

Educational concept of the kindergarten

Cologne Bumblebees e.V.

International Bilingual Kindergarten

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This concept of Cologne Bumblebees has been developed jointly by the team and reflects the basic educational idea behind the work at our kindergarten. It serves as a starting point and helps reflect upon our daily work and gives new parents, future colleagues and interested parties insight into the ways we understand our tasks and into our basic principles, forms of work and the methods we use.

1. An English/German *Kita* for Cologne

In view of the increasing internationalisation and intercultural development of social structures, multilingualism is one of the essential elements of how we educate and stimulate our children.

Scientific studies prove that the human brain is designed for multilingual use (cf. Gogolin, 2008). Early language acquisition, as opposed to acquisition of a foreign language after the age of 6, is independent of linguistic talent and, furthermore, facilitates the later acquisition of any additional language.

Therefore, the idea when founding our *Elterninitiative*, a facility based on parents' active involvement, was to build a bilingual kindergarten for children aged 2 to 6 to give as many children as possible an opportunity to profit from multilingual education. What the founding parents and teachers had in mind was to advance the concept of early bilingual education and embed it into the childcare offered by the city council of Cologne for children aged 2 to school age (6 in Germany).

The kindergarten is organised and co-funded by the association 'Cologne Bumblebees e.V.', founded in autumn 2005, which is managed and externally represented by a board composed of volunteers. All parents whose children are in the facility's care are members of the association and involved in organisational procedures.

Our kindergarten, which now has two groups, accommodates around 30 children aged 1 to 6. Depending on their age, the children attend the Caterpillar Group for children under 3 (10 children) or the Butterfly Group for children from 3 to 6 (20 children).

We ensure optimal care for our children by offering staffing levels in excess of the legally required teacher-to-child ratio. Both in the Caterpillar and in the Butterfly Group, the children enjoy bilingual care, i.e. they have both English- and German-speaking teachers.

2. Foundations of our educational work

Based on our conviction that child development is an utterly complex, holistic and individual process, we rely on different educational approaches in our work. Our concept contains elements of, among others, **Fröbel's paedagogy**, the **Montessori paedagogy**, the **situation-based approach** and the **early-childhood paedagogy of Emmi Pikler**.

In the style of **Friedrich Fröbel**, the inventor of the kindergarten and founder of the paedagogy of play, we consider free, autonomous play the most effective method for small children to self-educate. Accordingly, we place great importance on practicing free play as an educational and formative method.

Like **Maria Montessori** we believe in the hidden creative forces within the human being and make sure we use the signals we receive from the children to inspire their own potential and encourage their development in the best possible way. We give the children space and time to understand and experience their environment with all their senses. Like in the Montessori paedagogy, 'Help me do it myself', reflects our basic educational approach to help the child become independent.

In accordance with the **situation-based approach**, which starts from the premise that children build up their socio-emotional competencies and other personal skills via social relationships, we see ourselves primarily as role models and not as teachers. As sustainable education is only ever achieved through self-education, we see our main task in conveying a love of life to the children. Only if a child enjoys life does he or she find pleasure in engaging him- or herself in its impressions, adventures and experiences and have the opportunity to process them in a constructive manner.

Based on the practical and scientific work of **Emmi Pikler** we believe that the child's personality will thrive best if he or she has a right to develop independently. We consider it our task to provide a safe haven for the children in the form of secure, stable relationships and to design their surroundings in such a way that they can act in accordance with their individual development level. In our work – in particular that with children under 3 – we therefore place special emphasis on three aspects:

- **Mindful care**, which is done in communication with the child, incorporating his or her own initiative, and is used as an opportunity to forge an emotional bond;
- **Independent motor development**, which is accomplished by the child out of his or her own impulse and speed without the guiding and accelerating interventions of an adult; and
- **Free play**, where the child may unimpededly follow his or her own interests and develop his or her skills in a protected, age-appropriate environment.

3. How we see the child

Our actions as educators are characterised by our perception and our personal idea of what it means to be a child. We therefore believe it is important to review 'our idea of the child' on a regular basis in order to be able to provide optimal assistance to the children in their development.

We see the child as a unique, independent being with individual character traits, talents and skills as well as personal preferences and needs and his or her own life history.

