modelling, traumatic experiences can be expressed in a non-verbal way.

After such experiences, life is falling apart. Most affected children and adolescents suffer from severe arrhythmia. The school routine of Onagawa primary school was therefore given a rhythm and structure in cooperation with the



local teachers. The morning circle was followed by workshops in eurhythm, painting, geometric drawing, experiential education and role-playing. The joint final circle was conducted in such a way that it mirrored the morning circle.

Children with disabilities also became victims of Japan's black day. In Rifu the local facility for special education Satzan-zi, "Happy Home", offers assistance to children and adolescents with disabilities coming from the Japanese crisis area. Children with so-called mental disabilities are very often affected by traumatic events. Due to their cognitive limitations sudden changes in the way of their particular routine of living are perceived as threatening and frightening.

A traumatic shock also disrupts the perception of the body. It for example not self-evident that one is able to touch one's nose with the finger tips or to locate one's right ear, after such horrible events as people experienced in Japan. The children in need of support in Rifu were playfully encouraged in training their body perception and orientation, which they did through measures such as rope skipping, ball and movement games in a circle as well as through eurhythmic movements.

Anyone who wants to help children and adolescents after disasters, must also stand by their usually likewise traumatized parents. Only parents, who are inwardly completely calm, are able to stabilize their deeply shocked children. In Osato, in Tagajo and Tokyo counselling seminars for parent were as part of the emergency intervention. Repeatedly, parents told us that their children initially showed no signs of trauma. They seemed to be untouched by the disaster. First indications sometimes only came up after several weeks. Often it was also reported that many children gave consolation to their suffering parents and tried to relieve them emotionally. As a result they hid their pain in order not to burden their parents further and to protect them from additional worries.

What applies to the parents after the tsunami is also valid for teachers and educators: they must first feel stable again in order to help children and young people. In Tokyo, nearly 100 Waldorf teachers, Waldorf educators, anthroposophical doctors and therapists came together for a seminar on emergency education. In addition, more than 70 anthroposophical teachers, educators, doctors and therapists were prepared and trained in an intensive course on how to build emergency



intervention teams for future missions in the northern Japanese disaster area. The concept of Waldorf education as a measure in emergency situations has become more concretised shape through missions in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, China and Kyrgyzstan, as well as in Haiti in the Japan. The underlying pedagogical approaches of human development are universal. Their strength lies in their adaptability to different cultural conditions and needs. Emergency intervention according to Waldorf education grows through the exchange and cooperation with people from different regions of the world.

Bernd Ruf

Note of Thanks

We have experienced diverse and valuable support in the pre-and post-processing, but also in the implementation of our mission. Special thanks go to the Chemist Dr. Klaus Eiben and Mr. Stefan Prüssmann, leader of the group of radiation protection and decontamination at Kerntechnischen Hilfsdienst Gesellschaft, also to Mr. Joachim Pech, radiation protection expert from the Fire Department Karlsruhe, as well as the the medical services – the radiation emergency department of the Karlsruhe Institute of technology, the Federal Office for Radiation protection, and of course our Japanese partners, especially Kai Iruma and Kimiko Ishikawa.

WOW-Day wins global commitment

Like in previous years WOW-Day was again a great success story in 2010! Thanks to the commitment of students from 150 Waldorf schools in 15 countries, it was possible to support 52 Waldorf initiatives in 24 countries. Never before have so many schools been involved in this event.

In a combined effort many children and adolescents have dedicated many hours and much creativity for a good cause. In one day these students have raised the considerable amount of 319.818,88 € through their commitment for the global Waldorf Movement. The Friends of Waldorf Education would like to express heartfelt thanks on behalf of all children who will benefit from this incredible support. In recent weeks we have received many letters from the initiatives that received donations from this event. For them, in most cases valuable help came just at the right time when it was most urgently needed.

