

BIANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 02|2020

Pestalozzi Children's Village

Pestalozzi Children's Foundation



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Editorial

Dear sponsors,

The coronavirus has had a firm hold on Switzerland and the Children's Village since early March. Even though everyday life has returned to a degree of normality since then, project cancellations have still hit us hard. Up until mid-July, we have had to call off almost 70 of our radio, school and intercultural exchange projects.

A ray of hope during this period was the #powerupconnects radio programme. We made a spontaneous decision to use our children's radio station as a means of digital interaction in order to keep children and adults connected during the coronavirus pandemic. When people living through a crisis share and discuss their personal experiences, a tangible sense of

solidarity emerges. Read more about our coronavirus programme on powerup_radio from page 13.

We maintained close contact with our stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic. We were able to offer schools in Switzerland an attractive alternative to the projects we had planned in the Children's Village with our travelling radio vans: starting in June, we simply went to visit them in their playgrounds.

Thanks to relaxations in coronavirus restrictions, in July we were at least able to hold three weeks of «Kunterbunt» and «Action & Fun» Summer Camps in the Children's Village as planned. Our mobile reporters also found a time slot this month to discuss the themes for future

programmes. Get to know one of our mobile reporters, Tobias, on page 4, and find out more about the project on page 8.

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



Damian Zimmermann,
Director of Programme Switzerland

Realising that you can do it

Who can say they have helped plan their own radio programme by the age of 12? Tobias can. He is one of nine participants in the Mobile Reporter Programme run by the Pestalozzi Children's Foundation.

Tobias has a broad range of hobbies. He likes karate, kite surfing, water-sports in general, he reads a lot, spends time playing computer games like many of his generation and is fascinated by remote-controlled things, which is why he regularly sends his drone soaring into the sky. On the subject of heights – the twelve-year-old is certainly aiming high professionally. «After high school I want to go to graduate school. I'll wait and see what comes after that – perhaps I'll become an actor, a heart surgeon or a businessman with my own company.» Tobias is certainly convinced that doing radio programmes will set him on the

right path. «As a radio host I've learnt to express myself in a way that makes people listen.»

And how did this boy from the Canton of Thurgau come to be on the radio? Through technology. His mother sent him and his brother to a Digiweek event at the Children's Village. There he encountered powerup_radio and a spark was lit within him. The technical aspect is not the only thing that appeals to Tobias – he likes using recording devices and cutting programmes too. The music is perhaps even more important for him. «When you create a report and look for suitable music for it, you can discover a lot of new things.» There is also a third element of working with radio that fascinates him: the opportunity to make other people aware of your own interests through a report and to explain the context. «I want listeners to understand how something works.»

«AS a radio host I've learnt to express myself in a way that makes people listen to me better.»

Tobias, aged 12

Tobias is currently preparing a ten-minute report for the next broadcast. It is about computer games, and more specifically about how they are programmed. It is no simple task. Tobias likes a challenge, however, and learned from the workshops at the Children's Village how to simplify complex content and what aspects are worth focusing on in an interview. This particular report is intended to be a purely explanatory piece. Tobias gives a very frank explanation for this. «It has been very difficult», he says, «to find a proven



As a mobile reporter, Tobias learnt how to carry out interviews with complete strangers.



Tobias adds the finishing touches to his 10-minute reports for powerup_radio in his bedroom.

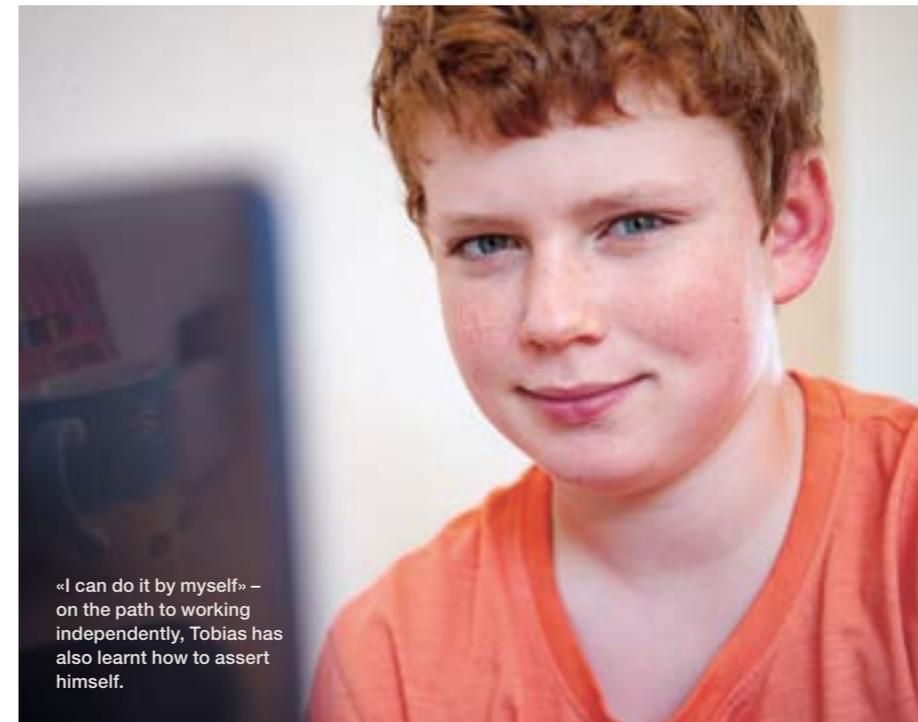
expert on this subject. And I haven't had the courage to go and ask companies.» This admission should not overshadow the many challenges that the twelve-year-old has taken on in his nine months as a mobile reporter. His Project Officer – Radio Projects and co-organiser of the project, Mariel Diez is delighted that he carried out a live interview in English at the Children's Village. «The moment when our mobile reporters try something new instead of saying 'I'd rather not' is always something special.»