We see children as 'agents of their own development' (Piaget) and thus as active participants in their education and development. Children cannot 'be developed'. They must perform a great deal of development themselves, following the laws of development that they bear in themselves.

Children are explorers who want to understand their world and get to the bottom of the things around them. Their innate drive to search, their curiosity and their own capabilities enable them to take part in their surroundings and have an impact on them. Independently and with an inner dynamic, they explore themselves, their world and the people around them.

Relentlessly and using all their senses, children learn through observation, listening and imitation. They use play and exploration to interact with their environment, gather experiences and develop sophisticated motor, social, cognitive, sensual and emotional skills.

They approach their surroundings in an impartial and unprejudiced manner and candidly and directly claim from their caregivers what they need at any particular time. Only in social interaction and in stable relationship structures can the child shape his or her educational process and build strong bonds. The quality of these relationships has a major impact on the child's perception of him- or herself and the world.

Children need free spaces suitable for their age and development level in order to make new discoveries and gain their own experiences. At the same time, they also need reliable boundaries and comprehensible rules in order to feel safe and comfortable and be able to develop their personality.

So early childhood education takes place in an interactive process of the child acquiring an awareness of his or her surroundings and the adult delivering impulses. Accordingly, relationships and communication between the children and the early years practitioners, but also between the children themselves, are crucial.

4. How we understand our role as early years practitioners

We consider it our main task to ensure the children's wellbeing. In our opinion, this is a basic prerequisite for any learning and development process. The foundation for this is laid through a warm, accepting, loving atmosphere and the secure attachment to dependable caregivers who pay respect and appreciation to each child.

We take our roles as attachment figures for the children very seriously and therefore place great value on a sound settling-in process. In the settling-in period, the child gets to know the early years practitioner as a trusted person with whom he or she experiences a sense of protection and security, and therefore attachment. Only this security-providing bond lends the child the ability to explore foreign, as yet unknown worlds.

We feel strongly about taking every child seriously in terms of his or her uniqueness and about safeguarding, protecting and fostering this unique individuality. This is the only way for the child to make creative use of his or her abilities, to express his or her personality and to develop social behaviour.

We see ourselves as companions in the development of the children who provide them with a setting in which they are allowed to act independently and gain varied experiences with themselves, with other children and with their environment. In this process, we guide the children by observing them during their activities and offering help and support to them or suggesting additional activities while considering their needs and development levels.

During our work, we are always aware of our role model function and the responsibility it entails. So it is a central part of our daily work to reflect upon our own behaviour vis-à-vis children, parents, our colleagues and our environment.

However, we also see ourselves as being in a learning process: we learn from each other in our daily lives and also through ongoing further paedagogical training, in order to be able to offer the children – together with the parents – the best possible conditions for their learning and development.

5. Paedagogical priorities

5.1. Bilingual education

It is a central concern of Cologne Bumblebees to enable children to grow up in a bilingual (English/German) environment.

We apply the immersion method, which means that the children experience and live their daily kindergarten life in two languages and acquire the English language in day-to-day interaction with English-speaking early years practitioners. There are no 'English lessons' where English is specifically taught. Instead, the daily routine takes place in a natural manner in both languages, with every early years practitioner conducting his or her respective activities in his or her native language.

In doing this, we follow the so-called 'one person – one language' principle. This means that each person speaks one language, as consistently and continuously as possible. With and in front of the children, each early years practitioner speaks his or her mother tongue, i.e. even when addressing another adult. If this is not always possible, it emerges that the children have no problem accepting that they are spoken to in a different language than the adults. A decisive factor for this acceptance seems to be most notably the distinct allocation of the languages, on which the children can 'rely'.

An important reason for this is that children aged up to four years old do not understand language as an abstract entity. They only know concrete persons speaking a certain language. They allocate

language to certain caregivers to whose linguistic behaviour they react. This makes it easier for the children, especially in early stages of language acquisition, to separate the languages from each other. In this way, the child learns that it is equally possible in both languages to express everything and anything and to act in both languages.

While the early years practitioner consistently use only one language, the child can freely choose which language he or she wishes to use. At no time should the child feel obliged to use either language.

It cannot be generally predicted how the individual command of English of the child will develop, as this depends not only on language acquisition at the care facility but also on the day-to-day language situation at home. If the parents of the child in care both speak German at home, the child will acquire English as a second language through the regular attendance at the care facility. However, if one of the two parents speaks English, the child grows up with the two first languages German and English, which are both encouraged at the kindergarten.

