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NEWS FROM THE WORK OF EMERGENCY PEDAGOGY



Freunde der
Erziehungskunst
Rudolf Steiners

www.emergency-pedagogy.org

Dear Readers,

How do you cope when it's hard to hope for peace? How do you persevere when everything seems hopeless? Where do you get the strength from when you don't know what is worth persevering for? These and other questions concern people in Ukraine. The war has been going on for two years now. For many local people, things are becoming more difficult every day.

In the seminars and training courses on emergency and trauma education that we have been offering since the beginning of the war, we, and local specialists from education, psychology and other disciplines repeatedly focus on our own mental health. In the workshops and theory units, a lot of work is done on the question: How can we take care of ourselves and strengthen ourselves so that we can then be there for the children? In Ukraine, as in other countries, education for adults has become an increasingly important part of our emergency education work. This includes learning about trauma and the possibilities of educational support for children, as well as enabling professionals to stabilize themselves when - as in Ukraine - they live in a state of uncertainty, tension, fear, and sometimes, hopelessness. You can read more about the emergency education work of the Friends in Ukraine in this issue of "Waldorf Worldwide" (from page 7).

People are not only experiencing war in Ukraine. The war in Gaza also continues with terrible consequences for so many people. We look back with great gratitude at the achievements of some of our colleagues on site, who continue to try to work with children and young people despite the most difficult conditions. Ahmed Alghariz, an emergency and trauma educator, was able to provide regular

activities and structure for the children from the beginning of the war until the end of December. His colleagues continue to this day on a smaller scale. As soon as the situation allows, we will carry out operations in Gaza.

The Hamas attack has also left its mark on children and young people in Israel. In the north, our colleague Stefanie Allon regularly works with internally displaced people from the south, near the border. With her they can paint, tell stories, do crafts, and try to free themselves from the general tension.

In 2023, over 150 educators from various South American countries were able to complete their twelve modules of further training to become emergency educators. For the last module, participants from Chile, Argentina and Uruguay came together in Argentina. The exchanges concerning individual projects of the individual participants, and also about larger projects of the country teams, such as work with women and children in prison (Uruguay), or missions after fires or earthquakes (Chile and Argentina), motivates us all to keep going with our work - to help children and young people process the traumatic experiences they have been through.



*Thank you very much
for your support of our
emergency education
work*

Fiona Bay

Emergency educational missions after the forest fires auch den Waldbränden

At the beginning of February, several forest fires caused devastating damage in Chile. The region around Valparaíso on the Pacific coast is particularly affected. Just days after the disaster, the emergency education network in Chile became active and carried out several missions.

Forest fires can occur again and again in the Chilean summer. This year, there were also extreme temperatures of well over 40 degrees, which were caused, among other things, by the El Niño weather phenomenon. President Gabriel Boric called the fires, "the worst tragedy our country has experienced since the 2010 earthquake." Thousands of people lost their homes, at least 130 died, and several hundred people were still missing weeks after the disaster. Since 2010, the Friends of Waldorf Education have conducted several emergency and trauma education courses in Chile, resulting in a network of emergency educators. During the fires last year, colleagues carried out emergency educational missions in collaboration with the Chilean government. Thanks to numerous donations, the colleagues were able to act quickly. As soon as the situation permitted, they worked with children at various schools.

From February 25th this year, work units with adults also took place at various locations in the particularly hard-hit Viña del Mar region. "At the invitation of the Chilean Ministry of Education, we spent four days training supervisors, directors and teachers, and were able to work with a total of 350 people," reports emergency educator Lukas Mall, who is part of the Chilean team. This enabled the teachers to be well prepared for the start of school. "I felt great gratitude from the teachers," Lukas Mall continues, "for the games, rhythmic exercises and graphic methods such as shape drawing that we showed them."

In addition to teaching emergency pedagogical methods, it was also about giving educators and parents tools to help them deal with the situation themselves. Lukas Mall reports: "After an exercise with wooden sticks, a man who had lost parts of his house reported that it was a relief for him to be able to hold on to something – symbolically. It gave him support and orientation in a situation in which he didn't know exactly what would happen next." One participant reported that while they were escaping the fire, they were able to save their own child, but not the four-year-old girl next door. "She felt a lot of guilt," Mall said. "It was important to clarify that it was not she, but the fire that was to blame for the tragedy."



