



_A Caritas Switzerland Study Paper
**Early Childhood Education and Upbringing
in Various Crisis Zones**



Doing the right thing

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Early Childhood Education and Upbringing in Various Crisis Zones

A Caritas Switzerland Study Paper

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with additional material from Geri Meili concerning Kosovo

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Abbreviations used¹

BNE	Bildung für Nachhaltige Entwicklung [<i>Education for Sustained Development</i>]
COBEC	Community-Based Education Centers
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
I P F	Initiative für Praxisforschung [<i>Initiative for Practice-Based Research</i>]
ISSA	International Step-by-Step Association
MEST	Ministry for Education, Science and Techniques
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RAE	Roma Ashkali Egyptians
RECI	Roma Early Childhood Inclusion
TB	tuberculosis
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

¹ in alphabetical order

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1. Introduction

Caritas Switzerland (henceforth referred to as 'Caritas') has been engaged in early childhood education in crisis zones since 2002. Within the context of international cooperation work, Caritas is implementing various development projects to alleviate the suffering of children in political, social and economic crisis situations. The aim of this study paper is first, to take advantage of the experience gathered through the implementation of early childhood education projects by Caritas in Kosovo, Chechnya and the Republic of Moldova and secondly, to make a contribution to conceptualization and systematization of the Caritas approach to this problem field.

Following in the tradition of international pedagogical reform (inter alia Froebel, Steiner, Montessori), programmes to support children aged from 1 - 7 years have been running since 2003 in Kosovo, since 2006 in Chechnya and since 2009 in the Republic of Moldova. While in Kosovo and Chechnya kindergartens were established, in Moldova Caritas developed special emergency education support measures not only for children undergoing long-term health care (TB hospital, skin burn clinic) but also for children who find themselves thrown into exceptional social situations (during the time that their mothers serve prison sentences).

Caritas bases its work on state education structures, works in and jointly with public kindergartens, striving to ensure that newly-founded play groups and day-care centres for children be interwoven as seamlessly as possible with the state education programmes, and constantly seeks - within a framework of critical dialogue - close cooperation with the authorities.

If children are not protected both during and after conflict and crisis situations (wars, natural disasters, etc.) and are not provided with developmental furtherance, there is a risk that an entire generation will suffer lasting damage as a result. Especially in young children, there is always the danger that the increased difficulties of their life's circumstances may lead to an extremely wide variety of physical and emotional reactions, which are not only massively detrimental to their learning ability, but can also affect their health and development potential. In conflict and crisis situations, it is necessary to allude primarily to the sustained negative stress to which many children are exposed. In order to re-invigorate the children's ability and willingness to

learn, and to prepare them to meet curricular requirements, any comprehensive early childhood education in crisis zones must also take into account health-promoting aspects.

Recognizing this problem, Caritas has developed and successfully tested special early childhood approaches beneficial to small children in conflict and crisis zones. In the projects carried out by Caritas, it can be demonstrated that children can be stimulated in such a way by targeted pedagogical measures, that they can stabilize their health through diverse experiences that enhance physical well-being and self-confidence. For children in conflict and crisis situations, it is essential to ensure that this prerequisite for future learning and taking an interest in the world first be realized and securely rooted within them before normal educational measures can be applied with success.

This early childhood education approach that Caritas has specifically developed and enhanced within and for conflict and crisis situations can be described as “emergency pedagogy education”. This description is intended to make it clear that in the context of conflict and crisis situations, an early childhood education is necessary; one, moreover, in which the primary goal lies in putting the focus not on the fulfilment of curricula but on the physical and mental health and on the balanced character of the children. In addition, by creating a situation of sustained health, based on good body awareness and well-anchored self-confidence, additional basic skills are fostered. Thus, it has been found that pupils² who attended a Caritas programme for early childhood education consistently showed a higher level of social skills. This observation was confirmed in 2006 during a first evaluation by David Selby, Professor of Education for Sustainability at the University of Plymouth, England.

The first part of the study paper (chapters 2 - 4) deals with basic principles of early childhood education, and describes their characteristics in conflict and crisis zones. Also, within a systematic context, methodology / didactic measures are compared with currently discussed upbringing models. In the second part of the study (chapters 5 - 8), the individual projects are presented, together with a discussion of their difficulties, expansion possibilities and results.

² In compiling this text, care has been taken to use gender-neutral terminology. Thus, wherever masculine person-related expressions are used, they are to be understood to include all genders.

children play with them. The two reform pedagogues Maria Montessori (1917) and shortly thereafter, Rudolf Steiner (1919) formulated their educational approaches after the First World War, and it must be assumed that both methodologies were also directed towards those children who had experienced that war. Both of these reform pedagogues made the development of the child the central issue of their teachings, and propagated a health-based pedagogic that would foster the children's health. As a doctor of medicine, Maria Montessori also took it upon herself to advance the rights and furthering of disabled children. Rudolf Steiner founded a school for the Waldorf Astoria factory workers' children (also because he called for good education for all children) and developed a child development-conform, process-oriented curriculum that to this day is still taught and is being developed in Rudolf Steiner or Waldorf schools around the world. In addition, one of the basic objectives of Steiner's upbringing philosophy was to awaken social skills in childhood and adolescence (Calgren 1996, 18). Then, after the Second World War, the 'Reggio pedagogy' was developed in the Italian city of Reggio nell'Emilia (the abbreviation Reggio Emilia is also applied), which can be understood as an 'philosophy of upbringing that combines a number of basic assumptions and flexibly manageable practical elements.'³ Thus the classroom becomes the creative workshop, so that activities and imagination can meet and merge.⁴ Emmi Pikler pointed out, also in the years just after World War II, that it is essential to nurture "a careful attitude to the child from the first day of its life onwards." The doctor of medicine focused her research on the independent activity during the infant and toddler age, "on the active and undisturbed development of the children's movements, the playing alone, the connection between bodily motion and play activity".⁵ In addition, she investigated the levels of ability of young children's attentiveness, one of the foundations of cognitive learning. During the same period as Emmi Pikler, research by the pedagogue Elinor Goldschmied brought the latter to the realization that a simple everyday object exerts a fascination for the small child; one that, moreover, creates 'treasure chests': those treasure chests which enable babies to explore their environment and gather sensory

³ Reggio Pedagogic: [http:// www.paediko.de](http://www.paediko.de)

⁴ [http:// www.familie.de/kind/kita-kindergarten/artikel/reggio-pedagogik](http://www.familie.de/kind/kita-kindergarten/artikel/reggio-pedagogik)

⁵ [http:// www.pikler.de/data/konzept.html](http://www.pikler.de/data/konzept.html).

experiences.⁶ All these aspects serve as indicators for the early childhood advancement in crisis zones and emergency situations.

The methodology / didactic advice of these reform pedagogues concerning the furtherance of infants during the first years of their life can be summarised as follows:

- Create opportunities for the child that enable it to conduct its own actions and direct its will (cf. Montessori 1992); this also corresponds to more recent research: “The most effective programmes for promoting development are those which stimulate the children’s self-initiated learning processes.” „ (Laewen, Anders (publisher) 2002);
- More conscious association with, and use of comprehensive sense advancement: the senses of being alive, of touch, movement, balance, smell, taste, warmth, sight, hearing, speaking, thinking, the sense of “I” as a self (Auer 2007, Zimmer (1995, 1997)) as a process of daily experiential learning (Rudolf Steiner 1909/1917 in Auer 2007); Steiner anticipated the modern, extended sense-schooling, the significance of which is confirmed by modern brain research;
- Promote various possibilities of expression, work with the children’s strengths and do not fight against their weaknesses (Reggio pedagogy); the conscious use of body language as a methodology / didactic tool corresponds to this approach and supports the children’s imitation faculties;
- Advice on observation for motor development promotion of very young children was provided by Emmi Pikler and Elinor Goldberg.

All the aforementioned teachers follow in the tradition of the reform pedagogues, who formed a methodology / didactic counterweight to the national schools and curricula, which align themselves more to the needs of the respective state than to education in the comprehensive sense and to the fostering of individualities. The history of reform pedagogy developed further with the research of peace promotion through upbringing, which also takes into account how lessons should be given so that their methodology / didactic is coordinated with their thematic contents. (Nicklas, Ostermann 1976) Thus,

⁶ [http:// www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk](http://www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk)

peace pedagogy or education in peace skills refers not merely to contextual aspects but simultaneously to the teaching methods themselves. The methodology / didactic approach is oriented not only on subjects predetermined by the respective teaching curriculum but also on the children's age and current level of development. That which takes root in the foreground of early childhood, rather as a result of experiential learning, steadily transforms into a studying-learning process. Concerning peace research, UNICEF comments as follows: "Starting peace building in early childhood is of paramount importance." (UNICEF 2013,1) It forms "the foundation of lifelong learning." (UNICEF 2013,1) In the lesson planning process, peace pedagogy takes into account the life situation, the gender and the cultural background of the children, their life circumstances, and the teachers' basic and CPD training requirements. In addition, global criteria also take root in the pedagogy (Selby, Rathenow 2003), as global links and connections are made visible during lessons. Economic and ecological criteria gain ever more importance, both in the school context and as an integral part of lesson contents. This is all the more so, taking into account that it is nowadays recognized that the way in which lessons are given can contribute to health promotion, addiction prevention, salutogenesis and resilience (Marti 2006). In the research of Aaron Antonovsky, which can be described summarily as "salutogenesis", one finds a positive preventive view, which could indicate that our soul influences our physical health and can affect the course of disease. While a strengthened immune system enables the body to acquire resistance, the soul acquires resilience. " 'Resilience' describes the ability of humans, despite adverse circumstances, despite defeats, worries and illness, to get a hold of themselves and pick themselves up again and again." (Rampe 2005, 9) These preventive measures too are ranked under sustained upbringing.