As opposed to foreign languages which one acquires through learning, the children “pick up” first and second languages, i.e. the language is acquired intuitively, subconsciously and without leading them in a certain direction. What matters in this context are the social situations in which the language is spoken. The children are immersed in the language environment, where targeted directions are unnecessary but may support the process. Bumblebees offers children a social environment for the acquisition of first- and second-language skills.

A scientific approach which attempts to describe and explain acquisition of a second language is the 'input-interaction-output' approach. According to this approach, the children require input, a possibility to interact and the opportunity to produce output. This is an approach which describes in detail the role of the ambient language, i.e. the input that the learners receive, the possibility of interaction with conversation partners and the language produced by the learner. In the acquisition of a first language, these three elements are balanced. In the acquisition of a second language, they must often be simulated.

Probably the most important requirement for acquisition of a second language is rich and comprehensible input: rich in the sense that language is offered in all its nuances and not in a simplified form, and at the same time in a comprehensible manner to ensure that words and structures are associated with meaning.

What is pivotal for the comprehensibility of the input is a consistently clear connection between language and situation by means of actions, objects, pictures and body language. Everything the English-speaking early years practitioners say is emphasised solely by gestures, mimics and pointing to objects or pictures for contextualisation, and not through translation. The early years practitioners use language to assist actions and try to make themselves understood on various levels.

Language accompanies familiar situations and actions (tidying up, morning circle, eating ...), so language-learning is at first a secondary process. Understanding the situation will gradually enable the child to understand the accompanying language. At first, there is no need for the children to

understand every word the adult says, but only what the adult means. In addition to a clear and conscious pronunciation, it is important to offer frameworks of time and language to the children, such as daily routines, phrasal expressions (e.g. 'tidy up time'), repetition, songs, rhymes and finger and activity games, as well as storybooks.

With the help of these, the child will independently deduce the language gradually from the context of the situation. This process is the most natural way for children to learn languages – no matter if they are first or second languages.

5.2. Free play – Playing and learning

'Everything we teach children they cannot discover for themselves and thus not learn properly' (Jean Piaget).

The child discovers and experiences its environment through play. The need and ability to play is innate to the child and is thus a vital necessity. New sequences of movement, unknown objects and social contacts are tried and acquired in play. In play, the child attentively and intently practices the familiar, explores the unknown and develops new skills on this basis.

Numerous works of research confirm that play has a decisive impact on the increase and expansion of the learning potential and the competencies of the child. Play, therefore, is of utmost importance for the development of the child's personality, the acquisition of many personal and educational skills, as well as professional abilities needed later in life.

In independent, free play, the child is active out of his or her own initiative, dares to try new things, grapples with unknown things in life, challenges him- or herself, develops solution strategies, expands familiar action patterns and uses his or her creativity and imagination. Children at play show us their current learning projects and own learning strategies.

If one looks at these vital basic attainments that the child acquires at play and that are considered the foundation of many human skills, it becomes clear that playing and learning form an unseparable unity. Children play while learning and learn while playing. Children's play is a highly effective and sensual form of learning.

As we consider play in this sense of the word as a main activity of the child, we attach the highest priority to free play on our daily agenda. We offer the children conditions that encourage their playful behaviour, such as sufficient amounts of time and space, diverse materials, playmates, freedom of decision and privacy. During free play time at kindergarten the children choose their own place, their materials and their playmates, and they independently determine the course and duration of their play.

We see our task first and foremost in creating a trustful, safe environment where the children feel at ease and sheltered. In addition to this, we encourage the children's free play through an inviting

layout and design of the rooms, motivating materials, recognition, reinforcement, inspiration and support, as well as through rules that provide security and identity.

5.3. Motor development

Initially, early-childhood learning takes place exclusively through movement, perception and active exploration of the environment. Generally, children's natural impulses to move are sufficient for a healthy development – provided that they find the corresponding environment.

The practical and theoretical work of Emmi Pikler shows that children, if given enough time, will find out and practise all possible types of movement by themselves. Only when a child feels safe in one particular type of movement and is able to start or stop it spontaneously at any time will he or she dare to start practising a new type of movement.

