

International Meeting of the Alliance for Childhood

2008

São Paulo - BRAZIL

On July 9, 10 and 13, partners of the Alliance for Childhood met in the city of São Paulo. During these meetings we had the opportunity to exchange information about the situation of childhood around the world with members of the movement in the following countries: United Kingdom Chile, Peru, Argentina, Japan, Tanzania, USA, and Brazil.

Monday - July 9th, 2007

Adriana welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Lia Diskin (Palas Athena representative). Lia explained that four million, five thousand Brazilian young people are currently in a situation of vulnerability for many reasons. She also mentioned that a newspaper published an article about Ute Craemer and the importance of her work (see page 17). She then thanked all participants for their presence.

Each participant introduced himself/herself by using the line colour dynamics. There were representatives from Japan, Tanzania, United Kingdom, USA, Peru, Chile, and Argentina. Each one presented a report on the situation of children in his/her country, starting with the person from the most distant place from Brazil.

Japan, Hiroshima - Josha Ito

This was the first time Josho Ito expressed his ideas in English. He is a lawyer who works on behalf of children. He mentioned that a series of celebrations would take place in August at the atomic bomb memorial in Hiroshima.

The Alliance for Childhood movement started in Japan five years ago when Ute Craemer gave some lectures in that country. Japanese children also face many hazardous situations. Just like in other countries, their situation is not good. Josha is working with the UNO's declaration of human rights for children, but the government does not wish to implement this . He is working with Hiroshima local government.

The objective of the Alliance for Childhood is to protect children and the objective of the declaration of human rights is to assure that these children will be independent adults in the future. Josha believes that both ultimately have the same aims. With these meetings, he would like to work on the integration of these objectives.

Tanzania - Pámela Banjhi

Pámela started by saying that when we talk about children in Africa, the major issue is hunger and poverty. How do we identify poverty? By the lack of water, education, food. Since its independence,

Tanzania has declared war against poverty. We are all aware of UNICEF's goals for the millennium: reduce to less than half the number of people who experience hunger and live on less than a dollar per month. In the sub-Saharan region, there are 240,000,000 people below the poverty line and children are the ones most affected. Pámela talked about the children's right to health and education. Danger arises when it comes to children and these privations become more severe and catastrophic.

Tanzania is a nation of children; they total 38,000; 19,000 are less than 18 years old. Life expectancy is 46 years of age, so there are no old people. If children are taken care of they will develop a greater self-esteem. They will later turn into a stronger generation if they are able to overcome the poverty, the sickness and the violence that affects so many countries.

Unfortunately in the early years of their lives children receive less help and support from the government. In 2001, at the Dakar Conference on *Education for All* where Tanzania was one of the members. The participant countries signed a declaration, and Tanzania made the commitment to work for an education for all, placing a greater emphasis on girls.

There are movements that only work with girls. Twenty-five countries have a different education for boys and girls, and the girls are the ones privileged with the best education that everybody wants. Well educated girls mean a reduction in the number of precocious pregnancies and AIDS contamination cases. AIDS today is an epidemic and Tanzania is receiving financial help from other countries.

These are major issues: the transmission of the HIV virus and the educational impact if we look into the future; 20% of the orphans are children below five years. Children are taking care of children; the older ones are responsible for bringing the money to support the family and here we come to the child labor issue: a boy in his community and nation becomes a burden and not a source.

Tanzania has empty classrooms due to lack of teachers and the long distance to the schools. Serengeti children are the most deprived of education because if they go to school they run the risk of being eaten by lions. Also there are many child marriages because of the need of a dowry.

Pámela receives a help from the government to act as a mediator and bring tools for the teachers; a donation of a toy bear, for instance, can turn into a good example for children who are learning how to help each other in their schools. Pamela also intends to establish an organization to help poor children, a system that will help to monitor the conditions of children in other communities. The government is not interested in improving children's education. Pámela is currently taking care of two centers: BIBA and Bodu Baby Center.

