

BIANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 01|2020

Pestalozzi Children's Village

Pestalozzi Children's Foundation



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Editorial

Dear sponsors,

History does not repeat itself. Looking back into the world of 100 years ago – to the second decade of the last century – reveals a world beset with uncertainty. A world war had brought unimaginable suffering to humanity. This period was shaped by nationalistic conflicts, by struggles to control as large and profitable a part of the world as possible. After the war, ordinary people sought orientation and security because everything around them was changing with ever greater speed.

Here we are one century later, and we can see many parallels with that period. Climate change is a threat for which a solution must be found. Yet many nations are protecting their own interests and are not doing what they could and indeed must do in order to avert an impending global catastrophe. With their

protests all over the world, it is children and young people who are imploring us to change our lifestyles in order to save that which can still be saved. Has a responsible generation emerged that can show us the right way forward?

We can safely assume that this maturity is fuelled by education. Children in many countries today benefit from an enabling environment. The combination of the digitalisation of knowledge and a generation that has grown up using technology since early childhood presents a tremendous opportunity. Not all children have the same opportunities, however. You, dear sponsors, can give more children access to good, relevant education!

With this report we would like to inform you about how and where we use your valuable contributions. Over the course of 2020, 189 school classes and groups

comprising some 4,500 children from within Switzerland and other countries will take part in our projects in Switzerland. New additions such as the Digi-week (see the photo story on page 8) are just one example of how we are supporting the digitally-aware youth of today on their path through life.

Please accept our heartfelt thanks for you valuable support. Yours faithfully,



Thomas Witte, Director of Marketing and Communications

An entire school year group declares war on racism

The Lindenbühl School in Volketswil is breaking new ground: for the first time, an entire year group is addressing the various aspects of peaceful coexistence in the Pestalozzi Children's Village, thereby sending out a strong message against racism in school life.

On a picture-perfect autumnal day in mid-September, two coaches pull up next to the sports field at the Pestalozzi Children's Village in Trogen and out of them pour 130 youngsters and teachers along with their luggage. A motley group of six classes, ready to take on the next three years of their lives together. The aim of the project days is for this path to be lined with understanding and openness instead of exclusion and prejudice. It is the first time that an entire school year group has attempted to nip challenges such as bullying and racism in the bud right at the beginning of the school year.

With minds, hearts and hands

Sonja Fröhlich's class will be accompanied by Julian Friedrich for the next few days. Together with her pupils, the teacher will discover what is required in order to coexist peacefully. To find this out, the group will delve into aspects such as identity, trust and cooperation, prejudice and discrimination, and cooperation and play.

Despite its simplicity, the first icebreaker exercise – a balancing act in which pupils must organise themselves by their first names while all standing on chairs – reveals one of the key working methods in the Children's Village. «For us it is always about doing something,» Julian Friedrich explains to the guests from Volketswil, adding: «What you want to learn from it is entirely up to you. You have to take responsibility for your own actions.»

After a few more warm-up games, the tone becomes more serious. The pupils

«Normal school means sitting down, listening, learning. Here you can have fun and empathise. The games help you to understand things better.»

Jamie, aged 13

note down on pieces of coloured paper what they hope to get out of the week, what they do not want to happen or what their hopes are for the class for the next three years. During the afternoon break, Sonja Fröhlich reveals what she expects of the project week: «I hope that the exchange strengthens the bonds between classmates and encourages mutual respect.» The teacher appears excited about the opportunities that the village's



Growing together through group activities and workshops: pupils from Lindenbühl High School taking part in a game on the playground at the Children's Village.

infrastructure offers. «It is very cool to live with a new class in a house and eat together. You have your own space, and yet the other year group classes, for whom the next three years are so important, are always around you.» As a teacher, she also hopes to take new ideas back to the classroom with her.

Togetherness through trust

Day two: the pupils from Volketswil are sat down in a circle. In the middle of the room is a colourful cardboard box, which is surrounded by large format photos from the previous day. The atmosphere is relaxed. Some of them are chatting, others are giggling. The youngsters have quickly become accustomed to the playful approach of the workshops. Or rather, as Jamie expressed it, «normal school means sitting down, listening, learning. Here you can have fun and empathise. The games help you to understand things better.»