"Just when we thought we could no longer continue with our work, unexpected help came!" says Peggy Rische from C.R.E.A.R in Brazil. To our great surprise, more and more schools get involved in the worldwide faith of Waldorf education. On WOW-Day 2011, for the first time, participating schools from Brazil, the USA, Canada and India joined us on our mission. The number of schools outside of Germany that commit themselves to help Waldorf initiatives in need of support, has already quadrupled this year. We are on an important path to a more humane world that connects people and builds bridges for a common future. Learn more through the following letters of thanks from Peru and the United States.

Our thanks also extend to our cooperation partners: the European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education and the Association of Waldorf Schools. Since

the Friends of Waldorf Education, forward all donations at 100%, a successful organization of WOW-Day implies higher costs for us. Therefore, our thanks go especially to the Mahle Foundation and the Waldorf Foundation for their financial support.

Olivia Girard

Peru Pro Humanus

"School on the road" is an initiative of the nonprofit association Pro Humanus, which works in Peru for a humane development in culture, education and health since 2004. "Huk umalla - Huk maquilla - Huk sonqoylla!" – "A collective head (thought), a collective hand (achievement) and a collective heart (feeling)" is an ancient Quechua wisdom, which even today accompanies the community work in the high Andes, such as working the fields or building a meeting house: many "heads, hearts and hands" combined can achieve more than any individual. But whom am I telling this: You, dear Waldorf school students in Europe have admirably put this idea into practice on WOW-Day 2010.

With the last WOW-Day contribution we were able to continue the project "School on the road" in four high-Andean villages of the region Huancavelica and thus support kids, parents and teachers in kindergartens and schools as well as providing teaching materials and furniture. It is especially important to make people aware of such gestures as your commitment in a social environ-



ment, in which many indigenous people live in crippling poverty and lose their original values and traditions, as a result of colonialism and terrorism. Gestures that, combined with our pedagogical approach to support the people in their development and to encourage their initiative, oppose the traditional kind of "poverty relief". Therefore I would like to express many thanks to all students and all those who have made WOW-Day 2010 possible and thus helped many initiatives such as ours.

Bettina Vielmetter

United States Lakota Waldorf School

It is very impressive what you all have achieved and with what great an effort! With your donation, it will be possible for us to provide meals for 16 children and the teachers for the next four months. Our food costs are around 600 U.S. dollars per month. We put a lot of emphasis on the fact that the children are being fed healthy, especially because many come from very poor families where their nutrition is insufficient and they do not have access to good and healthy food. There is also an organic school garden, in which the children themselves learn how to plant and harvest vegetables.

The Lakota Waldorf kindergarten is located in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, USA. The reservation where the Oglala Lakota Native Americans live is one of the poorest areas of the USA. About half of the Lakota here live below the poverty line, many still without electricity or running water. The parents therefore wanted a school, which includes the Lakota language and culture and responds to the needs of the Lakota children and provides them with opportunities for a better future.

Due to the apparent poverty, it is not possible to ask fees from parents and so we entirely rely on donations. A maximum of 18 children can be admitted to kindergarten and all seats are currently occupied. The demand is so great that we could have two kindergartens. Thanks to your activities healthy food for the children is ensured until the end of December 2011. Many Thanks – "Pila-mayapi" and cordial greetings from the prairies!

Isabel Stadnick

My Year at Helgo Northpoint in Calcutta

In this social project, which was founded by the German medical doctor Dr. Meyer-Hamme in 1995 and for which I worked for a year, children have the possibility to receive education. However it is not enough to simply organize lessons, because many parents rely on sending their children to work in order to feed the family. Therefore, in addition to tuition opportunities and a daily lunch that H.E.L.G.O. provides for the children, each month each family receives compensation in the form of food (rice, lentils, sugar etc.), because of the loss of the children's earnings.

Late in the evening I arrived at Calcutta airport with my co-volunteer and was almost run over. Thank God, only emotionally. The car was packed with Indian colleagues, who welcomed us very enthusiastically by throwing flower wreaths over our heads and handing us roses. Overwhelming impressions continued as the brim full vehicle sped towards our future home. Traffic rules did not seem to apply here. I was taught right away that the red traffic lights, only serves as street lighting and the bold white lines on the road serve only as ornaments. However, this was harmless. Upon arrival we went directly through the narrow streets of the slums, where I had to shake numerous hands of excited children. Then we went through an almost gap-like entrance, which led me into a dark stairwell with loose railings. A few steps later we were led past the big blue sign H.E.L.G.O.-North Point and through the offices of the institution to our rooms.