Since then, sustainable aspects of upbringing have become increasingly important, as more topics find space under the umbrella of sustainable upbringing: this includes the prevention of natural disasters (DRR) or emergency pedagogy, the need for which arises immediately after a disaster (war, natural disaster, *et al.*) and is required for children in special circumstances.⁷ Since the Caritas approach bears fruit in various crisis zones, it can be summarized under emergency pedagogical measures and is oriented

⁷ <http://www.ineesite.org>

on an education for sustainable development, as envisaged by the so-called Declaration of Bonn of 2009.

This Declaration of Bonn⁸ summarised different aspects of an education for sustainable development, of which the following points are relevant for this study paper:

- *“Through education and lifelong learning we can achieve lifestyles based on economic and social justice, food security, ecological integrity, sustainable livelihoods, respect for all life forms and strong values that foster social cohesion, democracy and collective action.” (Point 5)*

This is valid especially for an early childhood education that enables children also to learn different social, communicative and artistic competencies; issues which are often neglected in schools within crisis zones.

- *“Education for sustainable development contributes to creating resilient, healthy and sustainable societies through a systemic and integrated approach. It brings new relevance, quality, meaning and purpose to education and training systems.” (Point 7)*
- *“We recognise that education is a significant factor in improving human well-being. We now have the knowledge and experience available to significantly improve the contents, methods and purposes of education.” (Point 12)*

Precisely because the health aspects of child upbringing are of ever-growing importance, it is necessary to pay more and more attention to them within the context of school and deal with them as part of the teachers’ training. This is especially so in crisis zones, since the health of the children there is impaired in different ways by their respective experiences and life circumstances, and they must learn to deal with the negative stress that sets in whenever life’s demands exceed their own resources. For “the younger a child is, the fewer resources it has at its disposal to protect itself, which results in a build-up of non-released energy.” (Levine, Kline 2004, 22). For: “the lasting consequence of traumatic experiences on the psyche is based on the inability not only to regulate conditions of agitation, control feelings of rage, fear and mourning and put them into words, but also to become aware

⁸ <http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/>

of external stimuli in an appropriate manner, and be able to adjust themselves to the situation in which they find themselves. The younger a child is at the time of the traumatisation and the longer a trauma persists, the greater is its respective endangerment.” (Steck 2003, 38) A suffered trauma “does not lie in the event, it is rather that the trauma is located within the nervous system.” (Levine, Kline 2004, 22). Thus, it is understandable that in children who have undergone additional traumatic experiences in the midst of an everyday life that is anyway filled with chronic negative stress, a perception blockade can develop; for “the experienced sense of unity that is within the experience of space, time and self for a given situation is lost.” (Unfried 2003, 63) It can be observed in practice that the “build-up of non-released energy” leads to multifaceted expression blockages. The result is aggression against oneself and others: “the aggression apparatus proves [...] to be an auxiliary system of the motivation system: connection, acceptance and affiliation are critical for survival. When the alarm systems of the human brain are threatened, they react. As direct consequences, fear and aggression are displayed.” (Bauer 2011, 61) Since the small child is driven by its strong motivation urge to gather experiences, it is necessary to find methodology / didactic that makes possible a motivating, early-infancy stimulation that will bring back an improvement in the child’s general awareness of life. For if “a child has the possibility to transcend the congealing numbness and enter a state of flow, then its body builds up resources that promote self-assurance, internal strength and self-respect.” (Levine, Kline 2004, 103). This can be confirmed, as children who had participated in a Caritas early childhood education programme entered primary school quite prepared for it, and were conspicuous for their communicative and social skills.

Acute and chronic diseases (e.g. infectious illnesses) too can cause delayed development, and that is why small children are dependent on their childhood vitality being used to be able to rectify this if possible. “For children who experience disability, it is a vital time to ensure access to interventions which can help them reach their full potential.’ (UNICEF 2012, 4)

"Science has provided us with a better knowledge of climate change and of the Earth's life support systems; it has gathered significant knowledge about HIV and AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, heart diseases, and other serious health

challenges. We know more about natural systems, and human impacts on them, and the ways that biodiversity supports our well-being." (Point 13)

The knowledge about these illnesses plus the fact that medicines can trigger learning problems in children, are indicators enough that this awareness should be integrated into the school context, in exactly the same way as should be the hospital or school contexts in which children with or without infectious illnesses are provided with educational care. For "stress increases [...] not only susceptibility for certain pathogens, but also obstructs the efforts of the body to deal with them." (Bauer 2004, 30) Thus, emergency and peace-educational methodology / didactic can provide children with lasting help.

- *"Re-orient education and training systems to address sustainability concerns through coherent policies at national and local levels. Develop and implement ESD policies through co-ordinated inter-sectoral or inter-ministerial approaches that also involve business and the corporate sector, civil society, local communities and the scientific community." (Point 15 d)*
- *"Support the incorporation of sustainable development issues using an integrated and systemic approach in formal education as well as in non-formal and informal education at all levels, in particular through the development of effective pedagogical approaches, teacher education, teaching practice, curricula, teaching materials, and education leadership development, and also by recognizing the significant contribution of non-formal education and informal learning as well as vocational and work-place learning. Sustainable development is a cross-cutting theme with relevance to all disciplines and sectors." (Point 15 f)*

The aforementioned points serve as a stimulus to reach agreement on individual solutions in basic and CPD training in crisis zones and render not only teaching curricula more flexible, but also the way in which lessons are given. In future, it will be increasingly necessary for various ministries and faculties to work together. In addition, it is important in crisis zones to develop interdisciplinary modules that can be taught practically as part of training courses, both for teachers and nurses. This enables both sets of trainees to experience from the start that there is a concrete connection between health promotion and the way in which lessons are taught.

The aim of the study paper is to show that in its approach to early childhood education and child upbringing, Caritas has already implemented many of the points that are proposed by the Declaration of Bonn:

- Situation-adequate teacher training (modular basic and CPD, mentoring) and parent involvement;
- Peace-educational, early childhood advancement (adjusted culturally, and with regard to both gender and situation) with application of healthy early childhood methodology / didactic;
- Both economic and ecological aspects are taken into account.

2.2 Body Movement, Development of Senses, Immune System

A child's development is stimulated in general by "movement". Externally, this is noticeable at the child's extremities, and internally, the child's neurons give it the ability to imitate, thus reinforcing its sensory impressions. The child's natural motivation urge leads to a steady expansion of its mobility and sensory perceptions. Children must develop their reflection ability during their early years. By linking different experiences together, a child learns, finally, to feel and sense the consequences of its actions and to act with foresight. Whereas the motivation urge gradually decreases during the course of the child's development, its reflection ability increases, allowing the child to apply it ever better, regardless of its current actions.

Even while still in the womb, a child is already experiencing simple sensory perceptions, which are then expanded post-natally by reflexes (especially grasping and sucking), visual and auditory perceptions and the support of the mirror neurons, a process which enables the child to imitate at a very early age. These sensomotory activities, which the child already perceives as a kind of game, include touching and feeling everything with their mouth and tongue. In this way, a variety of movements is stimulated, developed and differentiated (e.g. turning, sitting, crawling, gripping, tasting, lubricating, Largo 2004). In its first year, a child is already imitating activities and trying to read and interpret body language and sounds of voices, especially those of its parents. Infants express themselves individually by applying their whole bodies to create diversity of movement and provide possibilities to use their sensory perception. Sensomotory impressions from play and activity experiences, for example in nature, stimulate synapse connections, which

communicate to the child security and control of their own body. For the infant, security and control over their own bodies, for example in the form of balance, play a central role in its ability to stand and walk, which in turn provides the child with a new awareness of its environment and opens up new experience possibilities.

As its senses become more active, so too does the infant's immune system develop. An immune system has the task of recognizing exogenous substances that first act on the organism, then render them harmless and process them in such a way that they can be detected and categorized in the future. Both the process of sensory perception and the immune system evolve for a lifetime and benefit from a multifaceted stimulation and self-activity.

2.3 The Phases of Play, Speaking, and Drawing and their respective Significance for Early Childhood Development

Each development that a child undergoes is primed by a previous activity. Once a child can walk, it starts both assembling objects and taking them apart. This is done in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional space. Besides the onset of the construction of physical structures, the construction of a language also begins, by the child putting together sounds to form words; and from "two-word statements", sentences gradually emerge. These assembling activities are primed by actions of giving and taking that are learned and practiced by the children as part of their early childhood development.

While children find a creative expression outwardly, they also feel an inner need to express their joy of movement by drawing pictures too. (see Lebéus 1993, Brochman 2000) This results initially in drawings of scribbled tangles expressing movement, but these soon turn into geometric shapes that have been primed by the construction game.