Taking home important insights and experiences from the project days: friends Kyoko and Shenaya.

Soon after the course begins, the secret of the colourful cardboard box becomes apparent. One after another, the pupils open the box and describe what lies inside using adjectives, as instructed by Julian Friedrich. They use terms such as strange, ok, surprising, weird and funny. The uncertainty that has spread like wildfire through the room is not surprising. Inside the cardboard box is a mirror – the children had to describe themselves. «We often have a rather negative image of ourselves,» the teacher explains during the ensuing discussion. He adds that since identity has a lot to do with self-confidence, it is important to be true to oneself.

This is followed in the afternoon by the ultimate trust-building exercise. However, letting oneself fall backwards with your eyes closed is not as easy as it seems, especially when the exercise involves multiple classes. The group comes alive with laughter and every now and then

one of the youngsters has a slightly bumpy landing on the floor. Julian Friedrich draws parallels with everyday life at school: «Take the exercise seriously and have the courage to say what you need of another person.»

Gaining insights through experience

The third day of the workshop focusses entirely on bullying. The pupils have the opportunity to share their own experiences through a range of exercises. How does it feel to be excluded and bullied by others? And why did that person become a bully? The class discussion leads to an important realisation. All too often we laugh along with abuse instead of saying no to it. This ends up with the perpetrators feeling as though it is all just a game. Julian Friedrich encourages the children to «say what you feel, what hurts you. Don't be afraid of being a spoilsport.»

«I've learnt that it is important in life to know that you can also say no. And you are entitled to have an opinion without feeling guilty about it.»

Shenaya, aged 13

For the most part, Sonja Fröhlich was a silent observer as her classes took part in the workshops. This was extremely exciting for her. «This outside perspective allowed me to see my class in a new light.» She was also delighted to see how enthusiastically the class took part in the workshop and how seriously they addressed the issues at hand. The children likewise give the workshop a thumbs up. «I think I've learnt a lot about how people

feel and how you can communicate,» 13-year-old Kyoko enthuses. Her classmate Shenaya is taking two important findings back to school with her from the workshops: «It is important in life to know that you can also say no. And you are entitled to have an opinion without feeling guilty about it.» The 13-year-old also believes that the class members have got to know each other better during their time in the Children's Village and have grown closer as a result. Jamie admits that at the beginning of the project week, he was rather skeptical about it. The workshops with teacher Julian Friedrich seem to have ignited his interest, however. «He did it pretty well, I think.» And even more importantly for the children, «He's someone you can trust.»

A fusion of human and machine

Tinkering, soldering and programming: a project of a rather different kind was announced in the Children's Village last November. During Digi-week, around 50 children experimented with robotic assistance systems for the disabled and programmed dancing robots.

Athlete Armin Köhli lost his lower leg in an accident. He showed the children how he has been living since then, and let them try out some prosthetics, wheelchairs and robotic assistance systems. The children played wheelchair basketball, did a slalom wearing prosthetics and overcame obstacles while unsighted.



The children had the chance to do some tinkering and programming in the «Laboratory of the Future». They constructed dancing robots with the support of the teachers. Each child was given a building kit consisting of lights, speakers, batteries, wheels and panels. Course leader Kevin Schneider explained what makes up a circuit board and how to use a soldering iron.



At the closing presentation, the children showed off what they had learned to their families. The boys and girls had rehearsed a choreography to the song «Happy» by Pharrell Williams and stood excitedly on the stage. When the song started, they began dancing with a giggle and something next to each child blinked and whirred. The sources of these strange noises were the children's dance partners – their robots!



Children at the Erlimatt School find out more about radio and rights

From 20th to 30th November 2019, the powerup_radio project run by the Pestalozzi Children's Foundation went on a children's rights tour with its Livezeit competition. Before it began, the foundation drew lots to decide who would be able to take part in this radio project for free. One of the twelve winners was the Erlimatt School in Pratteln in the canton of Basel-Landschaft.