United Kingdom and the European Union - Christopher Clouder

Christopher used a metaphor saying that "he works like a farmer" in the Alliance, "preparing the land to have the seeds grow". In Brazil, plants grow very fast and they come out beautifully. In the UK they grow a little bit slower. And, at the Alliance, you have to let them grow naturally. In the UK plants appear after many years of work.

To keep in touch with the International Alliance for Childhood we have developed an Internet site, a source for everyone including news, reports, works and researches. Things have changed dramatically last autumn; an increasing concern with the quality of childhood began to spread, including the media

and fostering a national debate on depression, child obesity, loss of play time, stress because of school evaluation, consumerism, effect of electronic equipment in brain development, parents who have no time for their children, increasing poverty levels -although it is a rich country, increase in the consumption of medicines, etc.

After the publication of the book "Toxic Childhood", this concern has been reappearing week after week.

For all these reasons, the Alliance for Childhood went through a fast development there. Prominent members of society decided to join their efforts with the Alliance. Out of a small movement, the Alliance for Childhood now has a larger voice to be heard.

At the European Parliament Christopher has been delivering and arranging lectures from several countries. The work started small and now it begins to grow with greater interest in the European Parliament. For many years Christopher kept contact with a member of the European Commission about childhood care and out of this has grown the Quality of Childhood group. They meet every two months and invite a person that is involved with this issue to make a presentation before the group, which is an honor. They usually choose the most influential person of the country. Then they prepare a written report that is made available at the site of the Alliance for Childhood. Their talks are in line with the concepts of the Alliance and they have resources and researchers. A publication with all these reports will go out to all of the 760 members of the Chamber. Gradually more and more people participate in such meetings. They have also established an Alliance as a European NGO separate from their assembly to support this work. Everything started in this autumn and it has been surprising to see how it has grown. They also work closely with the European Council of Steiner Waldorf Education which includes about 650 schools.. He also mentioned that the figure of Palas Athena has been very important for him for many years: she is not a myth, but a reality.

USA - Fred Donaldson

The USA participant, Fred Donaldson, had no detailed data about childhood in his country. He is not familiar with the Alliance for Childhood activities there, but describes a dramatic scenario for childhood in the USA: crimes among children, video games, lack of physical activities, bullying. He believes that adults have little knowledge about dealing with children. According to his experience, South America and USA seem to be alike.

During these accounts, problems such as child obesity and depression, stress caused by the great cognitive demand of schools, and the incidence of teachers that are not prepared to comply with children's needs, were presented. An education that precociously intellectualizes children, the lack of adequate spaces for play, the lack of physical activities, the damage caused by consumerism, TV and electronic games, the excessive increase in the use of medicines (Ritalin) for children diagnosed with behavior and attention disorders, malnutrition, parents that are too busy to establish loving connections with their children, the increase of child prejudice and violence in schools, were almost unanimously pointed out as problems that affect childhood in many countries. The incidence of the

problems described runs through all the countries affecting children regardless of their social class. What varies from one country to another is only the number of victimised children and how much each government is becoming concerned with such problems.

During this International Meeting, there was a moment when questions were raised about the Alliance for Childhood Movement. These questions were brought and developed by the participant partners and were treated by the groups of participants that were gathered to deal with specific themes.

- 1- Philosophical Foundation;
- 2- Fund Raising;
- 3- Learning;
- 4- Network;
- 5- Communication.

The questions examined were:

- How to connect the Alliance Movement with the Waldorf movement?
- How to prepare a consensual image about a dignified childhood?
- What are the philosophical principles of the Alliance Movement?
- Do we need a legal structure to formalize the Alliance for Childhood?
- How are the network and their projects financed?
- How to create a network - a common action that is international?
- Is there an academic institution that promotes a humanised education?
- How do we assure that all partners around the world have a efficient communication?
- How to transmit and share what is going on in the Movement?
- How to expand the Movement within one's own country?
- What is the degree of commitment that supporters should have?
- How to make the Course for Multipliers feasible for other regions of the country?
- In Japan: Brazilians, children of blue-collar workers, with identity problems, ashamed of being Brazilians.
- How to make an exchange about peace culture?
- How to have an introduction letter restating the connection between the partner and the Alliance in order to receive a support?
- What important pedagogical movements the Alliance should know to be able to establish and arrive at a consensual image?
- What are the necessary prerequisites to deliver courses in other states?
- How can the Waldorf Pedagogy schools get more involved with the community?
- Are there any criteria for the receipt of large project resources by the Alliance for Childhood?
- How to create an agenda of actions for the sake of children?
- How to create an international panorama of actions that meet the Alliance goals and how to introduce the Movement worldwide?
- How to identify the worldwide trends that are opposed to the Alliance goals?
- How to give visibility to childhood issues?
- How to have NGO's that are already working with children join the Alliance?

