

Karlsruhe, August 28th, 2012

## **“Freunde”-Kindergarten voted number 1**

*The success of the trauma pedagogical intervention of the Friends of Waldorf Education in the Kenyan refugee camp Kakuma has been made clear through, amongst other things, the appreciation received from the participants and UNICEF for the activities: in survey from UNICEF, that included all of the 12 kindergartens in the refugee camp, the Songot Kindergarten of the Friends of Waldorf Education was chosen as number one.*

During the third mission from the 27<sup>th</sup> of July to the 11<sup>th</sup> of August, a first evaluation showed that the pedagogical trauma work in the Reception Centre as well as in Songot Kindergarten, which has been open since January 2012, has been excellently established. Above all in the kindergarten there is a great trusting relationship between the children and the preschool teachers, which makes for an enormously important foundation for the trauma pedagogical work. However not only the quality of the work has great worth but also the growth, which the employed refugees have brought about themselves. It has been made clear, that the work is for them not only a possibility to make money but it also gives their lives in the refugee camp more purpose and supports them in overcoming their traumatic experiences. Experiencing one's own self-efficacy and self trust won from this experiencing in turn positively affects the work with the refugee children. This process of coping with the trauma was supported and complemented by the psychotherapist who travelled with the Friends of Waldorf Education and provided therapeutical support.

The further education of the employed pedagogues was a cross sectional theme and represents a further focus of the work in Kakuma. The local colleagues have basic qualifications in working with children and youths, for example training as primary school teachers or preschool teachers, but are not however specialized in working with traumatised children and youths. On top of this only a minority have basic knowledge of Waldorf pedagogy, which is why theoretical units were also taught. The practical training took place in various forms: in the mornings during work with the children's groups new methods were introduced, and then afterwards collectively reflected and theoretically reinforced. Afternoon training was offered during which the employees together with the German team were familiarized with new methods, in order to be able to implement them in the children's group later on by themselves. The thematical focus of this training lay in experiential education, eurythmy as well as art therapy, in which various forms of painting and sculpting with the very clayey earth from the site played a central role.

A further mission area of the Friends of Waldorf Education was the creation of the first trauma pedagogical structures in the so called Protection Area. This involves a separate area, in which refugees who for reasons of political persecution, religious conflict, or threat from family or the community cannot live in the regular part of the camp, find sanctuary. Currently there are around 100 families in the Protection Area with about as many children under the age of 18. Life in the Protection Area does offer a level of protection, but otherwise very little: neither shops, nor schools, nor anything else. Especially children suffer under these

conditions, who because of their status cannot attend school and are daily left alone. Against this backdrop the emergency team of the Friends of Waldorf Education began the first trauma pedagogical activities, which were already on the first day used by countless children. With them came many mothers requesting that the Friends volunteers also work with them. This wish was fulfilled taking into account the available resources: together with the mothers, toys were sewn which were then used in working with the children.

From Malte Landgraff and Michaela Mezger

*The Friends of Waldorf Education is worldwide sponsors of a free education system. Since 1971 they advocate for Waldorf education and the freedom of education systems. Since 1993 the office in Karlsruhe organizes and supervises international volunteer services worldwide. Since summer 2011 it is possible to complete a 12-month civil service in anthroposophic institutions through the association. Since 2006 the Friends of Waldorf Education are active in the area of emergency pedagogy. Following the outbreak of a war or a natural disaster, they worked with psychologically traumatized children and adolescents in Lebanon (2006), China (2008 and 2013); Gaza (2009-2013), Indonesia (2009), Haiti (2010), Kyrgyzstan (2010), Japan (2011), and Kenya (2012-2013), the Philippines (2013-2015), Kurdistan-Iraq (2013-2015), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014), and Nepal (2015).*



Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners ist Mitglied im Bündnis Aktion Deutschland Hilft, dem Zusammenschluss renommierter deutscher Hilfsorganisationen, die im Katastrophenfall ihre Kräfte bündeln, um gemeinsam schnelle und effektive Hilfe zu leisten.