One of the first contributions produced by the children from the Erlimatt School is their school song: «[...]Ob gross oder chli oder dick oder dünn. ob schnäll oder langsam isch egal. Ob türkisch, englisch, serbisch, italienisch und düttsch – mier alli verstönd eus glich. Denn mier sind e Schuel, mier gsehnd üs jede Tag. Mier gönd mitenand durch dick und dünn.» They sing passionately about their solidarity and how every child can be part of the community. No matter where they come from, what they look

like, or what language they speak. After all, every child has the right to live free from discrimination. This is something the children at Erlimatt learnt as they prepared for the project.

Standing by

Now everything is ready – Mara and Rebecca are about to go live. The segments that they are broadcasting live were prepared in class. The class was allocated a children's right beforehand, which the children pick up on in different ways in their reports. Armed with sheets of notes and visibly nervous, they wait in the bus to make their radio debut. They go through the notes and the sequence together one more time and then both take a seat. Their final preparations hardly help them to relax, however. Now they're on air: «Hello! My name is Rebecca, my name is Mara, and this is Radio Pestalozzii,» and the programme is underway. Once the girls have finished,

the tension in their faces makes way for a proud smile.

The children draw conclusions

From the outside, there is little sign of the tense atmosphere inside the bus. During breaktime, the children buzz around the mobile radio station like bees around their hive. Some of them listen excitedly, a «psst» here, a «psst» there. They move to the beat and sing along with the music that plays between the reports. The good atmosphere spreads to the anxious radio moderators too when they step out of the bus grinning from ear to ear.

Alisha feels the excitement too. «We were on the radio – wow!», she says beaming. Her face becomes more serious as she explains just how much importance she attaches to children's rights: «There are lots of children who do not have a good childhood because they

can't go to school, for example.» That's why children should know their rights and stand up for them, she adds. One of these is the right of a child to express their opinion: «Even if the parents say no, children should have the courage to speak out,» the 10-year-old believes.

«Even if the parents say no, children should have the courage to speak out.»

Alisha, aged 10

12-year-old Alicia did some research in class on just how different school systems can be. In her report, she decided to look in depth at the school system in Iran. School attendance is compulsory for children up to the age of eleven. After that, it is the parents' decision and it



When the red light is on in the bus, the children are broadcasting live. Those outside the bus listen excitedly too.

«Everybody should have equal opportunities and the same education.»

Alicia, aged 12

appears that they often take girls out of school. «I don't think that's good at all. Everybody should have equal opportunities and the same education.»

Adem also has no doubts that education is important and that every child should go to school. He discovered that two thirds of children in Ghana cannot attend school. «I think that's really bad,» the 11-year-old declares. Without education, ultimately it's harder to find a job, he adds. «It's definitely better for us here in Switzerland.» Iso, Kevin and Rehad drew the same conclusion from their radio research too. «We should appreciate



Alicia believes it is important for children to know their rights and to stand up for them.

living in Switzerland and being able to go to school.»

Children's rights in everyday life

Radio teacher Samantha Kuster also takes stock: «The classes had intensive discussions about the complicated children's rights articles and took a lot of new information on board.» Some of them looked at the right to leisure, she reports, and considered it in the context of the dangers posed by online gaming. «A group of girls took a closer look at teenage pregnancy and abortion and interviewed a Swiss influencer as part of their research.» Their focus was Article 6, which obliges the signatories to protect the innate right to life of every child.

Teacher Antje Kern observed that the children grasped many concepts and incorporated them in their everyday lives. «When the children are having a argument, I've sometimes heard one of

them say «Hey, can you stop that? I have a right to my opinion and to express it.» The teacher feels that the children have been able to implement the newly learned rights among themselves in a meaningful way. There were also a number of exciting

«The classes had intensive discussions about the complicated children's rights articles and made them their own.»

Samantha Kuster, Project Officer Radio Projects

debates during the intensive preparation process, including one about democracy. Antje Kern thinks that this interaction is very worthwhile as the children are now more aware of their rights.