Susan Hamilton has given the project her full backing and supports her son diligently. «Since he started working for the radio in November, Tobias has become noticeably more independent.» She initially helped him with working out the structure right from the outset, however, he wanted to work alone – and accept the consequences of doing so. «Fortunately, he proved that he

had what was needed and asserted himself,» she reflects. «I think this is a valuable learning experience because he's realised that he can manage tasks by himself.»

«I think this is a valuable learning experience because he's realised that he can manage tasks by himself.»

Susan Hamilton



«I can do it by myself» – on the path to working independently, Tobias has also learnt how to assert himself.

The young generation is rocking powerup_radio

Our mobile reporters: they are young and they love radio so much that they are willing to give up their free time for it. Project Officers – Radio Projects Mariel Diez and Samantha Kuster talk about a new project that largely relies on the enthusiasm of the participants.

What is behind the Mobile Reporters project?

Mariel Diez: The idea has been floating around in our heads for quite a while. We kept finding that the children and youths were hooked on making radio programmes at the end of a project and wanted to carry on doing it. Until now, we have not had the resources to follow up on our idea. That changed when Samantha started at powerup_radio. We said to ourselves: now's the time to do it.

How did the project get started?

Samantha Kuster: We started last No-

vember with six children. Since then, four more participants have joined the project who saw our radio bus during the Children's Rights Day event on the Bundesplatz. To begin with, this is a good number of participants. We underestimated how much support they would need from us. *Mariel Diez:* It is also important to emphasise that they are doing this in their free time. Initially we thought that the enthusiasm would subside over time and that things would change, but the children are still just as motivated. Only one pupil, who was still very young and unsure at the start of the project, has dropped out.

What sets the Mobile Reporters project apart?

Mariel Diez: In traditional projects, it can sometimes be difficult to build a proper relationship with the children. The teacher might have to look after a whole class and has very little time.

Just as you begin to really get to know them and recognise their potential, the project is already over. With the Mobile Reporters project, we can build a relationship over a longer period of time. We get to see the end product and share their motivation. The fact that the feedback in this relationship goes in both directions makes the whole thing much more appealing.

Do you agree, Samantha?

Absolutely. You can see how children develop and flourish just in the space of a project week. However, it is only a brief glimpse that you can marvel at, and then it's already a thing of the past. In this project we can give the participants much more specific support.

How do you go about doing that?

Mariel Diez: We meet every two or three months and discuss the main topics for the next programmes with the participants. At each of these workshops we also talk about past programmes and try to provide new input. Just recently, we discussed vari-



ous interview techniques, for example. *Samantha Kuster:* For kids of this age – ranging from 5th to 8th grade – it is a fantastic practice environment. Asking a stranger for an interview is not easy.

I'm still absolutely delighted that one of the children independently managed to set up an interview on children's rights with someone from the Child and Adult Protective Services. These are excel-

lent skills for everyday life and I think it's important that the children learn about them here.

What developments have you noticed in the mobile reporters?

Samantha Kuster: That they're very proud of what they achieve. And rightly so. Absolutely. During lockdown I arranged a virtual meeting over Zoom. One mother later told me that her son had run round the whole house proudly announcing that he was about to go to a meeting. I think the children feel valued by us and that they like taking the lead, which makes them feel important. *Mariel Diez:* It is nice to watch them have the courage to try out new things.