So one of the most important requirements for a healthy motor development is for the child to be unencumbered by adults' interference with and attempts to accelerate his or her processes of movement. If we help the child to achieve positions that he or she is unable to adopt or leave independently, we create dependence and cheat him or her out of experiencing the success of having figured out and achieved something by his or her own effort. However, if we leave the child to try out and practise a new sequence of movements on his or her own, the child will learn to judge his or her own abilities and develop a sound feeling for his or her own body.

By being given time to gain their own experiences playfully, the children are able to gain their own insight and will have the rewarding feeling of having achieved something on their very own. They will feel competent and effective and will thus build genuine confidence. A child who has the privilege to develop in this unimpeded way will find inner and outer balance and be able to freely develop his or her skills.

Against this background, we see movement and perception as paedagogical learning principles in early childhood and understand them as elementary ways of gaining insight and expressing oneself. We offer the children a stimulating, preparatory environment – in the group rooms as well as outside – and targeted regular exercising opportunities in our exercise room. This gives the children the opportunity to explore their bodies and senses and practise and improve all basic types of movement.

5.4. Encouraging independence

'Help me do it myself'. This principle by Maria Montessori is the guideline of our day-to-day educational efforts. Independence is achieved only through the child's own actions.

Children are spontaneously active and have a natural, childish drive to explore and develop. They should be encouraged in this effort, with the least possible instructions, so that they can follow their own impulses to develop ideas and skills and are guided by their own objectives.

This requires a prepared environment (Montessori), i.e. rooms, objects and materials that stimulate and challenge the children to independently explore, experiment and play.

Our task as we see it is to create a safe, prepared environment with a good, harmonious atmosphere and to be role models in our activities. In doing so, we observe the children's behaviour and actions, follow their learning process and reflect retrospectively on whether our preparations and our actions have been appropriate.

We consider ourselves role models, focus on our own actions and only interfere if the children demand our help. Thus we give them the opportunity to make their own experiences, find their own solutions, make mistakes and correct them in play.

A child who has the privilege to act independently is focused, experiences the effect of his or her own self, develops mechanisms to cope with frustration and learns to trust him- or herself and believe in him- or herself.

Day-to-day kindergarten life offers numerous possibilities to gradually become more and more independent. The younger ones learn to eat by themselves, to fetch toys they would like to play with and to get dressed or undressed on their own. The older children learn, for example, to solve conflicts independently and carry out housework or small jobs autonomously.

When doing so, they are encouraged by the early years practitioners to trust in their own abilities, given attention and confirmation. Thus, the children are motivated at all times to try out and practise new things. Every small, successful step towards independence boosts the children's confidence and gives them pride and satisfaction.

5.5.Socio-emotional development

We pay special attention to the issue of socio-emotional development in early childhood, as small children acquire many social competencies in the interaction with other children in kindergarten groups.

They establish contact with other children by handing over and sharing toys and by playing with one another. They imitate older children and adults, try out different types of behaviour and learn from their environment's reactions which effect their respective behaviour causes.

In this manner, they gradually learn to cooperate with others in play, perceive their own needs and feelings, to identify the emotional states of others and to be compassionate. They learn to respect the will and belongings of others, solve conflicts, make compromises, be considerate of weaker children and forge friendships.

The younger the children are when joining the kindergarten, the more important a secure bond with at least one of the teachers is. Only if the child feels safe, comfortable and supported, can he or she break free from the parents, explore the new environment and establish contact with other children.

Our central role is therefore to enable our young children in the settling-in phase to establish a secure bond, and we do so by giving them attention, care and affection, providing shelter and offering consolation whenever required.

Furthermore, our main task is to observe the children in their relational interaction and to intervene when support is needed. In situations of conflict we try not to interfere and impose solutions prematurely, but to guide the children in such a way that they are able to develop relevant skills through solving their own conflicts. We make a point of talking to the children about their emotions, needs and desires to ensure that they learn to perceive and express their own feelings and those of others.

The experience of seeing themselves as a member of a group where they are heard and able to talk about what is on their mind, for example during morning circle or joint meal times, plays a part in their developing confidence and a positive sense of self-worth as well as community.

These social development steps can only be taken in a stable socio-emotional environment, as children during the first years of their lives learn primarily by imitating the behaviour around them. We are aware that our behaviour towards one another sets examples. Therefore, the interaction in our team is respectful and appreciative.