Meeting at UMAPAZ

Tuesday - July 10, 2007

Participants:

Adriana Friedmann (Brazil)
Ana Cláudia Leite (Brazil)
Anália (Belo Horizonte - Brazil)
Ananda Carrion (Chile)
Célia Bottura (Brazil)
Chantal Amarante (Brazil)
Christopher Clouder (England)
Cristina (Argentina)
Cristina (Bahia - Brazil)
David Reeks (Brazil)
Eliete (Bahia - Brazil)
Elisete Onuki (Japan - Brazil)
Fabiana (Bahia - Brazil)
Fred Donaldson (USA)
Yoshiko Mori (Japan)
Josha Ito (Japan)
Karina (Espírito Santo - Brazil)
Luiza Lameirão (Brazil)
Magda (Brazil)
Maria (Brazil)
Maria Marta Chame (Argentina)
Marisa Bueno (Brazil)
Pámela Banjhi (Tanzania)
Patrícia Gimaël (Brazil)
Paulo Santos (Brazil)
Rosa Ângela (Holambra - Brazil)
Rosaura Huanacune (Peru)
Rubens Salles (Brazil)
Sandra Eckshmidt (Florianópolis - Brazil)
Simone (Belo Horizonte - Brazil)
Simone Andrade (Brazil)
Suzana Soares (Brazil)
Ute Craemer (Brazil)

Opening: Paulo César dos Santos - Director of UMAPAZ

UMAPAZ - University for Environment and Culture of Peace was the result of a great Alliance of Organizations that met with the São Paulo Department of Green Spaces and Environment with the objective of promoting a culture of peace and sustainable development for the city of São Paulo.

Paulo welcomed and thanked everyone for being there. He has just arrived from Bahia where he spent one week helping to find solutions for the problems that are always alike, they just change addresses: how to overcome barriers to reach common goals? How to achieve this great ideal of the Alliance for Childhood and the unity in diversity?

According to the United Nations, the network that has been working in this decade of Culture of Peace has opened doors for the solidification of a Culture of Peace. COMPAZ - Parliamentary Council for the Culture of Peace was created; it is seated at the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo and includes Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations. The objective is to implement public policies for a Culture of Peace. It is the opportunity to take the Alliance for Childhood projects to this Council because Childhood is a Culture of Peace.

Adriana Friedmann

She opened the session by saying that Marisa collected the questions raised the day before and that they were included within five major themes. She proposed group meetings to find answers for these themes. Then later a large panel would be opened to share the questions.

COMMUNICATION

- How to assure an efficient communication among worldwide partners
- How to share information
- Preparation of a Data Bank for common information
- How is the relation with the media achieved?
- How is the exchange of experiences established?

LEARNING

- How to make the course for multipliers feasible in other regions
- Requirements for participation in the courses
- How to exchange experiences of successful initiatives?
- Can learn be leveraged?
- Worldwide trends
- Research

FUND RAISING

- Agenda related to childhood
- Criteria for project funding
- Application and management of resources
- Commitment with sponsors
- Difficulties in the presentation of proposals to get funding
- Difficulties involving fund raising in rich countries like Japan

PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES

- Connection with the Waldorf Movement (Anthroposophy)
- Pedagogical movements that should be known and recognized in order to build a consensual image
- Philosophical foundations of the Alliance (feeling of abstraction)
- What we do not want to do.
- Focus: should it be local (projects), global (political) or both?