Besides supervising the children at the hostel, it was my job to give tutoring lessons. Otherwise, I visited the dwellings of the children together with a social worker several times a week. I learned a lot about everyday life in the slum and the people's problems.

I very much enjoyed the repeated visits of Dr. Meyer-Hamme. So I was allowed to attend the filming of a ZDF (German TV) film crew and was also involved in the negotiations for a new solar system at one of the facilities. Overall I was involved in many decisions of the organization and could even implement some of my own proposals. All this has added valuable experience to my personal life and my work in the project.

From starting out as a tutor, I more and more became the organizer. This was due to the fact that in addition to the supervision of a vaccination program, which was attended by our children, and the assembly of solar cells, we as volunteers began to implement our own proposals. So for example we organized lectures, visited a school for deaf and mute children and digitized an own database. Furthermore, we helped a former child from the project to find work, initiated discussions with teachers and social workers and tried to have lunch distributed to the homeless. There was also information to collect on about 300 children and then compile it into reports for the donors of sponsorships. This responsibility and freedom in planning let me grow the most.



During winter we conducted school visits, where the presence, the behaviour and performance of our project children were obtained. Throughout the year, there were several problems such as absence of students, theft or disappearance of children that provoked larger and smaller disappointments, especially if one had built up a very close relationship with them. The end result was their exclusion from the project, a drastic but necessary measure, since this was the only way to prevent imitation. However, it also raised the question of how to raise children not only to being smart and educated human beings, but also to being responsible and ethical adults.

Also interesting was my social standing in India: from being an ordinary young German I became a respected adult. Especially because of the great trust that we received by Dr. Meyer-Hamme, we as volunteers had influence within the organization. This has also brought about an inner transformation. As a result I now find it much easier to deal with strangers and I am now able to successfully propose ideas, follow up with public officers and discuss with bouncers. And I learned all that simply because it was part of my everyday life just as talking to key dignitaries.

"What have I accomplished?" this question has kept me very busy during recent weeks. I only know for sure that I have influenced the lives of twenty children. What remains is the hope in all the cherished people with whom I was able to work with and who can ensure that some of what I initiated continues to further develop. My year in the slums of Howrah has not only brought about a spiritual change, but also spawned my desire to help. Since I have come to the realization that big changes are very difficult to implement, whereas small changes can be executed fairly easy, I have decided not to study political science as I had previously intended and will instead study social work. And more travelling after my voluntary service is already integrated into my life plan.

Simon Sperling

Everything happens for a reason

USA, the country of infinite space and opportunity. It is simply a dream, because who has not wished to travel there at some point in his life? Once I decided against the army service, I learned about an interesting facility through the Friends of Waldorf Education: Heartbeet Lifesharing in Hardwick, Vermont. That was where I wanted to go. In August 2010 the time had come: Goodbye Germany, hello America! It was quite exciting to fly across the pond and travel so far away from everything familiar, to venture into the unknown. But this uncertainty would turn out to be a great experience.

After a talkative car ride I finally arrived at the destination: the facility in which I intended to live and work for the next twelve months and I received a warm welcome. Apart of the residential buildings, the property of Hearbeet Lifesharing comprises farmland, a large farmhouse, a large tool shed, a garden, a swimming pool and two large wooden sheds...and a lot of woods and meadows! The people there are incredibly kind and sincere. It was precisely this openness that cost me a bit of overcoming, especially since our society is not familiar with this openness. But in getting accustomed with it, one learns to look at things from a new perspective.

