

INNER AND OUTER TSUNAMIS

The registered association called “Friends of Waldorf Education” plans an emergency pedagogical crisis intervention in Japan in order to help the people who have been psycho-traumatized by the devastating earthquake to process their horrific experiences.

It is impossible to find words to describe the recent events in Honshu, located the Northeast part of the island of Japan. After an earthquake of magnitude 9.0 on March 11, Northeast Japan was shaken to its core, and then just a few minutes later, a tsunami of unimaginable size smashed the region around the city of Sendai. It takes your breath away to watch the videos circulating so quickly around the internet of the worst earthquake in the history of Japan, and the vast number of people swept away to their deaths.

Just how many people have lost their loved ones and their entire worldly possessions is uncertain. However, what is certain is the fact that their mental stability has been utterly devastated and it is not just by the scale of the external desolation, but also by the enormity of their inner anguish.

In order to support the victims in processing these terrible events, the “Friends of Waldorf Education” will be dispatching an emergency pedagogical crisis intervention team into the area around the city of Sendai --- once the safety concerns regarding the nuclear threat are clarified. An expert team of educators, doctors and therapists will administer to the needs of children and teenagers for their psycho-social stabilization. Those affected will be encouraged --- through various pedagogical procedures --- to process these terrible events and then integrate them into their own biographies. This form of pedagogical “First Aid” also serves to mitigate or even prevent post-traumatic stress disorders.

In general terms, the Emergency Pedagogy of the “Friends of Waldorf Education” is geared toward supporting victims affected by the traumatizing experiences of war and natural disasters by means of pedagogical methods which will stimulate the victims’ innate forces of self-healing. Ideally, these actions should be taken within the first four weeks following a disaster because it is this time-window that determines whether people are able to process their experiences or not. Thus supporting them is the central concern of emergency pedagogical interventions.

In order to provide long term stability for these traumatized children and adolescents, we involve local professionals who are also trained in emergency pedagogical methods. Meetings and discussions with parents are also part of the intervention process since many mothers and fathers are often helpless to deal with the changes in behavior of their children.

Since the cost of an emergency pedagogy crisis intervention is approximately 50,000 Euros [\$70,000 US], and since the team must be equipped with, among other things, protective suits and much more and despite the fact that the emergency-response teams are all volunteers, they alone cannot bear all the incurred expenses. Therefore, the “Friends of Waldorf Education” is urgently asking for donations to support the ongoing project.

Donation Account:

Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners e.V.
GLS Bank in Bochum
BLZ 430 609 67
Account 800 800 700

Keyword: Japan *

* If we receive more donations than we need for the operations in Japan or if the safety situation makes those operations impossible, then we will apply your contributions to other emergency pedagogical concerns.

The "Friends of Waldorf Education" promotes worldwide initiatives for free education. Since 1971, they have campaigned for the dissemination of Waldorf pedagogy and for freedom in education. Since 1993, the office in Karlsruhe has organized and managed international voluntary service programs throughout the world and enabled more than 6,000 people to work in over 350 social service projects in over 60 countries thus far. At the present time, there are 600 or so young people who participate in the programs. Since 2006, the association became active in field of "emergency pedagogy."

Thus far, the "Friends" have worked with psycho-traumatized children and adolescents in the following succession of armed conflicts and natural disasters:

Lebanon (2006)
China (2008)
Gaza (Feb + Jul, 2009, Jul + Oct, 2010, Feb 2011)
Indonesia (Nov. 2009)
Haiti (Feb, May and Sept. 2010) and
Kyrgyzstan (Nov. 2010).

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