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NETWORK

- Expand the Alliance for Childhood in other countries
- Actions to enlarge the international network
- Make the network stronger by promoting integration
- How to give visibility to the Alliance projects?
- Knowledge of and exchange with similar organizations that work with childhood in different countries.
- Culture of Peace projects in order to minimize violence.

What was discussed in the groups:

COMMUNICATION

How to assure communication among partners all around the world:

a) Site

The Brazilian site can be made available in terms of programming. In this way, other countries can have the same visual identity of our site. The site structure allows people to subscribe, publish articles, make researches, etc.

The centers in each country would be able to communicate writing in their own language. Each center would have a communication manager that would send information to the other partners about what is going on in his country. The ideal structure would be a team of three people: a technician, a professional responsible for the content, and a journalist to act as a press officer. In this way we would make feasible the exchange of information.

We could write articles about the projects and other subjects. Publication of papers of our interest could also generate debates, controversies, dissemination.

These actions could help us towards fund raising.

- 1- The site is already well developed in Brazil - proposal to make the structure available to other countries with links that will allow those who access the site to know all other countries that are part of the Movement.
- 2- Strengthen the communication between centers with managers in each country and a network linking the managers.
- 3- Press officer: a volunteer first, and then a professional.
- 4- Have someone responsible in each country for following up the news involving childhood - to

allow discussion of concepts.

- b) Facilitate interpersonal communication and meetings.
- c) David's suggestion: house the site of each country (in the local language) in the Brazilian site (more simple and cheaper).
Ana Cláudia: have only one site in English with flags to access each country.
Célia: form groups of studies to deepen each theme.

NETWORK

- a) Assure a sequence to the International Seminar. Maybe at every two years. Define the next hosting Country.
- b) Organize Regional and National Meetings.
- c) Exchange experiences with the places where the Alliance has already been consolidated and expand according to the characteristics of each country.
- d) Introduce the Alliance in other circles, such as: Meetings on Pedagogy, Psychology, Philosophy, Environment, NGO's, etc. (introductory video)
- e) Consider the Alliance as a network inserted in other larger networks and try to establish partnership with them.
- f) Encourage the Playday and other relevant international dates. Example: production of diaries and calendars of the Alliance for Childhood with holidays and suggestions of games and play. (One for each country with the same visual identity?)
- g) Establish links of the site with other similar sites.
- h) Develop projects in public spaces.
- i) Organize groups of studies.
- j) Carry out common works, developing projects in cooperation with other countries.
- k) International congresses.
- l) Ways to promote the projects of each country - presentations in public spaces.

PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES

Half of the group was composed of people involved with Waldorf Pedagogy. All agree that the Alliance for Childhood is not limited to advocating this pedagogy, but they asked themselves the reason why this question always emerges in the discussions. In fact, we do not only pay attention to pedagogy in childhood, but we also care about health, nutrition, pregnancy, architecture, etc.

So what is the essence of the Alliance for Childhood? Is it the humanist vision? The respect for the child, for the human being, the openness to perceive the problems related to childhood (Paulo Freire)?

In this context, governmental and non-governmental institutions that are concerned about childhood dignity are associated; institutions that will not implement actions to aggravate children's conditions, such as precocious intellectualization, lack of stimulus for play, inadequate nutrition, exaggerated consumption, etc.

On the other hand, the children are not the only concern of the Alliance for Childhood; the Alliance

also deals with the adult universe. The focus on childhood is wider than the child.

FUND RAISING

- a) Criteria. Companies that agree with the Alliance principles (letter of principles), for children from Birth to 10 years.
- b) The Alliance for Childhood works differently in each country. It is not a single body, so there is no finance department. Each Institution can look for its own financing resources.
- c) Resources for projects that involve children such as: family, multipliers, children, teenagers, parents, teachers.
- d) Criteria should be in line with Human Rights.
- e) Could an exchange exist in order to develop fraternity in the transference of funds?
- f) SESC as partner.
- g) Alliance as a Quality Seal.
- h) Have an organisation as partner in order to preserve the Alliance as a free network.
- i) It is important to understand that resources are not limited to money.
- j) Adriana: What means to raise funds for a movement? People that identify themselves with the Alliance go through personal and professional crisis at the same time, since they understand that they want to dedicate their time to the Alliance, but they also need to make a living.