In its games, the child now imitates what it perceives in its habitat (e.g. they cook when their mother cooks) and moves, gives orders to and plays independently with its toys, using its own words and actions. Its life experiences are woven into playful activities. Thus, it is quite normal for a child to use its imagination to picture a piece of wood as a doll or a car. In the course of its infant development, a child displays its emergent powers of imagination with games that are ever more multifaceted. A further step of development is reflected by the fact that geometric shapes are no longer

drawn on top of each other but side by side. Simultaneously, role-play games develop in which children slip into playing at being in actual professions, which are perceived through its own experiences in the direct vicinity. Playing in this way, the child increasingly adopts a creative and self-determining role.

In the defiance phase, through its resistance it gains important new experiences (see Einsiedler 1994, Meier 2000). Just as children, while learning to walk, repeatedly fall down and in this way learn the need to endure physical pain, they now learn to endure emotional pain. By composing geometric shapes (straight lines and squiggles) to make a "head-with-tentacles" figure, children create in their imagination a sentient being, which becomes for them the bearer of their feelings. Through the ability to assemble geometric shapes in different forms, children can now express their inner images independently. The next step of the drawing development displays a differentiation between the top and the bottom of the paper; the image design becomes ever richer and, so to speak, comes down to earth.

Playing games with rules, children then make up their own rules, practice applying and discarding them, and learn to accept winning and losing. The children mix all forms of play together and play them either jointly with other children of different age groups or alone; and their natural curiosity causes them to experiment with different play form designs.

Play represents a complex form of learning, because children thereby acquire motor, linguistic, mathematical and social abilities. During games, the intrinsic motivation comes to bear. If a child is determined to fulfil a task of its own accord (intrinsic motivation), for the most part it makes optimal use of its resources⁹. Intrinsic motivation is not contrary to extrinsic motivation, because posed tasks too can be experienced in a self-determined way, "if the action, the desired action event as such and the expected consequences at the outcome belong to the same subject." It is conducive for intrinsic motivation "if the particular action goal is clearly associated with a general target, whereby both goal and target are then assigned as unambiguously as possible to a specific activity. "(Rheinberg 2004, 14) This supports the development of impulse control, frustration tolerance and compassion as well as the formation of a self-efficacy framework and an action and planning concept. Play acts as a "learning and development motor", "through which cognitive and social skills

⁹ Huther G, *Sich zu bewegen lernen heißt fürs Leben lernen! Die erfahrungsabhängige Verankerung sensomotorischer Repräsentanzen und Metakompetenzen während der Hirnentwicklung*, <http://www.gerald-huether.de/populaer/veroeffentlichungen-von-gerald-huether/texte/sich-bewegen-gerald-huether/index.php>, 25.1.2014

unfold." (Leuchter, 2013) Thus, play (for the child, even painting is play) is for small children "preparation for the responsibilities that they will face in the next phase of development." (Donaldson 2004, 71) If a development step is not worked through, this then has negative consequences for the other child's further development.

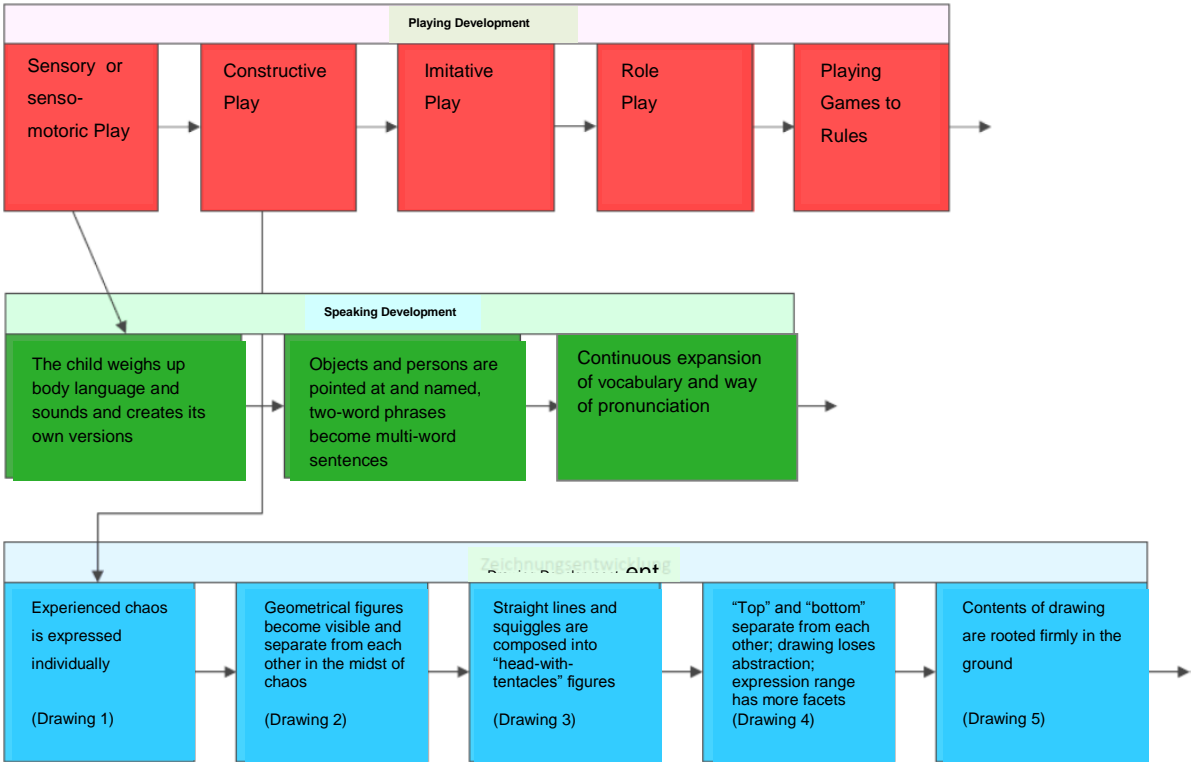


Fig.2: Graphic: Play, Speaking and Drawing Development



Fig. 3: Experienced chaos is expressed individually (Drawing 1)



Fig. 4: Geometrical Figures become Visible and Separate in the Chaos (Drawing 2)



Fig. 5: Straight Lines and Squiggles become "Heads-with-Tentacles" (Drawing 3)



Fig. 6: “Above” and “below” separate from each other; contents of the drawing ‘come to earth’; range of expression has more facets (Drawing 4)



Fig. 7: Contents of drawing are rooted firmly in the ground (Drawing 5)¹⁰

¹⁰ The drawings in Figures 4 – 8 were created on 24.9.13 in Oiscara, Chechnya

In the drawing development phase, development processes that children without outside help become visible. Through play, painting pictures and speaking, children allow adults to share both their development process and individual expression.

2.4 Crisis Zones require an appropriate Lesson Model

Often, children who are exposed to negative stress, or cannot act out their natural urge to be 'doing something', cannot improve their investigative curiosity, dexterity and creativity. This can mean that they do not experience development steps in the interactivity of play, speaking, and drawing development, which hinders their further development. "Early stress can affect brain function, learning, and memory adversely and permanently. New research provides a scientific basis for the obvious fact that children who experience extreme stress in their earliest years are at greater risk for developing a variety of cognitive behavioural, and emotional difficulties later in life" (UNICEF 2014) This can very often be observed in conflict and crisis zones, but it can also happen to children whose parents have lived in war or disaster situations in their own youth. Parents who have a greatly reduced relationship with nature, triggered off by their own wartime experiences, cannot communicate a link with nature and their environment to their children. On the contrary, the range of movement of children in crisis zones is often limited to the space within one's own walls, because in this way parents want to minimize children-relevant environmental hazards (such as landmines, unsecured building sites or unsafe roads). The link with nature that is so essential for children's development is thus limited by their parents' easily understandable security concerns. As a result, children thus affected can often not live out their child's urge for movement. This means that their senses are under-nurtured. Consequently, the children develop a diminished relationship with their own body awareness. Often, these children first of all tune themselves in with rocking movements before they practice the likewise early-childhood give and take, and before they plunge into constructive play and assume an active part in a group.

With the aid of a supportive lesson structure, however, missed development steps can be caught up with within a short time. The reason is that children who later make up the missed play, speaking, and drawing phases, remain only briefly in the respective catch-up phases. The initial goal of the Caritas approach to early childhood education in crisis zones is therefore to apply an

adapted form of methodology / didactic to harmonize that portion of early childhood development that - often for diverse reasons - has been disturbed there; and re-establish a basic education readiness in the children affected, subsequently fostering their educational ability. Through this, children in crisis zones gain the opportunity to find within a lasting or temporary educational emergency a link to educational normality. In this way, the state school system can be supported, which immediately after a crisis in the countries concerned is often not yet in a position to respond to crisis-induced early childhood development issues.

In order systematically to identify the specific educational opportunities for children of preschool age and to be able to use those opportunities as a basis for targeting and building up specific fostering opportunities, the model of Rossbach (2010) is brought in.

In crisis zones, the primary need is to harmonize the mental and physical health of children and restore their readiness to be educated. This is not so in PISA countries, where an intensive search is meanwhile under way for specific furtherance opportunities for children of preschool age, to be able to use this as a foundation on which to build targeted furtherance possibilities. One example of this is the Rossbach model (2010), which searches for specific furtherance possibilities for preschool children, so as to be able to initiate and build up targeted furtherance opportunities upon them.