IRAQ:

Continuous emergency and trauma pedagogy services for refugee children in northern Iraq

Ten years ago, the Friends of Waldorf Education initiated emergency educational work in refugee camps in northern Iraq. In November 2023, a team from the Friends of Waldorf Education travelled again to northern Iraq to conduct training with employees of the Friends of Waldorf Education and Island of Hope, which are now independent organizations there.

“Today there are more doors open to the children,” says Sadoon Barakat, team leader of Friends of Waldorf Education (FWE) in northern Iraq, in his closing words after a week of training. “We were able to support hundreds of children in coming to terms with their experiences of flight, and to this day offer them a safe place in the refugee camp where they can be fully children.”

These safe places are the so-called Child Friendly Spaces, which open the doors to children every day. A well-structured process and the presence of FWE employees give the children a feeling of protection and security. Beginning and closing circles, phases of free play, story times, and a healthy meal are some of the elements that create a reliable framework for the children. This not only supports the processing of traumatic experiences, but also strengthens the

resilience of the many children who continue to live in tents under the most basic conditions. When Barakat speaks of open doors, he means, among other things, the school career. FWE supports children in achieving school readiness through age-appropriate kindergarten activities. It is now known in the camp schools that the children who attended one of the Child Friendly Spaces as kindergarten children particularly enjoy learning, and they tend to find it easier to learn. Hishyar Obeid, founder of the Island of Hope (IoH) organization, which also operates locally, reports the same thing. In recent years, IoH has emerged from the work of FWE as an independent organization and, in addition to kindergarten activities in the afternoon, also offers an after-school care centre for school children in the camp.

In November 2023, a training team from Germany and Switzerland flew to northern Iraq to work intensively with employees from FWE and IoH on the topics of childhood development and Waldorf education. Alternating with short, improvised lectures, they deepened the content in group work and adapted it to the cultural context. When working with kindergarten children, the colleagues practised small handcrafts and created artistic activities for the after-school children.

Sadoon Barakat said that before he was driven out by IS fighters, he could never have imagined working





Page 24: Training for the employees of the Child Friendly Spaces.

Above: Child Friendly Space in the refugee camp in northern Iraq.

Below: In 2014, thousands of Yazidis fled the Sinjar genocide. The city is still in ruins.

with children; rather, he aimed for a career at the university. When he fled with his family and friends in 2014, he saw the terror on the children's faces and knew he had to help them. He observed a team of emergency educators in the camp and felt that this was exactly the work he wanted to do with the Yazidi children. So, he joined the team in northern Iraq and has remained with it to this day. He has now successfully completed his degree in business administration, leads the FWE team and plans to return to his hometown of Sindjar to set up a kindergarten there based on emergency and Waldorf education.

Raphaela Logemann

Ten years after the genocide: internally displaced people return

Ten years after the genocide by the IS militias, more and more internally displaced people, especially Yazidis, are returning to their homeland and trying to rebuild their lives there. But everything is missing: the infrastructure is destroyed, the supply of food is difficult, and houses are barely habitable. Teachers who have returned hesitantly resume

teaching and offer the children an alternative to playing in the rubble.

In February, employees of our partner organization, Island of Hope, travelled to Sinjar to survey the situation. By chance they met the teacher Kheiro Ibrahim, who knows emergency and trauma education work well from the refugee camps in the Dohuk region. Together they want to set up such offers for the returned children in Sinjar. We are grateful for these small steps towards peace and hope to continue to support this work.



GERMANY:

Our emergency pedagogy work in the Ahr Valley

Since the floods in the summer of 2021, the emergency educators from the Joy of Waldorf Education have been accompanying affected children, their parents and their teachers in the area that was flooded. We have now been able to build an educational network that can offer a range of helpful measures. This also includes, for example, special riding therapy, which is intended to strengthen children's resilience skills.