While working, a schedule helps not to lose track. Everyone, whether volunteer or friend - as the people with special needs are called here - is included in the timetable. The paper and felt making as well as weaving, in doing which there are no limits to creativity, were always great fun. In woodworking, as well as farming and gardening it can happen that after a hard days work, one lies in bed with

some sore muscles. This need not mean that it is not fun. No! I especially enjoyed the workshops. One gets to know new techniques, machines and material.

Every Monday morning, the schedule and the upcoming appointments are discussed in a large meeting. To be flexible is important and one has to sometimes restrain oneself. However, one always gets something back at some point. While working, it happens that the day goes on for sixteen hours, including lunch. However, one begins to love it and one is happy to help and work. After a while one understands the principle of social life. Now one can see the fruits and one realizes what living together as a community really means: You give much and receive even more. This is the principle. For the love, the experience and the care are simply unique and irreplaceable in the world. All my life I will be accompanied by what I learned over there: "Everything happens for a reason."

Daniel Frieske

Finding the purpose of my life

Before I started out on my voluntary service at the social community Schloss Hamborn, I was very excited and also nervous. Facing a journey abroad, far away from my usual environment, I knew that my new life would be difficult. But I wanted to grow, and if one wishes to grow, one has to gain new and unfamiliar experiences.

When I arrived at Schloss Hamborn, I saw how big an anthroposophical facility could actually be. In Argentina, it is generally believed that anthroposophy is just a dream or a fantasy. So I was totally surprised. I think this made me realize what I want in life.

Then the school year began. I helped in the second grade and at the boarding school. After three months I had settled in and was able to understand more. Initially, I was often sad. In the beginning I just could not do much and then I had difficulties coping with the climate. I will never forget this gray and dreary autumn.

At school the children were taught each letter with an accompanying story and when doing math they playfully discovered the world of numbers. I could see very clearly how everything that the children learned, had a beautiful picture behind it.

I often wondered why these young people are attending the boarding school? But as time went by I saw what was different in each individual I encountered at the boarding school. However, to me they are very special and valuable human beings.

Winter was the first time I experienced snow in my life. How beautiful it was when everything was white. This change from gray autumn to

bright winter is the most beautiful thing I've ever experienced. And how happy the children were outside. I think they were happier playing in winter than in summer.

When spring came and with it new forces, I decided what I want for my future. It became clear to me: I wanted to be a teacher. After the experience with the children, both in the community and at school, I was determined.

Overall it was a good year. I have learned a lot, not only for my career, but also internally. Although I often felt alone, I was able to get to know myself. Never before have I had such a clear perception of my abilities and my disabilities, my strengths and weaknesses. I was able to accept the new in other individuals and I no longer have many prejudices that I had previously. At Schloss Hamborn I discovered that "life" itself is ALIVE! It is not a complete entity, but something that grows every day. Here I have experienced this very strongly. And that is something that will remain forever within my soul.

Nicolás Andres Prestifilippo from Argentina

The last two and a half years

The so-called “weltwärts” program is unique in its implementation and its financial value. By hosting volunteers, Waldorf kindergartens, Waldorf schools, special education facilities and social therapeutic facilities around the globe benefit from the opportunity to obtain additional funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Much has happened in the last two and a half years. We have succeeded in our aim to help “the poorest of the poor” by supporting over 100 projects, which have not only hosted more long-term volunteers, but were also able to achieve significant improvement in educational infrastructure.

Through this program funded by the BMZ we helped with a new approach. For the first time in the history of the Friends of Waldorf Education we were able to specifically ask Waldorf initiatives, whether they need money for important long-term infrastructure projects. First, many institutions were irritated by this surprising offer and therefore we received only a few applications in the beginning. But after we presented the weltwärts program at our Partner Conference in 2009, this changed significantly. Suddenly there were a lot more requests than funds available. This proved to us the great need for additional help. Small construction projects such as the construction of a classroom, the expansion of a kindergarten in the township of Masiphumelele, the construction of a solar system, and the purchase of musical instruments or materials for the arts and crafts lessons became possible.