Crisis Situation

Early Childhood Education according to Rossbach

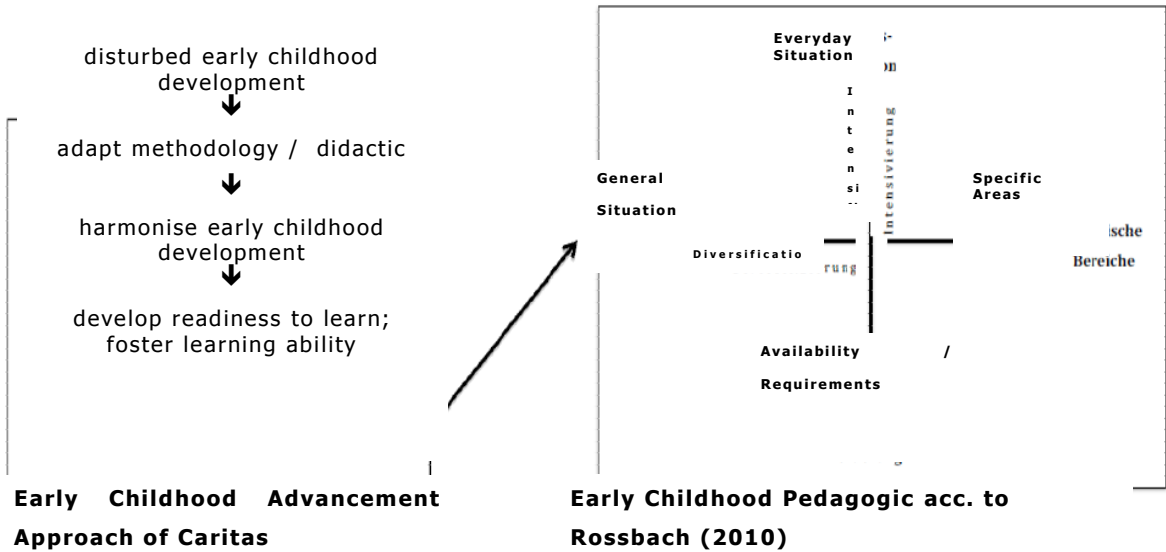


Fig. 8: Caritas Approach to Early Childhood Education in the Context of the Rossbach Two-Dimensional Model

2.5 Differing Developmental Deficits — Lesson Preparation Aspects

Children from crisis zones have differing developmental deficits after armed conflicts such as those that occurred, for example, in Kosovo or Chechnya. The reform pedagogy-moulded approach of Caritas adjusts its early childhood education in conflict zones so that it corresponds to these developmental deficits, and makes them the key points of the lesson contents. In its school year planning, the Caritas health promotion-based early childhood education approach takes into account the often precarious conditions in a crisis-racked country. Not only during but also after experiences that are particularly very traumatic for children, such as wars or natural disasters, the children bear a burden of negative stress. For example, the construction of new buildings and the demolishing of old ones during a reconstruction phase, with the resulting inherent change in the known environment, creates yet another uncertainty factor for small children that is important for them to understand and process.

The Caritas early childhood education approach helps children to retrieve missed steps in their development process and prepares them for successful fulfilment of school curricular requirements. It contains social activities, including imitation and role-play. These play forms strengthen the mental expression level of early childhood education.

First, the children's space perception is practiced, for which the playing of various sensory games is particularly suitable. Only when this is firmly established are the children ready to develop their cognitive domain. Thus, towards the end of the school year, mathematical processes, shape recognition and design can be increasingly developed. For example, the children experience and learn the feeling of various materials and discover whether they are long or short, heavy or light. Also, these materials are arranged in order and sorted in sequence. Furthermore, by then the children should also be able to sort different materials into different series. Not only that: in the process of playing together it is also important to feel the quality of the numbers and discover counting. These are important preconditions for mathematical activity and for the ability to abstract letters. At the same time, with these different activities graphic-motor skills are practiced. The fine

motor skills are fostered with handicraft activities. For example, paper is first torn into pieces (macro motor skills) before patterns or forms are cut out of it with scissors (micro motor skills). This corresponds to a process-oriented approach, since the child is first of all presented with light tasks, which then gradually become increasingly differentiated and thereby more difficult. Thus, the furtherance of cognitive domain aspects such as concrete mathematical processes and shape recognition, which are prerequisites for the abstraction of letters, is increasingly developed towards the end of the school year. The reason for this is that by then, the space perception, which has been specially practiced by playing various sensory games, is already somewhat in-depth. This also corresponds to a methodology / didactic, process-oriented approach which makes it possible for the children to practice different skills, both with each other and towards each other, and they can also take on leadership roles. Thus, a child is never under-challenged.

The knowledge about development processes and the ability with which the child begins to differentiate between these out of its complex experience, can be made use of in the methodology / didactic. This can be well explained with reference to role play: for example, in the role-play game "Market", a child practices selling and buying; and in doing so in a game, it learns mathematical and language skills in a complexly modelled and lifelike activity. Through this role-play game, the child decides of its own accord which products it wants to buy and sell. In this way, children learn that each decision has a consequence and they acquire nonetheless a trove of hidden knowledge and experience in their respective cultural context. Children incorporate their experiences into games and can independently verify and deepen their learning within their everyday surroundings. In this way, cultural aspects with which a child grows up are integrated into the classroom lessons and so the danger is avoided that the child might be otherwise misled into a parallel world (for instance by textbook examples, with which children in crisis situations can have no personal connection). For children who are suffering from negative stress or trauma, the consideration of cultural aspects in early intervention programmes is particularly important, since this helps them more easily to identify with their home region and community and thus feel at home. A further contribution to helping these children to find their roots can be a lesson plan which selects the weekly theme so that it runs as a common thread throughout both the school day and the whole week and correlates with the surroundings. In this way, children can build a relationship with their

immediate environment, which they understand increasingly better with time. Furthermore, a balanced methodology / didactic lesson design takes into account alternating phases of relaxation and concentration for the children.

For children suffering from severe negative stress and traumata, the Caritas early childhood education furtherance programme is deliberately strengthened by a methodology / didactic that supports and stimulates their motivation:

- If the teacher exhibits an attitude of natural authority, this gives children inspiration and support. Tasks are set in such a way that children can grow beyond themselves and expand their development process.
- A rhythmic lesson design gives the children security through their subconscious.

Another element is the possibility to be able to fail in a task in order to improve oneself. The teachers actively encourage the children to practice and overcome the difficulties experienced. In crisis zones, therefore, the fostering of cross-linking capabilities is a central component of the Caritas early childhood upbringing system.

2.6 Physical, Mental, and Cognitive Development enables Children to make a Conscious Transposition

External and internal movement “massages” a child’s soul. For example, the telling of a fairy tale creates in children feelings of tension, anxiety, sympathy or antipathy. In fairy tales, wrongdoing is always followed by certain consequences, so this is an important training ground for learning reflection. In addition, listening to fairy tales enables children to experience orality, which is an important precursor of literacy (Sanders 1998). While listening, children can imagine the scenes in the narrative to expand their own different nuances of feeling. These body perception and sense impressions are rooted in the child’s body memory and can be resorted to in later years.

A development step is prepared and expanded through practicing, long before its presence is perceptible. This applies to physical, mental, and cognitive development. When a small child imitatingly practices giving and taking or hiding and finding toys and other objects, it is preparing the emotional expression skills that will later be supplemented with language. A child begins to separate and reflect. This procedure can also be observed in language

development: movement becomes a sound; and in turn, sounds become aural syllables. Later, an activity is appended that can be depicted as follows:

<p>“Woof, woof” (with its whole body, the child imitates a dog)</p>	<p>Dog (this is usually indicated by the hand)</p>	<p>Dog runs (the child remains still and relates an action)</p>	<p>Brown dog barks loudly (the dog can be described although not in sight)</p>
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This procedure can also be observed in mathematics:

<p>Mathematics is discovered in Role Play and different materials are discovered;</p>	<p>Quantities and qualities are experienced physically and registered: much - little, heavy - light, long - short etc.</p>	<p>Serial recognition is added to separation. Mandalas/ornaments can be laid out;</p>	<p>The quality of the numbers enables a sensory association to numbers and counting,</p>	<p>Mathematical processes can be experienced experimentally;</p>
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Mathematical processes cannot be diversified until children show in their drawings what represents “top” and “bottom”. Whereas children playing games express their visual ideas with simple, multifunctional play materials (building blocks, recycled materials), when they draw, they express their images as compositions of abstract shapes (straight and squiggly). This realisation is important for them to be able to understand how to learn to write:

<p>Listen to stories</p>	<p>Understand body language, learn to imagine;</p>	<p>Deepen understanding for forms with a feeling for right and left, top and bottom;</p>	<p>Letters of the alphabet are forms which, when put together, build words, which in turn can be put together.</p>
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A school’s annual lesson plan and methodology / didactic task-setting are implemented in a complex and process-oriented manner, to avoid the coexistence of learning and play. From the complex learning form, the compartmentalised, formal, separate-subject learning form is prepared that is practised in the primary schools of most of the crisis zones (Kosovo, Republic of Moldova, Chechnya *inter alia*). However, this approach falls short due to the level of psycho-developmental knowledge. At preschool and early school age, play is the relevant activity through which children learn. Play is the intrinsic gateway of the child to its world understanding, which then undergoes a rational expansion in school.” [(Rossbach et al, 2010) Precisely because the “comprehending” form of learning is hardly practiced in the

primary schools of crisis zones, in preschool¹¹ the complex process-oriented learning form acquires even more significance, especially for children suffering from negative stress or traumata. For “a start in school without being ready for school, has enormous consequences for the child and society.” (Stamm 2010) and school readiness includes physical, social, emotional and health aspects. “For school readiness is more than what children know and can do.” (Stamm 2010).