As part of the project, the class also discussed the opportunities of the medium of radio at length. An important step was to find out what the children would like to report about and how to organise the reports. «We invested a lot of time in it, not least because it was important both to us teachers and the children to immerse ourselves in the world of radio,» Antje Kern explains. The teacher is proud: «All of the children were courageous enough to step up to the microphone.» Antje Kern points out that it is a long road from thinking about a subject to deciding what to broadcast to the world. «The children coped with this fantastically well and very responsibly.»

Creating an opposite to the digital world

At the symposium for media education in the Pestalozzi Children's Village, experts held classes focussing on media literacy. In this interview, Florian Karrer, Head of Radio Projects and Co-organizer of the symposium, discusses challenges, dangers and solutions.

Florian, why is there a need for the Media Literacy Symposium at all?
During the radio projects in the schools, we noticed that the teachers were facing a sizeable challenge in the form of social media. Children have access to digital devices in lessons at an ever earlier age. This has an enormous influence on the school routine. Furthermore, 90 per cent of youngsters spend several hours online each day. We have to face up to this reality as a society. Our hope is that this symposium will raise awareness, thereby helping to protect children.

What challenges do digital media present for teachers?
The biggest challenge is probably the omnipresence of the smartphone, particularly from high school level and up. Teachers therefore need to work out how to deal with this. Smartphones should be integrated into lessons in a meaningful way, and there should be rules that promote interaction. The children and teenagers often know much more about using smartphones than the adults. Many teachers find this rather overwhelming.

Is this where the symposium comes into play?
At the symposium we want to encourage the teachers to take a proactive approach to media literacy. Ultimately, the internet also contains dangerous content that children and young people must be protected from. This means both adults and youngsters must be made aware of the risks.

What sort of dangers do you mean?
One speaker, Maya Götz – a media scientist and teacher at the International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television in Munich – spoke very impressively at the symposium about the role models that have become accessible through various media. This includes, for example, skewed perceptions of male and female body images, which are most notably propagated in TV series and films. Normal people cannot remotely match the body proportions that are shown – that would be unhealthy. Yet these images are portrayed in the media as ideals. On a psychological level, these body images give young people a constant sense of being inadequate. It is also possible to compromise someone very quickly on social media. Images of injuries can be shared among huge numbers of people with enormous impacts. And the internet does not forget.

How can teachers promote media literacy in lessons?
Teachers can try to create an analogue opposite to the digital world. This could be an experiment, for example, in which

the entire class chooses not to use their smartphones for a week. The class can then reflect on this experience as a group. In the absence of a smartphone, the same issues usually come up: identity, self-esteem and anxiety. «I can't contact my friends, I'm not in the chat, I'm missing out.»

You carry out similar exercises with the children during the radio projects too. Where have you noticed that they are changing their behaviour where social media is concerned?
A lot of things happen in this sort of group discussion. Each child develops an awareness of their own social media use and its impacts on their life. The children start to reflect and notice that the other children are battling the same challenges, problems and anxieties with regard to social media. In the end, they leave the exercise with a new perspective and are more aware of their smartphone usage.



Among the participants are trainee teachers from St. Gallen High School.

No difference any more

Over the past year, the Pestalozzi Children's Foundation has focussed concertedly on the issue of gender. After all, whether they are a boy or a girl, every child and every person should have the same rights and opportunities. Unfortunately, this is by no means the case everywhere. Even in Switzerland there are still many differences between men and women. For example, did you know that...

...Switzerland was ranked only 20th in the Global Gender Gap Report?

...in 2016, the monthly gross salary in Switzerland was around 6,830 Swiss francs for men compared with 6,011 for women?

...instances of domestic violence in Switzerland are on the rise? The Zurich Cantonal Police, for example, is called out to twelve such offences every day. One woman dies in Switzerland as a result of domestic violence every two weeks.

...68.4% of board members in 2018 were male and 31.6% were female?

...just 22.1% of all university graduates in Switzerland with degrees in science, technology, engineering or mathematics are women?

IMPRINT

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