Due to a lack of space, the vocational school Baboab in Ghana was not able to host any volunteers so far. However, with the help of the

weltwärts program it was possible to build a new accommodation. “As part of this project, I was able to actively support the local construction workers and contribute by manual labor,” said one weltwärts volunteer. “The work day began early as we tried to avoid working during the oppressive midday heat. Especially at the beginning, when we built the foundation, I was impressed by the strength and endurance of the Ghanaian workers. They went to work equipped with only picks and shovels and without the help of machines. Although there were occasional cultural misunderstandings, I am very happy to have been part of this project.” With the new volunteer accommodation the long-term support of local children is ensured. Furthermore, the common cross-cultural experience between the school community and the dedicated volunteers becomes tangible.

We also sent the first 29 volunteers to the Centre for Creative Education (CFCE) in Cape Town in mid-2009. The CFCE is the only Waldorf teacher-training center in Africa. From there, over 50 kindergartens



and the Zenzeleni Waldorf School in Khayelitsha are being accompanied and supported in educational matters. As positive as the development of kindergartens is, as humble and improvised are the means by which people work there. Two or three women care for up to 120 children, often in very confined spaces. Now the CFCE stood before the great opportunity to host weltwärts volunteers, which at the same time was quite a challenge. There now is a new kindergarten building and a new bus, which safely brings volunteers to the facilities in the townships. Thus, the local initiatives are happy about each new volunteer, because they support them in their core task, which is providing a child-centered care.

And finally I would like to tell you about an example from Georgia. In this country, adults with disabilities are often ending up on the street when there is no family who cares for these people. TEMI, a community for people with special needs in the Northeast Georgian village Gremi provides them with a caring

environment. During the 90s the initiative was able to acquire a turn of the century stone house. Now 70 people with disabilities live under its roof: street children and orphans and people with psychological and social problems. For 26 people in need of special care, TEMI receives financial support. However, the amount is as low as 5 lari or € 2.30 per day and person. With the little money, private donations and the revenues from self-made products, the project supports the people who live in the facility. “All rooms were heated with small stoves. Each year, we had several accidents due to the unsafe stoves,” says the project manager of TEMI. This danger was averted. The first winter in the now centrally heated main house was a big relief for the whole community. They now have a clean house, no more accidents, the consumption of heating fuel has decreased, and the people can now concentrate on other important tasks.

Fabian Matejek

Attending School – Finally!

Through educational sponsorships the Friends of Waldorf Education seek to ensure that as many children as possible can attend a Waldorf school, regardless of their parents financial situation. For many children, this means new perspectives and gaining access to education for the first time ever.

Full of anticipation two girls are eagerly waiting for their first day at the McGregor Waldorf School in South Africa. Siphwe and Mandisa are excited and one can feel that they cannot wait. It is the first time in their lives that they attend school. Amidst the hustle and bustle on the playground they stand among their new classmates, who receive both of them with a warm welcome. From afar one can see their beaming faces.

Until recently, the girls lived in a small shack with their parents. From morning to evening the parents went to the neighboring fields - for a tiny salary they helped the wine growers and usually had little time for dinner. Suddenly the father disappeared and Siphwe, Mandisa and her mother were alone. They moved into an adjacent township, as they were no longer tolerated on the wine farmers premises. Violence and crime was what they experienced on a daily basis in their new environment. The mother had a hard time finding a new job: She speaks neither English nor Afrikaans, and was only occasionally able to work on short-term jobs.

Some time has passed since the girl's first school day. Despite their daily commute of more than an hour, the two come to school every day. During the first year, their mother contributed every hard earned penny to the school.

Now the girls have found a mentor, who financially supports their education. The mother is very happy that her daughters can now attend school all day long and thus escape the hostile township environment.

There are many other children just like Mandisa and Siphwe, who can only attend school under very difficult conditions or simply cannot go to school at all. With an educational sponsorship some of them are able to see a school from inside for the first time.

Currently, the Friends of Waldorf Education have mediated around 500 ongoing sponsorships at 45 schools. In 2010, 190,000 Euros were donated to children, whose families are in financial need. Through the sponsorships not only the children benefit but also the schools that are often in financial difficulties too.