Even among young children in crisis zones there is more media consumption, so they experience "overstimulation in specific sensory regions, which often does not in the slightest keep in step with their experiential processing. In contrast, they often experience in elementary sense regions a sub-stimulation." (Zimmer 2005) It is necessary therefore, for children, especially after a war (or a natural disaster) to feel at home both within themselves and in their environment.



Fig. 9: Stories are practiced with movements and repeated often (loudly, quietly, using only body language)

Learning objectives and curricula for early childhood education are similar worldwide. The following learning areas are usually included:

- Physical Development
- Speech
- Mathematics

¹¹ In this work, the expressions 'preschool' and 'kindergarten' are used synonymously

- Artistic Activities (e.g. music, handicrafts)
- People and Surroundings

The methodology / didactic with which the learning objectives are to be achieved is mostly not described in detail. This leaves room to choose innovative methodology / didactic ways that include complex learning, as described above. Practical experience has shown that even children who suffer from chronic negative stress achieve preschool learning objectives when the latter are communicated by complex and process-based teaching methods. Their hunger for learning and their motivation to enter school often prove to be great.



Fig.10: Children testing their mathematical abilities: by counting with old fibre-pen caps on their finger (Chechnya).

2.7 Summary

In every child, natural motivation and self-activity form the motor for healthy development. In crisis zones, various play forms can be used to unblock inhibiting factors and reinvigorate both motivation and self-activity in children who are suffering from negative stress or have traumata. In this context, it is also important to embed the cultural aspects of the school lessons in an existing social context. The most urgent task in crisis situations is first of all

to bring the children back within themselves so that they feel at home not only there but also in their surroundings, in order to use this as a basis from which to strengthen their educational readiness. The Caritas early childhood education projects approach implements these focal points with an appropriate methodology-didactic, which enables affected children who are suffering from traumatic experiences and chronic negative stress to catch up on their development, and leads them back to the curricular requirements and formal learning in primary school.

3. Specifics of Early Childhood Education in Emergency Situations

People process their experience of wars and natural disasters in very different ways. Whereas on the one hand, wars are man-made disasters, natural disasters on the other hand are perceived as being caused by a higher power: disasters that affect equally all the people of the region concerned. (Galtung 1993) Little children experience both emergency situations unconsciously, as a reflective consciousness is not yet developed. Thus children are defenceless and unprepared for exposure to the realities in their environment. To help children learn to deal better with the physical and psychological consequences of emergency situations, early childhood upbringing should prepare children for emergency situations; in particular, for natural disasters.

Negative stress and trauma also occur when small children grow up over a long period in difficult circumstances; for example

- as a marginalized fringe group;
- separated from their parents in an institution;
- isolated from their environment with their mothers in prison.

Peace researcher Johan Galtung speaks of negative peace being the absence of direct violence against the body, mind and soul, the absence of cultural violence (religion, language, art, schools, media) and the absence of structural violence (political repression, economic exploitation). The concept of negative peace is the opposite number of positive peace, which consists of verbal and physical care for body, mind and soul, and addresses all basic needs. (Galtung 1993) Furthermore, Galtung sees positive peace as a state that realises “more” freedom, justice and happiness. (Galtung 1975) The peace researcher thus follows more the definition of the World Health Organization (WHO), which defines health as “more” than merely the absence of disease.

Based on this approach, in crisis zones the Caritas early childhood education integrates health-promoting aspects with the pedagogical work. The Caritas pedagogical approach in early childhood education in emergency situations thus weights those aspects that affect the physical and mental health of children, more heavily than the curricular requirements which children in crisis zones can only regain with full health anyway.

3.1 Emergency Pedagogy Education Approach: Convert Negative Stress, Strengthen Physical and Spiritual Immune System

After a war and a natural disaster, many children find themselves in an emergency situation that often turns into long-term normality. For children who are affected by structural violence, this is true in general. After a war, there is often a lack of therapeutic measures for affected children. This gap must be closed by pedagogical interventions in order to be able to help affected children to find their individual expression again and gradually regain their health and develop "coping strategies" ¹². As there are always some children in a class who are affected differently by a particular crisis situation, the children who are less affected animate their worse affected classmates in a natural way by assuming the function of role models. In the educational work, the respective exceptional situation in which children currently find themselves is taken into consideration and the lessons designed analogous to the children's current needs and abilities. Only in a second step is the state-required curriculum taken into account. The following examples explain this approach:

Living Circumstances of	Pedagogical Situation	Methodology / Didactic Approach
Children affected by war	Children protect their hearing sense by clapping their hands over their ears", as if they do not wish to hear the loud noise of the fighting and parental admonitions. Children who cannot speak express themselves first by	Teachers increasingly arouse the children's curiosity by working with their own body language. In this way, children are reactivated and once again understand and listen better. This happens during the playing of the multiplicity of games that is available using the multi-functional play materials.
Children affected by poverty	These children often reduce certain sensory perceptions (e.g. the sensation of cold) to a minimum (observed in Kosovo and Chechnya and confirmed in the literature on children with trauma).	The various senses are awakened by playing specifically targeted games.
Children suffering from infectious diseases	Play is forbidden or limited.	This work is done using multifunctional recycled materials that can be disposed of. Thus, the risk of infection is eliminated and the
Children with physical difficulties, who e.g. cannot hold a pencil	The child cannot perform a task allotted to it.	An attempt is made to find the child a customized way to perform the same task, e.g. "painting", using PET bottle caps by putting these together to form pictures, without this being rated by the teacher as negative.

¹² 'Coping Strategy' refers to the way of dealing with an occurrence that is perceived as a significant and difficult life event or life stage.

In the children's surroundings there are numerous dangers that lead parents to restrict their children's radius of movement and set limits on them. Instead of minimizing the children's stress, this approach unintentionally reinforces it. Therefore, in early childhood education in crisis situations, a consciously applied, comprehensive and differentiated sense promotion is of particular importance.

3.1.1 Early Childhood Furtherance of Roma Children in Kosovo

In working with Roma children, the principle is applied of integrating current reality into the teaching. The diligent and creative children have trouble gaining any recognition and appreciation at all for their classroom skills. Even as still small children, they are taken off by their parents to work. The Roma children collect and hoard items and know exactly how much money they receive, for example, for a bag of collected aluminium cans. Due to the precarious housing situation, many Roma children have difficulties in complying with hygiene standards and being punctual for class.

The Caritas early childhood education furtherance programmes with Roma children knowingly take these difficulties into account. Because many of the Roma children suffer from chronic hunger, which additionally affects their physical development and makes learning difficult, they are offered a light meal. The pedagogue also adapts to the situation by, for example, having the children wash their hands as their first activity when they arrive at the preschool. The complex learning form is suitable for these children, as their world is rich in imagination and experience that can be used positively in the classroom. Through storytelling, not only is the rich practical knowledge of children brought increasingly into order, but also their ability to concentrate can be strengthened. More emphasis is put on playing games with rules, and care is taken to achieve a rhythmic teaching sequence and punctuality. Thus, the training of sensory perception is somewhat reduced and the work with specific games and other tasks enhanced in order to awaken the understanding of form in the children. Using this approach, children affected by structural violence, such as Roma children, can still achieve the official learning goals and be prepared for school. According to the Roma Early Childhood Inclusion Programme (RECI), Roma children are "the most disadvantaged and marginalized group in Europe". (RECI 2012, 10) It is not surprising, therefore, that "the participation rate of Roma children in preschools is extremely low." (RECI 2012, 38) Providing them with a suitable

preschool education makes possible the same starting conditions for them as for other children.

Through adapted early learning support for Roma children, the misuse of their active, motivating and creative force by criminal tendencies and the learning of “wrong” coping strategies can be prevented. Therefore, Stamm calls for a “targeted expansion of preschool for disadvantaged children.” (Stamm 2011) Particularly the children of disadvantaged ethnic groups need to be furthered early to enable them to have the same “starting conditions” and life prospects as the children of non-disadvantaged ethnic groups. “Early childhood is a critical (and potentially vulnerable) stage where extreme poverty and malnutrition have lasting negative effects on subsequent health and development.” (RECI 2012, 34) According to RECI, investment in early childhood education is an effective means of reducing structural violence. “The understanding that the early childhood period is the foundation stage not only of individual development but also of lifelong health and education” makes it clear that “investments must be made from the beginning if Roma children are to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills to continue education and become part of a skilled European workforce. (RECI 2012, 18)

Roma children form a contrast to children who are prevented by their parents from exploring their surroundings and who therefore suffer from motoric and perceptual difficulties. It is important for early childhood education furtherance to take this into account.



Fig.11: Roma Children compose Patterns with PET bottle caps

3.1.2. Learning Understanding and Acceptance through Stories

A further pillar in emergency education is to help children by using appropriate stories. Listening to audial images is one possible way for them to develop a sensory understanding of their situation. This is a complex learning form that provides a contrast to reflected explanations. Since very few stories and picture books are available for children in crisis zones, it is necessary in the specific situation to enrich or invent stories independently with appropriate ad hoc (audial) images.