The coronavirus programme #powerupconnects was broadcast in English every Thursday in order to involve all the listeners from our exchange programmes. Tobias got involved and did interviews with little preparation time with youngsters from Serbia and North Macedonia. The moments when we give them a new challenge and they say «Alright, I'll give it a try» rather than «No, I'd rather not» are very powerful.

Culture shock leaves a desire for more

At first she is overwhelmed, and then she does not want to go home. Yllza visited the Summer Camp at the Children's Village in 2017 and spent two weeks there that changed her life. Three years later, the 19-year-old returned to Trogen as a minder of a group.

Yllza grew up in Pershefca. The village in the Northwest of North Macedonia is less than ten kilometres as the crow flies from Kosovo. 99% of the residents there are Albanians. Surrounded by this ethnic uniformity and having been raised by conservative parents, there are precious few opportunities for young people to interact with people of other nationalities. When Yllza attended the Summer Camp in 2017, she was initially overwhelmed by the diversity in the Children's Village. «When I arrived, I cried and wanted to go home,» she recalls. Her current boss, Metin Muaremi, even describes it as a culture shock.

Yet after just a few days – inspired by her interactions with the other youngsters and her trusting relationships with the teachers – she underwent an impressive change. She opened up, was more communicative and learnt a lot about how to avoid conflicts and find solutions. She had completely changed, Metin Muaremi remembers, even her way of thinking had changed. «Before, she was someone who did not worry about anything and simply enjoyed things. Now she is a much more responsible person.» The 19-year-old agrees with this assessment, adding «I have a lot more positive energy and far fewer prejudices against people I do not know.»

Farewells and new beginnings

As the end of the Summer Camp approached, Yllza was dreading going home more and more. Metin Muaremi, the director of our partner organisation,

Centre for Education and Development (CED), was not working as a minder in Trogen that year, but understood why Yllza was struggling with the idea of returning home. When the youngster turned to the North Macedonian organisation, he offered her an opportunity as a volunteer. «The Summer Camp will come to an end, but you can find another way of staying involved here in North Macedonia.»

Yllza is delving in at CED and has risen from volunteer to Youth Coordinator. In this role, she is the point of contact for all the volunteers. As CED also offers camps for children and adolescents, Yllza can bring in her experiences from the Children's Village to her work. «The time I spent there helped me because I learnt first hand how to interact with children.» When the young adult looks back on her time in Trogen, she always circles back to talking about the people who welcomed her with such unexpect-

«I want to keep this Pestalozzi spirit close to my heart.»

Yllza

ed openness. She also raves about the positive energy that inspired her rather childish and naive self at the time. «I want to keep this Pestalozzi spirit close to my heart.»

Passing the practical test

As director of CED, Metin Muaremi experienced Yllza's personal development from up close – particularly how she organised an entire summer camp with two other volunteers and how she interacted with people. He believes that she now sees the world differently. «She has had an influence on her society through her work with the organisation



A participant in 2017, a minder in 2020: Yllza from North Macedonia.

and her new way of thinking and understanding things.» The shy teenager has become a self-assured young adult who has taken a large step towards her goal of returning to the Children's Village. «When I went home in 2017, I said to myself: I want to go back to Trogen again and again.» She is over the moon that the time has now come for her to return. She is as excited to meet Daniel and Pascal again as she is to return to the Village. They are the Project Officers who made sure that she felt as welcome as she did.

At 19, Yllza is only just older than the youths who take part in the exchange project in the Children's Village. She says that she had of course already thought about this, but that she is well accepted by the group. Metin Muaremi explains that there is a conscious effort not simply to show the participants a particular perspective on learning or an approach to dealing with things. «I am

perhaps slightly more authoritarian, but she is much friendlier and the children are likely to tell her more things than they would me.»

«60 to 70 per cent of the youths become active citizens at home and lead organisations.»

Metin Muaremi, Director of CED

The two are united in their belief that the exchange projects in the Children's Village can create a lasting impact on the children's native countries. The projects can change the way we think, says Yllza. «When I returned home, I had lots of ideas about what I wanted to do and how I wanted to work.» CED has been taking 40 youths on an exchange to Trogen for the last ten years. «The ex-

perience shows that 60 to 70 per cent become active citizens at home and lead organisations,» according to Metin Muaremi. He points to national, ethnically mixed student organisations, reading clubs and web radios. «It motivates us when we find out that somebody who was part of our project has gone on to achieve things and continued our work in another way.»

Stronger united

Children need a voice, especially in unprecedented times. The Pestalozzi Children's Foundation responded to the coronavirus with its children's and youth radio and developed a crisis-resistant programme that connected people in isolation.

