

Karlsruhe, 11 October 2016

Hurricane “Matthew” has brought destruction and death – the traumatisation of the people is great

Six years after the severe earthquake in Haiti, catastrophe has once again struck the island country. Hurricane Matthew swept across the island on Tuesday, October 4th, 2016 with winds up to 230 kilometres an hour. It brought renewed suffering and death to Haiti. The death toll has now risen to around 1000 persons.

According to UN-figures, at least 350,000 people are homeless and urgently require aid. Fear of epidemics is also rising; first cases of cholera have already been reported. Many countries and aid organisations have pledged immediate aid and have sent rescue workers to the Caribbean island. The *Friends of Waldorf Education* are also planning a mission in Haiti to support traumatised people.

In addition to the hurricane, extreme rain fall increased the risk for flooding and mud slides, which caused extreme destruction. There is a shortage of everything: drinking water, food, tents, and medical care. The people are stunned; especially the children and adolescents are in acute danger. Many of the youngest victims of the hurricane are traumatised, lack orientation, and have been left on their own.

Already after the earthquake of 2010, the *Friends* set-up a Child Friendly Space, together with the organisation “Kindernothilfe” (Children’s Emergency Relief) and local NGO Acrederp in Leogane. They also worked in the orphanage belonging to their cooperation partner “Unsere kleinen Brüder und Schwestern” (Our little brothers and sisters). This German organisation is part of the internationally active children’s relief organisation nph-“Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos” which operates like the *Friends* from Karlsruhe. These contacts are now being used to once again help children on location. The volunteer colleagues will mostly be working near Les Cayes. We have already worked here with teachers at a Waldorf pedagogy oriented school six years ago. Les Cayes lies in the southwest region of the island and was especially hard hit; the region is largely cut-off from the rest of the country. Houses were flooded and destroyed, trees uprooted and streets flooded. Many have lost everything that they own again, they are (re-) traumatised and require support in dealing with their experiences.

Emergency pedagogues help children and adolescents to process their experiences and dissolve trauma-induced torpor. The introduction of a rhythmised daily structure with set meal times and alternating movement and rest phased within an established protection space give them support and security. With painting and drawing, experiences can be expressed without words, in exercises from experiential pedagogy trust in oneself and others is strengthened. Movement games help to dissolve torpor and movement disorders. These experiences of self-efficacy and self control can activate and strengthen self-healing powers. Furthermore, these methods should prevent possible trauma-related disorders.

In order to be able to help traumatised children and adolescents as quickly and unbureaucratically as possible and to support them in their despair and need, we are as always dependent on donations. Please support our work in Haiti and other countries with a donation.

Donation Account

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*The **Friends of Waldorf Education** are worldwide sponsors of a free education system. Since 1971 they have advocated for Waldorf education and the freedom of education systems. Since 1993 the office in Karlsruhe has organized and supervised international volunteer services worldwide and has to date made it possible for over 7,000 people to complete a social service in over 350 projects in more than 60 countries. Now around 600 young people annually take part in the programme. Since the summer of 2011 it has also been possible to complete a 12-month civil service in anthroposophic institutions in Germany through the association. Since 2006 the Friends of Waldorf Education have been active in the area of emergency pedagogy. Following the outbreak of a war or a natural disaster, they worked with psychologically traumatized children and adolescents in Lebanon (2006), China (2008 and 2013); Indonesia (2009), Haiti (2010), Kyrgyzstan (2010), Japan (2011), and Kenya (2012-2013), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014), Greece (2015), Slovenia (2015), Nepal (2015-2016), Ecuador (2016), Gaza (2009-2016) the Philippines (2013-2016), Germany (2014-2016), Paris (2016), Brussels (2016), and Kurdistan-Iraq (2013-2016).*



Freunde der Erziehungskunst is a member of Germany's Relief Coalition, a union of German relief organisations that can provide rapid and effective aid in the case of large catastrophes and emergency situations abroad.