Topic	Pedagogical Image	Pedagogical Effect
Earthquake Topic (Pakistan 2005, Chechnya 2010): ¹³ This story is suitable for the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approach	“The Earth coughs” Whenever the Earth coughs, it shakes.	This image does not convey fear to the children, but rather the fact that there are times when the Earth ‘coughs’. Thus, the small children take in the fact that when ‘the Earth coughs’ they must leave their houses. They become self-active and independent.
Tuberculosis as topic (Republic of Moldova 2010):	In “Tubercle’s Journey” trans-mission routes of tuberculosis are represented pictorially.	The children learn to understand their illness and can thus approach the invisible enemy.

All stories are passed on orally, as publication would necessitate the creation of child-suitable artwork. Some other, fairy tales are also retold orally. For example, for children who have themselves lost a parent, “Stepmother stories”, generate images of their own situation. Fairy tales deal with evil that is always punished. In fairy tales, all the heroes and heroines must undergo difficult tests and transformations before they can finally fulfil themselves. The listening children experience being noticed and taken seriously. This is especially important for children in the context of crisis situations, because in many families their experiences are not talked about. Also, listening to language and the reading of mouth movements fosters the linguistic ability of children both consciously and unconsciously. By imagining individual inner images, children learn to concentrate and are internally active. Thus DRR, emergency pedagogical stories and specially selected fairy tales create opportunities to talk with young children about difficult topics. In this way, children in crisis zones playfully practice philosophising and debating. This is also a complex learning form, which differs from teacher questions to which

¹³ Rutishauser Ramm B., *Frieden Lernen*, Basel, AAP Verlag, 2012

the children need to know a correct answer. These examples are meant to illustrate how children in crisis situations can learn to accept their everyday situation and how this can be implemented in a manner that simultaneously both fosters the children's education and helps them therapeutically. The following pictures show that children can express a theme equally well even if they are in different stages of development.



Fig.12: Children from Chechnya paint the strong hero of a story differently: in conversation with the child, it pointed with his finger to the abdomen of the three figures



Fig.13: Children from Chechnya paint the strong hero of a story differently: in this case the hero's strength is localized in his belly



Fig.14: Children from Chechnya paint the strong hero of a story differently: here the hero's strength is localized in his arms and hands.



Fig.15: Children from Chechnya paint the strong hero of a story differently: in this case the hero's strength is localized outside the person painted.

3.2 Effects of a Healthy Early Childhood Upbringing

If crisis situation-induced negative stress can be minimized during early childhood upbringing, then the children's zest for life is increased, which in turn has a positive effect on their anxiety- and stress-impaired immune system. In a healthy early childhood upbringing, care must be taken to ensure that despite difficult circumstances the zest for life be retained. True zest for life is acquired by undergoing genuine experiences, not through promised sweets or consuming the contents of DVDs. Children soon see through education methods that reward and punish by turn. Such methods also separate children from real experiences in just the same way as do copying activities or repetitive learning. In crisis zones, however, it is often precisely such methods of upbringing that are applied.

Based on long-term experience with early childhood education projects in crisis zones and on numerous discussions with children, parents and teachers on the spot, it can be concluded that negative stress does not necessarily lead to long-term consequences, because children who have overcome difficult circumstances, display stronger social skills. Children, however, who had no way to handle negative stress or traumata and thereby build up resilience, run the danger of falling ill again later in life as part of the negative consequences of this fact. (Rutishauser Ramm 2011) Just as the physical body that has undergone a disease, creates antibodies that enable it to ward off the disease in future, it is also important for the soul to process the negative stress or traumata and build up a mental immunity to negative stress. One important prerequisite for a healthy learning biography and an active prevention of violence are one's social skills. According to Eisner, the social skills acquired during one's lifetime are an important protective factor against the later emergence of violence. (Eisner 2006) The prevention begins during early childhood upbringing, for "social and cognitive skills are included in the most important protective mechanisms that counter the development of behavioural problems during later development." (Eisner 2006)

Through intensive observation of children's behaviour in the various crisis zones, it was possible to deduce methodology / didactic indicators and subsequently, as part of a Master's degree programme, verify these by comparing them with peace-fostering upbringing and emergency situation pedagogy. These methodology / didactic indicators make it possible to fulfil

even a relatively rigid, government-prescribed curriculum and convey to the children a strong learning foundation for their future.

3.3 Teachers' Continuing Professional Development

The realised and unrealised resources of the children and the teaching personnel are taken into account in the teachers' CPD training. (Storch, Krause 2011) In crisis situations, the teachers' CPD training is adapted to the circumstances, and the expertise of child development passed on in various modules. In the basic and CPD training of teachers, the teacher's teaching skills are strengthened, which is rated more important than their academic degree. The "effect of early childhood education can be strengthened primarily through the development of the professional action skills of the teaching staff. A university degree is no guarantee of successful results". (Stamm 2011) This statement can also be confirmed by the experience gained in crisis zones. Not only children but also many teachers are handicapped in their development due to negative experiences during the war. Negative experiences undergone by teachers living in the wild, (for example, because they were forced to hide in the woods for a long time to survive, e.g. in Kosovo), can have long-term consequences that manifest themselves after those crisis situations have ceased, when the teacher is doing early childhood upbringing work. For example: if teachers, due to their negative experiences derived from living in the wild, refuse to visit a wood with children, then, often unwittingly, a more distant relationship to nature will be conveyed to the children as part of their early childhood upbringing. Thus, if it is to be at all in line with the curriculum subject "Mankind and the Environment", this aspect of the basic and CPD training of teachers must be integrated into the training and lessons concept.

The foundations of the teacher training are the laws of development, which the teaching personnel can experience in practical play. In addition, they will be given the opportunity to practice their acquired teaching methods 'live'. This happens, for example, through the practice of body language in the basic and CPD training courses. Teachers learn how children 'think' and how they, through imitating and finding out "what the teacher wants to tell me", activate themselves physically and mentally. In the basic and CPD training courses, it is important to raise the awareness in the aspiring teachers of how essential a playful approach is for the children. For according to Donaldson, it is hard for children to play in the shadow of adults who have become radically estranged from the experience of the original game. (Donaldson 2004, 68).

This approach to teacher training brings out the enjoyment and curiosity of the trainees to deal with developmental psychological principles, and opens a different approach to methodology / didactic questions, one which allows flexible responses to the individual and specific needs of children. One of the key elements in the Caritas approach to early childhood education is that individuals themselves actively complete each learning process. This applies not only to children but also to the adults who undergo basic and CPD training in the Caritas approach; whereby learning is more than an individualistic activity. Learning is always embedded in a social context in which other individuals are directly and indirectly involved. This co-construction also includes processes for knowledge acquisition and problem solving, in which interactive partners can exchange knowledge, thoughts and ideas and each of them thus obtains their individual knowledge of the other. (Rossbach et al 2010).



Fig.16: Practical teacher training in Kabardino-Balkaria: Teachers try out a mathematical experience

4. Early Childhood Furtherance by Caritas in Crisis Zones

The Caritas early childhood education approach is based on a cultural embedding in the respective project region and on situationally-adapted furtherance i.e. a needs-based preschool education. Furthermore, the Caritas projects are characterized by organic growth at organizational level.

Built upon these foundations, the Caritas early childhood education furtherance method consists of four components (Equipment of Preschool Facilities, Methodology / Didactic, Continuing Professional Development, and Curriculum), which are coordinated and in turn have an impact on the learning behaviour of children. The following chapter describes in a first step the points to which attention is paid regarding the equipping of an early childhood education facility. It then presents a cross-project picture that shows to what extent the methodology / didactic presented in the first chapter is confronted with the specific conditions in the respective project countries, and how this affects the curricular requirements. Finally, in Chapter 7, the aspect of CPD training is covered.