Suggestions:

- An exchange could exist among the Alliance centers in the world in order to have a fraternal share of resources.
- The Alliance - a quality seal

LEARNING

- a) Multilingual education based on the Peruvian experience. How to integrate differences and not discriminate.
- b) Concern about the academic environment, specially because we are not always welcome. Need to develop researches.
- c) Multipliers - at the beginning, it would be interesting to concentrate on the teachers of the region due to financial reasons, among others. The course developed in Brazil is available on the site and in a book that was launched during the Meeting. It is possible for each state or country to create a course for multipliers based on the local demands.

At the end of this task, each group presented its contribution in the plenary session and it was agreed upon that Friday would be the day for closing, and formulating proposals and actions to answer to the questions worked in each group.

JULY 13, 2007 MEETING

Christopher - United Kingdom and the European Union

Christopher opened the meeting by proposing to use it as a place of reflection on what had happened during the week or as a time to ask questions. He reinforced the importance of the spirit of the Alliance, the meeting and the relationship with colleagues which form the true spirit of the Alliance, the Alliance of the heart.

"With a developing network there will be many questions, but they will not be the same. We are working with the Alliance spirit; it is something that we feel but it is hard to describe; it has a poetic quality; it is to meet one another focusing on the relationship with colleagues, and that is the Alliance, the Alliance of the heart.

We will resume these questions every day at work, with our families, but what we have experienced together we will take as a flame. When everything becomes hard and complicated, the flame will still be lighting us and we will remember the atmosphere we created together, and we will be waiting with great joy for our next reunion. Together we have started to build the foundation of the relationship that we want to build for the children".

Christopher proposed to open the meeting for comments or questions, reminding that some could be left open, or for suggestions for the future.

Geza - Holambra, Brazil

"I emphasize that we should use the Internet as a communication resource to put us quickly in contact".

Christopher - United Kingdom and the European Union

"Technology has made the work of the Alliance possible, but most of the world does not have this tool. Together with this we need to think of other ways parallel to the Internet."

Josha - Japan

"The Alliance in Japan is not made of people from the Waldorf movement. We need to think of a common philosophy. I believe that humanism and respect are important, but in the case of Japan they are not enough. There are many differences. As I am a lawyer, I would like to have a criterion, it is a tendency of my profession. On the first day I said that we needed to think about three points".

We have the convention, the Declaration of Rights; before that, I thought that the Alliance was different, separated. I think that it would be meaningful in Japan if we could get united around the ideals of the convention that have to do with the Alliance ideals. The Alliance does not assure the ideals of Childhood, but it is a beginning".

Christopher - United Kingdom and the European Union

"It is a minimum criterion with which we can judge those who have the same values as we do. Today there is no country that can really reach that minimum criterion".

Elisete - Japan/Brazil

"Is there hope for children in the future?"

Christopher - United Kingdom and the European Union

"I would not be here if I did not have hope, but how does it happen I do not know. **Together we know**, but I alone do not. Whatever will come, will come from us; our initiative will lead us forward. Our job is to work together. From there will come what we will do".

Ute - Brazil

"There is a tendency to idealise childhood. In the past, some aspects were better, others worse, just like the chimney boys that Christopher told us about. The 20th century was declared as the childhood century because childhood was being discussed, and that did not happen before. Childhood started to be seen as a specific time within the development of the human being. This is an improvement; things are getting better.

I read with great attention what Josha said about Japan: the Alliance agrees with the convention in the sense that it gives value to the internal nature of the child. Josha wants to work to have a paragraph in the convention and have a forum in relation to the dignity of feelings".

