Background Pestalozzi Children's Village

Switzerland
- Integration Programmes
- Education Programmes
- Intercultural Exchange Projects

The Pestalozzi Children's Foundation works in twelve countries. Its purpose is to ensure that children and youth have access to quality education which promotes peaceful cohabitation. The Pestalozzi Children's Village in Trogen is the heart of the Foundation. Here, as in all other PCF partner countries, promoting interculturality is the focus. Our activities in Switzerland are divided into three areas: Intercultural Exchange Projects, Integration Programmes and Education Programmes.

Intercultural Exchange Projects

Children and youth from Switzerland, South East Europe and the Chernobyl region come for two to three weeks to the Pestalozzi Children's Village in Trogen to take part in Intercultural Exchange Projects. The main objective of these projects is to improve communication skills. During their stay in the Village, children and youth discuss subjects such as interculturality, anti-racism and child rights.

We encourage them to reflect on their own values and behavioural patterns, thus helping them to strengthen their personal identities. Meeting and exchanging with other youth groups gives them the opportunity to identify commonalities and differences between various cultures, and it enables them to take a fresh look at existing prejudices, and to reflect on, and overcome, them.

Education Programmes

PCF school projects are primarily geared towards encouraging children and youth to prefer talk to quarrel and to handle differences in a constructive manner. Only in an environment of mutual respect can people learn with, and from, each other. Readiness for peace and tolerance of the other are prerequisites for a world in which children can grow up freely and happily.

Integration Programmes

The Pestalozzi Children's Village is home to children and youth from all over the world. They are faced with the challenge of developing personal identities in an environment which is characterised by the conflicting demands of their own and of Swiss culture. Before coming to us, they lacked a stable social or family network or were in need of protection. They attend school and learn how to develop responsibility for themselves and for the Village community as a whole. To be part of a «family» strengthens their self-confidence and makes them realise that being different is an asset, thus paving the way for building a better future for themselves.

Exchange | Patricia (13) and Bianca (12)

Patricia and Bianca have learnt how it feels to be excluded. It is not a very nice feeling.

They are two children who can benefit from your sponsorship.

Sponsorship Pestalozzi Children's Village: Intercultural exchange

Patricia and Bianca are very lively and start chatting right away. Both girls speak English quite well, so well that they hardly need the translator to make themselves understood. They have come from our project in Romania to take part in a two-week Intercultural Exchange Project in Trogen.

When asked what they have learned during their stay in the Children's Village, Bianca explains: «I have learned how people who are excluded feel. It is an uncomfortable feeling that I don't wish on anybody. You know, it does not matter at all which language you speak, where you come from, how you look like or how old you are. Your heart tells you when someone can become your friend. Friends are very important. You never know what will happen in life, and if something bad happens you can count yourself lucky if you have many friends. But even if your heart is not sure, you don't have to exclude other people. You wouldn't like it if it happened to you.»

Patricia adds: «It's ok to be different. But first you have to understand and accept who you are. Once you do that, differences can be very exciting. It is important that we accept each other, even if we are not always of the same opinion. I know that now. And I will tell it to my friends at home. Maybe I will even show them some of the games we played here. I will see.»

«It's ok to be different.»

Every year, children and youth from Switzerland, the Chernobyl region and Southeast Europe come to the Children's Village to participate in our Intercultural Exchange Projects. They learn about themselves and their culture and develop healthy self-confidence. Meeting and exchanging with other participants helps them gain knowledge about different cultures. They learn how to identify what they have in common, practice mutual respect and find ways to solve conflicts peacefully. These skills are the foundation for peaceful and equitable cohabitation between different cultures.

What can my sponsorship of the Children's Village achieve?

Your sponsorship of the Children's Village enables children and youth between 6 and 19 years of age to learn more about their personal culture and become aware of other cultures, thus laying an important foundation for a peaceful intercultural future.

- 90 francs cover the costs for one child a day in a Chernobyl project.
- 180 francs cover the costs for one child a day in an Education Project.
- 360 francs cover the costs for one child a week in an Intercultural Exchange Project.