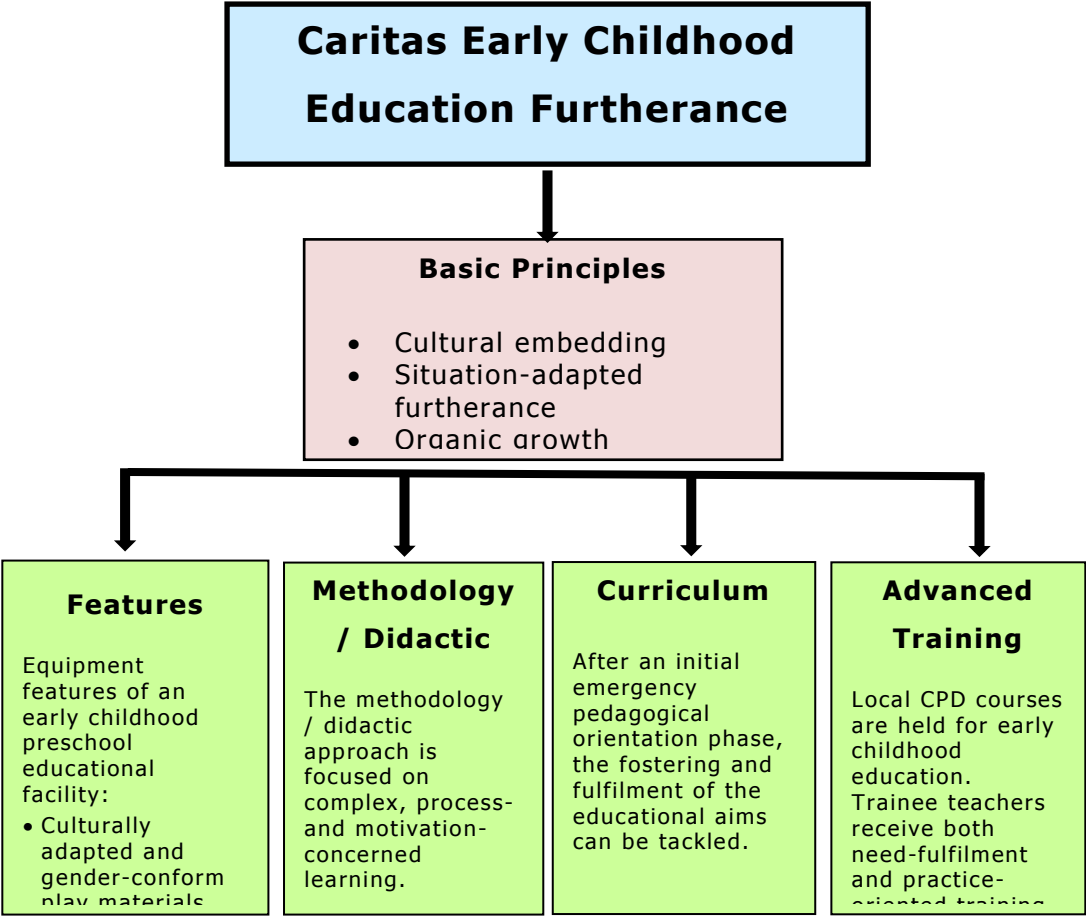


Fig.17: Caritas Early Childhood Furtherance

This interaction is described in an internal report as follows: "The Caritas kindergarten project follows the current European trend of early childhood education, which has recognized that early, professional development support and furtherance increases educational opportunities and has a positive effect on the school career. The fostering of basic functions of perception, motoric skills, language, cognition, sociability and emotionality, which are the basis for learning in school, is given sufficient room. In accordance with the findings of recent studies, the play form is used for learning at the basic learning level; and at the acting level, learning-by-doing is applied, with the necessary materials being provided to enable the work of the specialist fields of language, mathematics, mankind and the environment, movement and music / works to proceed in a manner suitable for children. The expertise of teachers for age-appropriate learning, furtherance and accompanying the kindergarten children is meaningfully enhanced by appropriate CPD training courses led by experienced and competent kindergarten-level trainers."¹⁴

4.1 Equipping Early Childhood Education Facilities in Crisis Zones

In order to take into consideration the development-furtherment and cultural needs of both the children and the local curriculum, early childhood education facilities must be tailored to meet these requirements. Care must also be taken to ensure that the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the equipment is guaranteed.

a) Ecological Sustainability:

- Furniture and wooden toys are produced or purchased in the respective country, and materials and shapes conform to local cultural customs. Thus, play materials can be repaired and re-ordered.
- Various recycled materials are used as learning and handicraft materials. These materials are partially collected and brought into the preschool by the children themselves. In this way, children are confronted with environmental issues.

b) Economical Sustainability

¹⁴ Sarbach, S., internal report to Caritas Switzerland, 2013

- Parents participate with a small financial contribution. This is necessary for consumables (glue, paper) and cleaning materials.
- Use of recycled materials reduces the preschool's material costs.

c) Social Sustainability:

- State-provided early childhood education furtherance programmes reduce new structural violence by offering poverty-affected children access to education.
- Parents are welcome in the kindergarten and parent involvement is actively offered. Message boards or a newsletter are used to give parents pedagogical information.

The country's education authorities are involved, so that pedagogical measures are supported.

The following general notes regarding the fitting-out of the premises originate from Kosovo; they have been adapted in other project countries.

- The wardrobe is of children's height so that the children can take off and put on their coats and shoes themselves.
- Similarly, the layout of tables and chairs is adapted to suit the often small classrooms and so arranged that they can be used multifunctionally and enable play.
- The racks on which toys and playthings are kept are made accessible to children. Inaccessible cabinets for teachers' use only are clearly defined.

Various play materials:

- Many varieties of multifunctional play materials are always to hand:

In the Caritas early childhood education centres, the children's available play materials include wooden building blocks, cloths, various pieces of clothing, natural materials (seeds, pieces of wood, etc.), commonly used tickets for that specific country, boxes, PET bottles with their caps, as well as cleaned recycled materials from everyday life. In this way, the children can pursue to the full their desire to play and their urge for creativity. Multifunctional game material, in particular, supports the children's imagination and enriches their

play. For poverty-affected children, access to this play is of special importance because the material conditions in which they grow up, often render access to play material impossible.

- Defined assorted play material:

Each item of the defined play material should be intact and handled with care. It must be culturally appropriate and should, if possible, be produced or purchased locally. For example, the cultural context must be considered in the case of dolls' clothing: in Muslim-influenced places a doll can wear a veil. The "skin" of stuffed toy animals should have a colour that looks as natural as possible. If toy cars or animals are made of wood, these toys should be made to look as natural as possible and be manufactured locally. The selection of play material is completed with puzzles, memory and board games, photo and picture books.

- Supportive materials for learning and handicraft (e.g. sensory games):

Common learning and handicraft materials include pieces of string, balls, tyres, as well as paper, chalk, scissors, glue or paste.

Depending on the children's ages, the size and volume of the playthings must be adapted to suit age group and gender.

- Classwork preparation material for teachers and documentation:

One folder each for attendance lists, pre- and post-lesson notes, respectively, so that this documentation can be submitted to the authorities.

In addition there needs to be a constantly expanding collection of materials, including poems, songs, suggestions for games, and stories. This collection can be increasingly added to, and the collected items can also be used for the exchange of experiences.

Together, learning and play compose a unit. This is taken into consideration in the methodology / didactic applied. The daily schedule displays a transparent, rhythmic structure that makes it easier for children to follow the lessons. This is also true for mixed-age groups. In addition, a transparent and rhythmic daily structure reduces disciplinary problems.

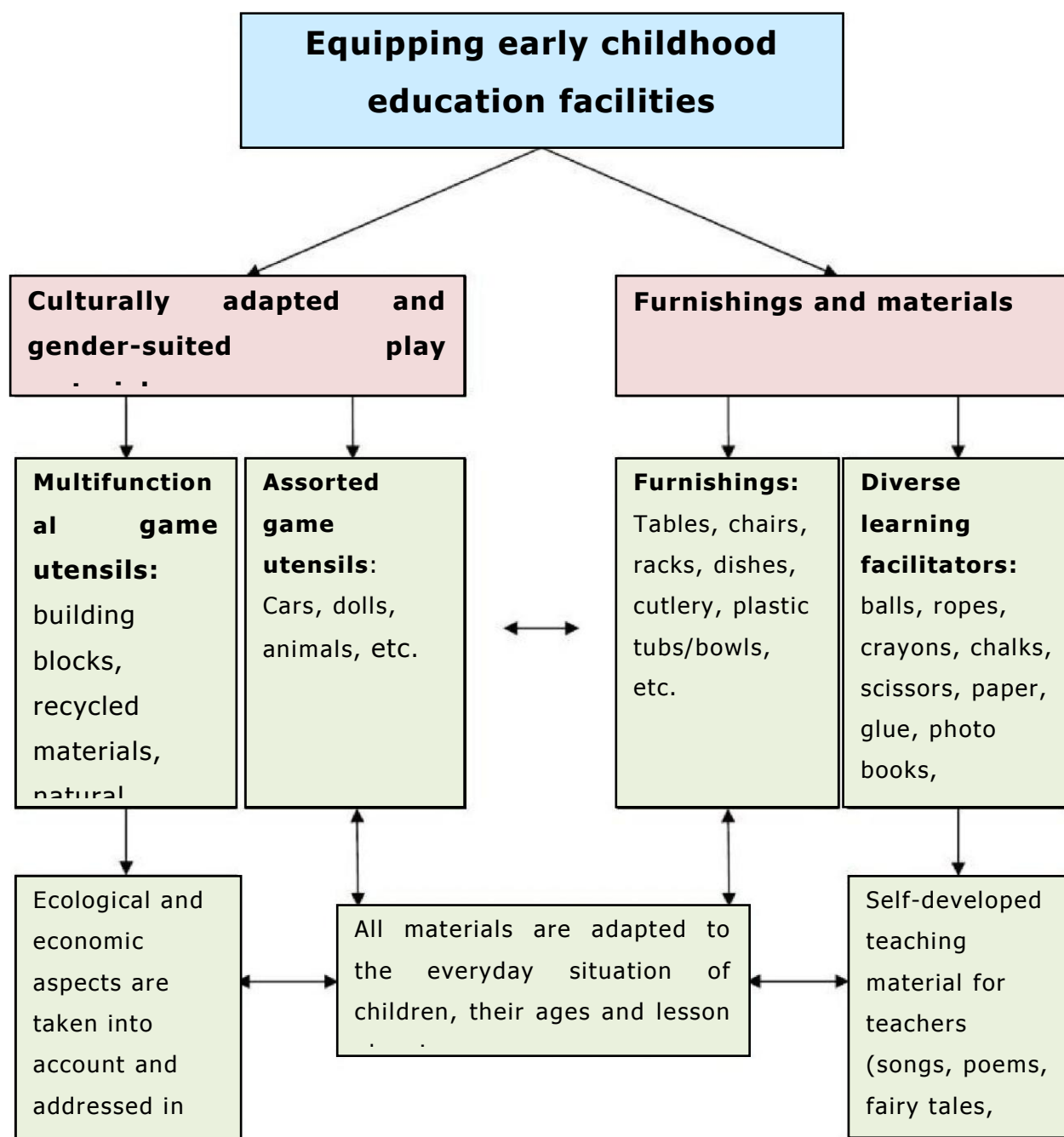


Fig.18: Equipping Early Childhood Education Facilities

4.2 Methodology/ Didactic in Crisis Situations - Cross-project Challenges

Particularly children in crisis zones often do not have the possibilities to live out their playful needs and find their self-expression. Varied experiences are the basis for self-created interest, which in turn creates the conditions to want to learn and consciously be able to mould learning success. In this way, an age-corresponding process is formed in the respective learning biography, which takes into account a child's psychological, emotional and cognitive

skills, and children are guided from easy to difficult task fulfilment.