Christopher - United Kingdom and the European Union

"It would be interesting if Josha could write that paragraph and share it with us in the future. In Brussels, the EU institutions have expanded on the concept of citizenship; we do not know if this is going to be mandatory in the European countries yet. Some years ago, we managed to change one concept. The earlier words stated that parents could choose an education for their children based on beliefs, values, philosophy and religion. We managed to have the word "pedagogy" added. Now we are trying to include: "All children have the right to be children". (The first insertion was made through the NGO called European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education; the second one, we are going to try through the Alliance.)

It is important to work on the legal aspects together with the governments and other authorities".

Comment

"What should be clear is that we are working for childhood, not for children in general".

Rosaura - Peru

"I am very happy with my participation. I thought that the Alliance in Peru was small, but now I have a different feeling, I know I am doing something and giving my contribution. My country has many difficulties, but Peru is bigger than the problems. I will go back to Peru, just like my colleagues and the institution, knowing that there is much to do, but that there are many people already working on it. During these two days of the congress at SESC, I had the opportunity to know the people and I have felt that the Alliance is more than just an institution".

Pámela - Tanzania

"When I arrived, I did not understand the concept of the Alliance. I felt that what I was doing was small, but after knowing all participants and feeling their interest, I am returning to my country with much more enthusiasm and assured that I am doing something with the support of others".

Christopher - United Kingdom and the European Union

"We had already talked in Finland seven years ago. Now it is worth commenting that the importance of the Alliance is the experience; there is no use in just describing concepts; it is forged when people meet each other, either physically or in mind".

Cristina - Argentina

"In Argentina there are three local groups to sign the declaration; this was a rich group experience".

Yoshico - Japan/Brazil

"I only knew the Alliance superficially; I was invited but I did not want to join it before I had a deeper understanding. I think that its philosophy is innovative, gratuitous (???) , and shows a profound respect for the individual and of course for the child. If you are willing to accept me, I would like to be a part of the Alliance".

Christopher - United Kingdom and the European Union

"It is good to know that you have made a decision, that you can be included in the communication. I heard accidentally that there is a new group in New Zealand. If we do not tell each other what is going on, we will not be able to form an Alliance".

Tereza - Campinas, Brazil

"I discovered the Alliance through the Internet; the projects "Kids Guernica" and "The Colors of Peace" took me to the Alliance. The philosophy that unites us is not the Waldorf model of Education. We do things up to the level we can do. When the 1st Biennial of Art happened in Campinas, I had the idea of contributing the time I spent at Unicamp (where I graduated and my children are currently studying) to creating a project for the children of University employees".

Karina - Espírito Santo, Brazil

"My daughters asked me what I was doing during these days; I tried to explain by saying that I was learning how to play with Fred and both were shocked. They asked me if he was a child and I said he was not. And then they said, "to learn how to play with children, one must be a child and know about their problems". The problem that we face is the lack of respect: why don't we respect nature, the differences in people? What unites us is love; when my daughters hug me, they hug me with their hearts".

Cristina - Argentina

"Experience in the city of Rosário - a great work of education; a small congress was assembled inviting the children to legislate. They formulated the bases of the proposals that were more than laws; they are municipal orders that are being implemented now. They proposed the parents and adults to go out and have some tea on the streets, to talk to each other, to not watch the children so closely and let them play on the streets".

Luiza - Brazil

"I would like to take up the image of the seeds, those that grow rapidly and those that grow slowly, and remember that there was a long time of monoculture in Brazil. And now looking at the people gathered here at SESC, we can see the joy, the plentiful diversity of wonderful plants. It is the quality of the Alliance, the quality of Brazil, the possibility to enrich with diversity. One more historical aspect, a sentence from the Portuguese people: "by nurturing, you will get a harvest"; I am thankful that the international seed is being germinated in our country".

Ananda - Chile

"When I was small, I liked to paint, talk with the angels, the earth, the ants My mother thought that something was wrong and took me to a psychologist. He said that everything was fine, "your daughter is a sensible child and she will certainly be an artist". But I grew up thinking that I was different, strange. My cousins played with dolls ... When I arrived at the psychologist's office, I thought: "I found my place", I had a feeling of belonging because everybody was crazy like me and thought "when I go out, I know that the world will be difficult".