Neo was looking forward enormously to the upcoming radio project week in the Pestalozzi Children's Village. Then lockdown was announced and like all other organisers, the Children's Village had to cancel its programme. Neo's disappointment was so great that his mother asked the radio team about other alternatives. They came up with this: under the hashtag #powerupconnects, the children's and youth radio run by the Pestalozzi Children's Foundation launched a programme that aimed to give children like Neo a voice. «We used the digital opportunities for interaction that radio offers to connect both children and adults during the coronavirus crisis,»

explains project officer Cinzia Hänsenberger. A sense of solidarity was created as people shared their experiences of dealing with the crisis, she adds.

From youth to senior

On 23 March at 11am, the radio team went live on air. To begin with, the one-hour format was still very structured: the programme had a requests segment, featured happy news and a self-explanatory «Gamecorner». The listening community for the new format first had to be established.

It did not take long, however, for the first children to pipe up. Project Officer – Radio Projects Samantha Kuster recalls the son of her parents' neighbours, who she encouraged to take part. The 13-year-old handled interviews confidently despite his very quiet nature. During the second week, he then called into the programme of his own will to talk about his favour-

ite book and to say hello to family and friends. «I was aware at the time that this experience would be very important for his self-confidence.»

There were moments that brought people together, for example when a girl shared a book tip during a programme and said hello to a friend who no longer lived in the village – and that friend then got in touch. Older people also spoke about their everyday life in quarantine. Cinzia Hänsenberger had the almost 80-year-old parents of a friend on the line, for example, who really appreciated being able to bring some calm to their surroundings and say hello to their grandchildren.

Digital school meet-ups

#powerupconnects emerged from adversity. Following the rapid spread of the coronavirus, numerous projects had to be cancelled at the Children's



Social distancing in the studio and broadcasting to their listeners' living rooms: the duo of live hosts Selina and Samuel in the radio studio in the Children's Village.

Village. Wherever possible, it was deemed desirable to continue connecting people through radio and exchange programmes and to create a sense of community. «We wanted to show the children and their families that we are there for them and that they can use us as a platform for interaction,» explained Project Officer – Radio Projects Adrian Strazza.

Strazza had wanted to carry out a project week with a primary school in Gais at the end of March. When the project fell through, it was important not to let the children's and teachers' preparations go to waste. What emerged from pre-production was an all-day programme with ample room for interaction. «We switched from the same principle with as much physical interaction as possible to a social distancing compliant version where everyone met digitally.» From Adrian Strazza's viewpoint, the programme was a complete

success. Among the things that moved him the most was the collective greeting from all the kindergarten teachers. «It is beautiful when teachers are able to say they are fond of the children and are looking forward to seeing them again.»

Mobile reporters

However, the organisers did not want to leave it there – they wanted to turn #powerupconnects into an even stronger mouthpiece for school pupils. As a result, so-called mobile reporters were deployed – these were former project participants with a passion for radio presenting. Equipped with a laptop and a recording device, they produced their own reports. Five children were involved from the third week of broadcasting. They were assigned interview partners, including the media spokesperson from the Swiss Farmers' Union, a master baker and the manager of a children's

zoo, who they interviewed live on the programme by telephone.

Even Neo who we mentioned earlier was a potential mobile reporter in Samantha Kuster's eyes. The same evening he phoned into the programme for the first time, he wrote an email asking for an opportunity to report himself in the weeks ahead. The Project Officer – Radio Projects sees this as an excellent example of how radio can empower children to become more active and to get their opinions across. #powerupconnects gave Neo the opportunity, she believes, to test himself in a challenging situation and to strengthen his self-confidence. What's more, he found something that he enjoyed doing. Samantha Kuster: «He completed the task with bravery and independently delivered a very high quality report about his hobby, basketball.»

Escaping daily life during the coronavirus with a radio drama

The pupils at Bütschwil School enjoyed a very special day. They had the opportunity to produce two of their own radio dramas together with powerup_radio. The radio project was a fantastic success for them, their teacher Petra Hugentobler, and Project Officer – Radio Projects Cinzia Hänsenberger.



«I would happily do this project again with powerup-radio any day. The children received support in various disciplines and there was a wide variety of individual work processes.»

Petra Hugentobler, teacher

«I really liked making funny noises with all the objects that we had and how we were able to write and draw our own stories. I enjoyed speaking into the microphone the most because we had to change our voices for Rumpelstiltskin.»

Miguel, primary school pupil



«I am delighted that we were able to offer children an auditory journey into a fairytale world during the coronavirus period thanks to the radio drama production.»

Cinzia Hänsenberger,
Project Officer – Radio Projects



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