A few weeks ago we received a call from a former Waldorf teacher: he had set out to become a sponsor. Through friends and acquaintances, he collected donations and established contact with the foreign school. Out of a single sponsorship developed two sponsorships. Since then he has a lively correspondence with the children and rejoices every time one of them sends him a letter about the small successes and challenges they encounter at school.
Olivia Girard, Fabian Matejek

An independent and attentive woman: Q&A with Ingeborg Bräunlinger.

She supports the Friends of Waldorf Education since 1979 and at age 91 she now lives in the Christopherus Home in Berlin. After well over three hours, we have learned a lot about her long exciting life. She told us stories about her affection for her blind father and a major change in her life: from being a dreamy girl, she grew up to be an independent, interested and attentive woman.

Your father meant a lot to you. As a 19-year-old he lost his sight in the First World War. What do you remember?
My father was a man who never bemoaned his fate, but showed great interest and attention to everything that came up to him during his life. This is one characteristic that I have always admired about him.

How did your parents meet back in the days?

As a young woman my mother was a milliner, this meant she made hats. One day, during her lunch break at the Tiergarten, she saw that some blind people walked with a cane. She was deeply moved. Alas she thought, I could go to the blind peoples facility and ask if they look for helpers. There she got to know my father and accompanied him to concerts, because at that time, he was just learning how to play the piano. Anyway, they got married, which was not easy, as my father was Catholic and my mother was Jewish. Then in 1920 I was finally born.

And how did you get into the first Waldorf School in Berlin?

Through the piano teacher of my father we got to know the anthroposophical movement. My father became very interested and he wanted to know more. At

that time anthroposophy was still very new. Through some children from the Christian Community I apparently got to know fairytales and experienced what beautiful things they were doing there. Then I switched schools. This was just around the time when the first Waldorf schools were established in Berlin. I went to the school, which was founded at that time by Mr. Schiele and Mrs. Kiefel. Then, unfortunately the Nazis came to power in Germany. As a result the Waldorf schools in Berlin decided to shut down. They said they would not swear an oath to Hitler. That was in 1938. It was now the misery that I was stamped by the Nazi regime, not as a Jew but as a non-Aryan. As a result I was not allowed to do certain things or had to do this and that.

You loved the poems that your teachers gave you.

Yes, one of my first report card poems is from 1930. "Stand on earth with both feet and courageously look around. What one cherishes in the heart always brings joy."

What has brought about your extraordinary commitment to the Berlin Waldorf Schools and the Friends of Waldorf Education?

This is actually my life motif. I have al-



ways had an interest for new initiatives. This has become an essence of my life. I want to be attentive to promising new impulses and I want to decide. I know now that I have inherited this from my father, but I also experience these impulses in my own way. Many people have no interest in anything. At first I was a dreamy person. However, through the fate of my father, my attentiveness and patience became very important to me. Above all, I have always admired how Nana Göbel, took up the development of the association. She at that time continued what Ernst Weißert had begun with his suggestions. Ernst Weißert, who by the way was my teacher in Greek, Latin and Art History.

Interview by Katharina Kurz



Remembering Marina Lippke

On 3 June 2011 at the age of 93 years, our longstanding member Ms. Marina Lippke passed away. She was born in 1917 in St. Petersburg. With much enthusiasm, she supported the Friends of Waldorf Education for 25 years. Her zest for action was unbroken, in the truest sense of the word, even at high age. Actually, she had planned to be 100 years old, because - as she said - there was still so much to do for her in the world.

In the early stages of her life, Marina Lippke had to face several losses, which she encountered with a deep determination. After two survived world wars, the early death of her first son, the death of her husband in 1944 and the escape from Berlin, she finally managed to build up a new life in Tübingen together with her son.

After many years of teaching at public schools, she began to be interested in Waldorf education through her son, who was a Waldorf student. A mere eight years after completing her degree in Waldorf education, she opened the first Waldorf school in Saarbrücken, where she taught several subjects as for example English and religion. At that time she was already 65 years old. At age 70, she founded another school for children with disabilities in the Saarland, where she also held a fulltime teaching position.