The Alliance gives me the feeling of belonging to a tribe, the experience that I have arrived home, and I want to thank you for that. I had the feeling of a solitary work and now that I am a part of the network I take this spirit to my country. You gave me a gift and I want to give you a gift too, not as a Chilean, but with the Indian spirit inside my heart. (Ananda offers to us and sings a beautiful Indian song that she is used to offer to the pregnant women she helps.)

Marisa and Marta statements

Rosaura - Peru

"I would like to thank Fred for the touch experience (Peruvian laws do not allow this in schools), but trying to get the contact depends on adults; if we trust that it is good for the children, they will have the confidence. By looking the child at play we are able to know how he/she is going to be in ten years".

Rosa - Holambra, Brazil

"So many beautiful images; it looks as if I am not Brazilian but rather a star, this is a large place with a star that is part of a beautiful constellation. When will we meet again and form a new constellation? My gratitude for the light, for now and for looking into the future".

Christopher - United Kingdom and the European Union

"As to the future, we have two important aspects:

- 1) The proposal from Brussels Alliance to do something on the same day, something big or small, but in the whole world. The date suggested was November 20th, when the UNO Declaration of Children's' Rights was signed. The idea is to establish an Awareness Day throughout the world. England will do something in London. Please advise if you are going to do something; we need to know to strengthen the Alliance in the world.
- 2) In 2000 an important meeting of the Alliance took place in Brussels with 350 people from different places of the world. It was a very significant meeting and another happened two

years ago in Salzburg with about 250 present. In Europe they are planning another international meeting in Aarhus, Denmark from 29th September to 2nd October 2009. But the work should continue everywhere, and it depends on our initiative”.

Rubens - Brazil

“I suggest that the Alliance in Brazil could put on an event using the holiday of November 20th; we could use the whole week and not only the day”.

Pámela - Tanzania

“I suggest July 16th when the child massacre happened”.

Christopher - United Kingdom and the European Union

Brussels 2000 was something similar to SESC, collecting resources to help people with travel expenses ... these are some opportunities but others have to be created. People will go back to their countries assured of our commitment and dedication. The event was the proof of what has been given to children”

Ute

“The memory of the event in Brazil is going to be important for other countries to remember the images and experiences we had here, but the spirit has to have a little meat, a little money to feed it and that is why I thank all the foundations that have helped us”.

Adriana

“As Ananda said, everything begins at childhood, either because it was happy or because it was unhappy, and each one of us has to go after and fight for it. The concept of children and childhood that Christopher brings is what moves us to be here. I did not have a childhood with a capital C to be who I am. The memory that each person has of his/her childhood is what can mobilize us to continue. Throughout the 25 years of work dedicated to childhood, I have always been torn between going out to work for this cause and leaving my children at home. This happened 20 years ago with my daughters, now adults, and it happens today with my eight-year old son. The image of the seed - we adopt many children - is what has mobilised me. I have learned that you give to the world what you can, and at Alliance each one has his/her very own ability. I leave the seed that everyone should do what he/she has to do according to his/her heart.

In the name of the managing group, for those who have crossed the world with great effort and for us too it was a great effort, it has been a great pleasure. In this sense, we would like to thank Christopher for the privilege of having established this connection, for the experience and for the human being that he is”.

Saving children

Miguel Reale Júnior

During the first three years of its life the child is a blank sheet where the impressions generated by the environment where it lives are fixed; from this environment the child needs to receive, above all, protection, affection, and safety.

The interference of adults in the learning process should not be made through admonitions directed to the intellect, that are easily disobeyed, but through examples, based on the profound need of imitation that children have. To do the right thing, starting from the most simple acts of life, in an atmosphere of coexistence based on respect for each other, is the main and indelible positive example to be imitated.

Poverty and precarious housing, only noise and promiscuity, do not of necessity prevent the creation of a loving climate. Devastating, as Frans Carlgren and Arne Klingborg, disseminators of the Waldorf pedagogical method created by Rudolf Steiner, point out, is the privation of feelings, the lack of love in the first years of life.