5.6. Rhythmics/Early musical education

Another focus of our pedagogical work is early musical education. Once a week, a trained music teacher provides musical training classes of 30 to 45 minutes in four age groups.

In addition to the Zoltan Kodaly and Carl Orff Methods, our early musical education concept primarily incorporates the rhythmics method. This method, developed by Emil Jaques-Dalcroze, is based on the close alliance of music and movement and thus responds to the nursery school children's natural need to move. Relaxation of muscles, posture, movement, hearing, sight and touch are 'fused' to form an overall impression and are thus all expressed in the individual movement.

Any playing of music is originally based on movement. The genetic synchronicity of movement and expression requires musical pedagogy, as one of its central tasks, to create musical coherences when moving, singing and playing. The children explore the space around them through movement and are encouraged to play with time and time intervals, which is then reflected in the rhythmical games.

The other components of the training are:

- Singing (solmisation according to Kodaly, traditional children's songs, folklore songs, world children's songs)
- Playing of instruments (accompaniment of children's rhymes and songs on simple percussion instruments)
- Improvisation (of movement, voice and instrument-playing)
- Organology and musicology

The rhythmic lessons are always accompanied by improvised piano music, stimulating the children's expression through movement and singing.

This form of rhythmic-musical group training nurtures the children's mobility and perceptive ability at a physical, emotional, cognitive and social level and, also, creates a space where each child is able to find his or her own access to music.

5.7. Nutrition and eating habits

A healthy diet is absolutely central to children's development in several ways. It provides the necessary energy a child needs in order to move actively and play on a day-to-day basis and, furthermore, to develop his or her physical, motor, emotional and cognitive skills. In reverse, because they grow and move, children have great energy needs and require regular meals.

It is part of our concept to provide the children with full board, including three meals a day (breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack). Breakfast and snack are freshly prepared every day by our teachers, lunch by two cooks in our inhouse kitchen. In order to make sure that the children drink enough, sufficient amounts of water are available even between meals.

Our choice of food products and meal planning is based on the quality standards for full board of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährung e.V.* (German Nutrition Society) and the Bremen Checklist for Balanced Lunches at kindergarten. Organic groceries are procured by the parents as part of a weekly shopping duty and ordered at an organic delivery service.

In addition to a healthy, balanced diet, we attach great value to experiencing community and learning eating habits and table manners. During the joint meals, we are mindful of a quiet, relaxed atmosphere and allow sufficient time, so that the children are able to enjoy the food with all their senses and eat at their own pace.

Each child and each adult has his or her designated place at the nicely and invitingly laid tables in the group rooms. Good habits and set rituals guide the course of the meal, such as the joint song before eating, the observance of table manners and the joint clearing of the dishes.

We are aware that our own eating behaviour is observed and imitated by the children and that we thus have a considerable impact on the eating habits of the children. We encourage the children to try everything before the child decides whether he or she wants to eat a specific food or not. It is up to each child to decide how much he or she wishes to eat.

Communal meals for us are thus more than just food intake: they are sensual experience and pleasure, create a sense of community and provide the children with positive associations and therefore a healthy relationship to eating.

6. Education partnership with parents

Only in a trusting and respectful relationship between teachers and parents can we provide ideal guidance and stimuli for the children's development. To us, 'education partnership' means taking joint responsibility for the child's development and valuing and supplementing one another as experts, each in their own field.

We see the parents as primary educators and thus experts for their children, whose educational competence we acknowledge and whose individualities, different educational styles and family models we honour and respect.

We can learn from the parents and use this knowledge in our supplementary, professional work at the kindergarten by seeing diversity as an enrichment, seeking debate instead of devaluation and showing our willingness to reflect upon ourselves.

It is very important for a child to experience that parents and teachers acknowledge the significance of the respective child's different reality, have a positive attitude to one another, communicate, support one another and work hand in hand.

In this respect, we are engaging in trusting, open communication with the parents, during which we discuss our respective ideas, give each other advice, set common goals and collaborate to ensure the children's wellbeing.

The younger the children placed in our care, the more important a regular exchange between teachers and parents. In daily impromptu talks during drop-off and pick-up we enable the parents to participate in their child's progress, relating their child's day and reporting important experiences. We ask the parents to equally report back to us, so as to be able to make the transition between home and school as smooth as possible.