During her more than ten years of Waldorf educational work in the Saarland, she has not only founded two Waldorf schools in Saarbrücken, but also actively dedicated her self to public relations tasks for the worldwide Waldorf movement. For her commitment she received the Federal Cross of Merit from the Saarland Minister of Culture in 1989.

In addition, Marina Lippke had a strong bond to Latvia. Several times each year she traveled to the Waldorf educational seminars at the Liepaja Pedagogical Academy and supported several Latvian Waldorf initiatives.

She understood it to revive the musical spirit in Latvia. For her work as a lecturer and the establishment of the school partnership between Chemnitz and Grobina, the Liepaja University awarded her the honorary diploma in 2002. In November 2003 the Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga herself honored Lippke with the Three Star Order, the highest award in Latvia, which is awarded for outstanding services in the social and cultural sector.

With deep gratitude we thank her for her creative vigor and our thoughts are with her!



News in brief

Emergency Education Seminars in South America

In 2010 a group of dedicated Chilean educators, medical doctors and therapists worked with people affected by the earthquake in Chile. As a result of this work the desire came up to the exchange ideas with the friends of Waldorf education and develop ideas for future collaboration. In order to extend cooperation in South America, more seminars in Brazil and Argentina are planned. This cooperation led to the idea to restructure the Emergency Education Services approach to suit the needs of schools in socially deprived areas.

News from Peru

The organization Estrella del Sur “Star of the South” is a Waldorf initiative established in 2005. This year, the school has moved into the Amazon region to Tarapoto, in order to build a new education center. The founding couple Lourdes Jibaja and Martin Stevens bought a 220

square meters large property and are in the process of building a classroom and setting up a biodynamic garden. For the past 80 years the region has not changed much: no paved roads, poor health care and only a few good educational facilities. That should change, according to Waldorf educational parents, and public school principals. They have already expressed interest in Waldorf Education and want to significantly improve the educational situation in Tarapoto. Through evening and weekend classes in English, in reading, writing and practical courses in woodwork and sewing for young mothers, the project has already begun. In the future, the education center will serve as contact point and will finally provide better educational opportunities for local people.

Kindergarten opening in Kenya

On 27 May 2011, the Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi in Nairobi opened a new building for four kindergarten groups. Jürgen Bartzsch, voluntary co-worker of the Friends of Waldorf Education was present as project ma-

nager in order to inaugurate the new building. Soon the outdoor grounds will be completed as well. Following the request of the Friends of Waldorf Education, the school building was financed at 75% by funds from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. 25% of the money was brought up by the school itself and by the Acacia Foundation.

Appreciating the dedication of WOW-Day participants

Our WOW-Day is continues to grow and gains increased popularity: in 2011 the Waldorf One World Day will be part of the European Year of Volunteering. Coordinated by the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the European Year of Volunteering is appreciation and challenge at the same time. It is a tribute to the commitment of millions of people in Europe who dedicate their free time voluntarily for the common good and it is a challenge for those who want to enlarge the number of participants. Through exhibitions, workshops and

conferences, the Campaign will fight for attention throughout Europe.

Romanian Waldorf Schools far above average

In the third-largest Romanian newspaper “Romania Libera” one could read on 6 July 2011 that the Waldorf schools in Romania are well above the average in the final examinations. Only 44% of the students nationwide managed to pass in the first attempt the final examination, whereas in the Waldorf schools in Timisoara, Iasi and Bucharest well over three quarters of the students immediately passed the exam. Test results are certainly not the main concern of Waldorf education, but given the difficult conditions of Romanian Waldorf Schools, this positive feedback boosts morale. For next year, the Romanian Waldorf movement is now planning to expand their Waldorf educational training centers to a nationwide scale.

Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners e.V.
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www.freunde-waldorf.de

Visit our website. There you can find more information on Waldorf Education, news from the worldwide movement in English and German and much more.