It is certain, however, that the children that are more exposed to violence at home and on the streets are generally those belonging to the most destitute sectors. Their behavior is a continuation of the day-to-day oppression, that is, dreary, aggressive, an imitation of what surrounds them, as indicates so well Leni Attarian, tutor of "Boa Esperança" Day Care Center in São Paulo.

The school, however, can help to offer the child models that are worth imitating, so that the child feels that it is being taken care of and knows how to look with sympathy and kindness, to be able to trust others and itself. In this way the atmosphere of aggressiveness is minimized through the solid and loving presence of teachers in an environment of empathy, sharing joys and sorrows.

The Birth - 7 year age bracket is the most important in the development of human beings, as attested by specialists. For those children surrounded by a daily life of difficulties and violence, the school can make feasible, through the Waldorf method, the development of potential and sensibilities, providing a field where fantasy and creativity can bloom. Play is a serious activity for the child, states Renate Keller Ignácio. Toys should be simple so that play will be born from inside out, out of fantasy. Play opens the path to creativity with a wooden stick, pieces of fabric and primitive dolls. Listening to stories and fairy tales nurtures the imagination and produces new fantasies. Ring-around-a-rosy, songs and music provide the life rhythm. Handmade articles, the preparation of food and the planting of a seed organize the mind, and unite us with nature. Poor is the child that is given a finished toy or a computer.

More than any other, the child who lives severe conflict situations in slum quarters needs, as oxygen, a healthy environment in school so that the doors to sensibility and artistic creation can be opened through drawing, sculpture, theatre. Solidarity reveals itself in the daily example of loving teachers. The freedom to imagine, fantasize, think is stimulated through songs, fairy tales, theatre.

It is essential to bring the parents to school to participate together in this process, since this participation humanizes them resulting in a drastic reduction of family violence rate, as experience shows at the "Boa Esperança" Day Care Center. This was also the touching experience that I saw during the visit I paid to "Favela Monte Azul" in the southern region of São Paulo, where six thousand people live in an extensive social project bravely built by Ute Craemer.

I have also witnessed an extraordinary experience at a small Waldorf school in a seaside village of

southern Bahia. I will let the teachers tell. Fabiana Silva Diaz reports that "12 lovely small children" came to the school. They knew nothing about hygiene or basic notions of education. She remembers that their first snack was chaotic, anguishing, since right and wrong did not make any sense there. She then started by giving examples of eating slowly, with serenity, well educated, and little by little the small princes and princesses were coming into sight.

With love and patience and in a ludic way, tells Fabiana, we introduced notions that are customary for them today: thank for the food, wait to eat till everybody are served, brush the teeth before going to play, wash their hands before eating, apologize. "I realized", says the teacher, "that they had no creative imagination". They did not know how to play. They just threw the toys on the floor. Slowly, creativity emerged with the songs that are constantly sung, with the drawings and stories told. Today they play by themselves, create small fables for themselves to act, represent domestic situations, and are harmonious at play.

Sociability developed immensely. In the beginning, reminds Fabiana, they behaved like hillbillies before strangers, mute and with no eye contact. Today they show the school to visitors, they are talkative, safe and respectful. "I have also felt", declares Fabiana, "the importance of the work with the families, since it would not be possible to introduce to the children so many new things without calling the family to participate and learn too".

Roberta Policarpo, another teacher of the school, states that what the children in a poverty condition lack most is affection, a look, warmth. For her, as soon as someone directs a respectful and responsible love towards the children, they will start trusting that person, building a connection that will heal their pain and transform passiveness and apathy in participation, aggressiveness and disaggregation in harmony and respect.

I can conclude that: children up to 7 years old, specially those living in slum quarters, should receive fewer concepts and more affection and incentive to creativity; less rational orders and more quiet examples of how to act with respect to their neighbour and nature; more play with pieces of fabric and broomsticks than the premature use of computers that plaster the spirit. This is the recipe for children to grow with confidence in themselves and in others.

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