After a settling-in period adapted to the child's and parents' particular needs, including day-to-day reflexive discussions (following the Berlin model [*Berliner Eingewöhnungsmodell*]), we offer parents regular development talks and parents' evenings, in addition to impromptu talks. We keep a portfolio for each child, in which we expressively and lovingly document important development steps and educational achievements.

Furthermore, the active involvement of parents in kindergarten life, e.g. through joint missions and scheduled duties, as well as jointly organised celebrations, are key elements of an applied education partnership.

7. Working as a team

We are aware of the fact that the quality of our collaboration and communication as a team has a major impact on the atmosphere at our school and informs social interaction among the children.

This is why we strive to constantly expand our communication skills. The daily life at the kindergarten demands a high level of communicational abilities from teachers. The various levels (children, parents, colleagues) on which teachers communicate – often simultaneously – require utmost attention and mindfulness when it comes to communication. Especially during drop-off and pick-up, often a great deal of critical information is channelled to different recipients. In order to be able to select and process this flood of information – also under time pressure – and to react in an appropriate and circumspect manner, we consider it pivotal to constantly work on our communication culture.

The precondition for successful communication is the inner attitude we assume vis-à-vis our interlocutors, such as genuine interest, empathetic understanding and appreciation. On the basis of these fundamental attitudes, we use active conversation techniques such as active listening, questioning techniques, 'I-messages' and feedback.

By listening to each other mindfully, making sure that we understood our colleague correctly and expressing our sympathy for how he or she experiences things, we are creating a space in which everyone feels valued and respected. Open, non-judgmental and understandable questions provoke thought and enable solution-orientated communication. I-messages place the focus on the speaker's own experience, ensuring that relationships with colleagues remain unburdened. A mutual giving and taking of feedback regarding the paedagogical work contributes considerably to improved communication and avoids misunderstandings.

An important part of our advancement as a team is the opportunity for each team member to make contributions according to his or her potential and keep on developing his or her skills and abilities. Vivid interaction with one another enables us to discover personal and professional differences, which will then through further development be transformed into a constructive, joint basis of viewpoints and behaviour.

All this usually takes place during our weekly team meetings – both of each group's teams and, in addition, of the entire facility's team of teachers. In addition to ongoing advancement of the communication culture, during these meetings we work on paedagogical topics, look into best ways of consulting colleagues (e.g. relating to observations made in the children), learn to organise the daily kindergarten life with its diverse tasks and reflect upon our joint work.

In order to be able to offer children and parents educational work of consistently high quality, it is near and dear to us to keep updating our knowledge and advancing our skills and abilities. Only through regular further training courses can educational concepts be expanded and paedagogical professionalism reinforced.

8. Organising the work

Our two-group kindergarten is funded by the association and private youth support organisation 'Cologne Bumblebees e.V.', which was founded in autumn 2005. All parents whose children are in the facility's care are members of the association and involved in organisational tasks.

The executive bodies of the association are the *Mitgliederversammlung* (general meeting) and the *Vorstand* (board), which independently manage the association and act as employer. The voluntary board, elected by the general meeting, bears overall responsibility for the kindergarten and the association and represents both entities externally.

The management work of the board is motivated by the principle: 'If our employees are well, our children are well too'. This cooperation between board and team, which is based on appreciation, respect and partnership, has our joint cause at heart: the children's wellbeing. Everything is placed in the service of this common goal. This creates a perception of 'we', in which each person assumes responsibility according to his or her individual abilities, competencies and resources.

In order to ensure a fair distribution of responsibility, as well as democratic decision-making processes, between parents and teachers, we value a transparent organisational structure. During regular board meetings, board and head teacher discuss personnel, strategic and organisational issues and make the relevant decisions. During the inter-group parents' evenings with an organisational focus, which take place every six months, parents' duties are distributed and joint activities and celebrations planned.

The extraordinary dedication of the board is primarily based on a high level of identification with the educational concept of the kindergarten. The parents on the board have co-developed the present concept and, together with the pedagogical staff, contribute to its application on a day-to-day basis. It is a great challenge and a matter dear to us to hand down this enthusiasm from generation to generation in order to secure the future existence of the *Elterninitiative* and high quality of our educational work, which is dedicated to the wellbeing of the children placed in our care.