After more than two years, the consequences of the severe floods in the summer of 2021 in the Ahr Valley are still visible in many places. From the beginning, we were able to support the families by creating play spaces and financial support for educational institutions, and to work with the children on emergency and trauma education. For adults who live or work with children, we provided training on the characteristics of trauma and ways to deal with this trauma. Our employee Johannes von Mitzlaff has now been working on site for over a year to maintain and intensify the exchanges with affected people, institutions

and communities. His work resulted in many new projects and collaborations in the region, such as a horse-riding project in the district of Ahrweiler in the Eifel, which was severely damaged by the flood.

In the horse-riding project, in cooperation with Pegasus e. V., the resilience skills of a group of children are strengthened over six months. The children are given the space to slowly and consciously meet the horses and rabbits on the farm. Due to the high care ratio, which is continuously guaranteed by specialized educators, it is ensured that every child receives great attention in their challenges and learns to deal constructively with the animals and plants on the farm. It's not just about riding, but about experiencing self-efficacy and strengthening self-awareness through a variety of activities on the farm and with the horses. Some children were particularly proud when they were able to take home their dream catchers made from horseshoes, beads and stones, which will certainly remind them of their own strength and abilities for a long time to come.



Syria: **Emergency pedagogy -** **online offer following the** **earthquake**

After the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria in February last year, several emergency educational missions have been carried out in Türkiye. Unfortunately, it was not possible to enter Syria to work in the earthquake zone there. In the weeks after the earthquake, we were asked whether we could offer something online for Syrian educators, social workers and therapists. 30 people were selected from 200 applications for an initial online offer. From April 2023, five emergency educators and the participants met weekly, and worked together on the topics of trauma, self-care, art and movement. In addition to theoretical and practical input, there were also opportunities to exchange what we had learned and experiences we had already had.

Mexico: **Six months after the** **hurricane**

On 25th October 2023, a Category 5 hurricane, Otis – hit the city of Acapulco, in Mexico. Its consequences can still be seen almost six months later. The government estimates that 250,000 people have lost their homes. Acapulco is a tourist region that has been struggling

with increasing violence from drug gangs for years. The economic situation has already deteriorated since the Corona pandemic, and the destruction caused by the hurricane made this even worse. Several emergency educational missions have already taken place after the hurricane. In March, an international team was active again: ten emergency educators from Mexico and three colleagues from the international network – including Fiona Bay, head of the Friends' emergency education department – worked with children, parents and teachers at two primary schools in Acapulco. Further information about working in Mexico can be found on our website at: emergency-pedagogy.org/news.

Afghanistan: **Emergency educational** **support for women and** **children**

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), two thirds of Afghanistan's population will be dependent on humanitarian aid in 2023 (source: un.org). The situation has continued to deteriorate since the Taliban conquered

the country. The situation in Afghanistan is becoming increasingly precarious, especially for women. They are, therefore, increasingly exposed to laws and regulations that, among other things, restrict access to education. The ongoing and ever-increasing uncertainty, as well as the increasing economic difficulties, also influence the psychosocial health of the local people.

With the support of Aktion Deutschland Hilft, we help women and children in a kindergarten and a sewing factory near Kabul. In addition to the important space to play, the children in the Sadaf kindergarten also receive a warm meal a day. There is a sewing workshop attached to the kindergarten, which trains women and enables them to contribute to their livelihood through tailoring. We also offered the women the opportunity to discuss psychoeducational topics and everyday questions. The internet connection is quite unreliable in Afghanistan, but we manage to stay in touch regularly, via WhatsApp groups, and impart the basics of emergency education.



Current information on emergency educational missions can be found on our website at emergency-pedagogy.org/news.



Contact

Freunde der Erziehungskunst
Rudolf Steiners e.V.
(Friends of Waldorf Education)
Emergency Pedagogy Department

Parzivalstr. 2b
76139 Karlsruhe
Germany

Donation Service Emergency Pedagogy

Phone +49 (0)721 20111-132
Fax +49 (0)721 20111-180
nfp.spenden@freunde-waldorf.de

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