Since teachers have a leader role, children can more easily accept the tasks put before them. The difficulty of a task is determined by the children themselves, but the teacher can guide them in a particular direction. Thus children are not overtaxed by having to look for tasks on their own initiative.

The learning environment of a Caritas early childhood education facility is often in drastic contrast not only to the parents' own principles of child raising, but also to that of some schools, which operate mainly with the punishment and reward approach. The motivating learning contained in the Caritas early childhood furtherance programmes fosters the youngsters' interest, enables them to experience having space around them in an age-appropriate framework, and furthermore facilitates them to be able further to develop these learning achievements at home. This approach is supported by the use of recycled material, which is easily available and does make any children, particularly those who are poverty-affected, feel additionally disadvantaged. Since recycled materials acquire a positive value in preschool, the children take the ideas with them from the school environment and use them in their play outside. In their involvement with teachers, parents have confirmed the positive use of recycled materials by the children.

Parents must first gain confidence that the learning objectives will be achieved by the end of the school year. For many parents, the Caritas early childhood education approach is new territory. When, say, their children do not have to copy out by hand the letters of the alphabet and no pre-printed teaching material is handed out, this appears strange to many parents in crisis zones. They have to be convinced from the very first day onwards that curricular requirements are being fulfilled right from the start. In Caritas preschools, no pre-printed colouring books are used because this would stand in the way of a true encounter with nature and cause the child's interest in nature to wither. Caritas quickly gains parents' support for an education aligned on nature and sustainability, which (unfortunately) is still all too often in contrast to the regular media consumption in the family home. Not only in Kosovo and Chechnya but also in the Republic of Moldova, particularly in the early years (2002 in Kosovo and 2006 in Chechnya), the authorities had to have the importance of the "complex learning" explained, presented and substantiated to them. By persuading the respective education authorities to visit a Caritas preschool, at which they were able to test the performance of

the children attending their first primary school years there, it was possible to reduce official misgivings towards the Caritas approach. In this way, Caritas was already able to prove to the educational authorities in the early years that the 'complex play' method really does foster the children's learning and is not merely a waste of time for them. Assessments conducted by Caritas and also external project reports illustrate the importance of the complex learning system.¹⁵ Complex learning forms help the children not only to maintain their motivation urge and their hunger for learning, but also prevent them from losing interest in learning in their first years at school. Although Caritas regards the school plans in crisis zones as tending to be too sophisticated (see also Pritchett, Beatty, 2012), the children who have attended a Caritas preschool are able to tackle the differently presented tasks in primary schools. Primary school teachers from Kosovo and Chechnya confirm the learning success of children from Caritas preschool facilities. The headmistress of Oischara in Chechnya emphasises that children who have attended a Community Based Education Centre (COBEC) kindergarten perform well at school. Furthermore, she emphasises the vitality and the ability to perform solution-oriented thinking and communication skills, which distinguish former participants of Caritas preschool projects.¹⁶ In Kosovo too, the feedback from the primary schools is positive. In Chechnya, the children from the very first year of the COBEC kindergarten are now in the seventh class, while in Kosovo they are already in secondary school.

Primary school teachers in Chechnya report that in the first year, children who have attended a traditional preschool are still at an advantage. From the second year, however, the benefits of early childhood education approach of Caritas become increasingly visible. In higher primary school classes, children who have attended a COBEC kindergarten have significantly fewer memory problems than other children. The headmistress of Oischara in Chechnya confirms the positive development of children in primary school. She stresses in particular the good memory ability of children who have attended Caritas preschools. Based on the positive experiences with children from the COBEC kindergarten, elements of informal learning are now also flowing increasingly into the very formally aligned lessons in primary

¹⁵ Lousselet R, internal assessment, 2011

¹⁶ Headmistress in Oischara, Chechnya, 2013

education.¹⁷

¹⁷ Headmistress in Oischara, Chechnya, 2013

4.3 Importance of Playgrounds

Playgrounds support the movement of children in a manageable and safe place. At play, children can get to know each other and parents can chat together at the side of the playground. In recent years, there have been dramatic changes in playground design possibilities. Thanks to the use of different materials (complex and dynamic structures), movement and coordination skills are widely challenged (including balancing, climbing, rope-traversing, swinging, seesawing, sliding, hiding, digging) thereby strengthening the children's sensory perceptions.



Fig.19: Playground at the tuberculosis hospital in Chisinau (Moldova). It was built by a school class, jointly with the company Kukuk.

In crisis zones, however, there are too few playgrounds. In addition, the natural surroundings are only slightly integrated, so that there is no active connection between play and encountering nature. Toys and playground equipment enable children to practice both movement processes and social

interaction. Both promote the self-activity of children: “It is very important for children’s physical, mental and social development that they get enough exercise”¹⁸ If physical, psychological and social development are in balance, these are good preconditions for children's health. “Without movement and sensory perception, the prerequisite for any self-confidence is lacking.”¹⁹ In order that they can raise their self-awareness of their own accord, children need opportunities to overcome challenges and dangers. For these kinds of challenges, playgrounds are ideal and protected surroundings. A playground that fosters activation of the senses allows children to practice different sequences of movements. Children also need regular interaction with nature to strengthen their immune system.

For children in special life situations, the sensory activation playground is even used for therapeutic purposes, such as the playgrounds at the tuberculosis hospitals in the Republic of Moldova. Through physical activity, medicaments are better absorbed, appetite returns and the children fall asleep better. In addition, their zest for life and their humour re-awakes, which provides not only an effective defence against homesickness but also support for the immune system. (Tietze 1995)

4.4 Summary

In early childhood upbringing, play and learning form a single unit. In order for both these basic needs of children to be met, the amenities of an early childhood education facility must be adapted to suit the current situation of both children and curriculum. It is also necessary to ensure economic, ecological and social sustainability and to ensure a continuity of quality in education. The teacher’s person forms a natural authority that creates a motivating and aesthetic learning environment and so creates opportunities to guide children in their carrying out of diverse tasks so that they develop their respective various individual skills. Since the teaching persons can select the children’s tasks from a complex lessons stream of varying degrees of difficulty, their individual learning process is actively accompanied and various difficulties can be overcome. In addition, sensory activation

¹⁸ www.sport.admin.ch/compi/bewegung_bei_kindern.php

¹⁹ www.aok.de/hessen/gesundheit/sport-und-bewegungsguide-warum-bewegung-fuer-kinder-wichtig-15887.php

playgrounds support the children's urge for movement and increase their zest for life. It is also important not to withhold this zest for life from children in crisis zones. Thus, classroom, teaching materials and contents, as well as the movement in nature (optimally on a sensory activation playgrounds) form a unit that is both addressed in teachers' CPD training and experienced in practical reality. In addition, natural and recycled materials guarantee that there are always enough playthings available.

5. Adaptability - Experiences from Project Countries

The Caritas early childhood education approach can be adapted to suit both the life situation of the children and their age. The following describes how the early childhood education approach of Caritas was adapted to the various project countries.

The children cared for in Kosovo, Chechnya and the Republic of Moldova differ according to country and project. Caritas developed specific measures for each age group and life situation in order to enable the children to pursue a successful learning biography. In Kosovo and Chechnya, Caritas cares for children in the preschool age groups from four to six years and four to seven years old respectively. In Moldova, Caritas is active in TB hospitals (children up to 9 years old), a department in a hospital for burns (children up to 12 years old) and a women's prison (children up to 3 years old).

5.1 Kosovo

5.1.1. Background and Origins

During the Kosovo war in 1998/99, Switzerland gave shelter to many refugee families. The Kosovar children who enrolled for school in Switzerland were co-cared for by Kosovar teachers. In this way, two Kosovo Albanians became familiar with preschool education in Switzerland, a school class level that was not yet recognized Kosovo at that time. Before the war, preschool level had been available only in the form of private day structures.

When the two teachers returned to Kosovo in 2000, they founded, jointly with the Swiss NGO Acacia, a private kindergarten in Pristina, which Acacia has supported since then. It was built and co-supervised by the author.

5.1.2 Motives

The postwar period in Kosovo was marked by a hectic phase of reconstruction. School space was very limited for all school class levels, and the students had to be taught in shifts. Electricity and water were in short supply, so that it was hard to design a regular daily routine. As a result, small children grew up in this crisis situation “sidetracked”, as it were, and “struck speechless”. In addition, parents tried to protect their children from the countless dangers in the surroundings. This in turn meant that children in this environment could not undertake suitable tasks that would have enabled them

to rediscover and foster their skills. Due to the post-war situation and the culturally confined child upbringing process, many parents of children of preschool age lacked an awareness of the relevance of play activity for children's development. Play was viewed merely as a pastime rather than as a means of fostering learning. When young children were not together with their parents on the dangerous building sites, they busied themselves on the no less dangerous roads. Some parents preferred simply to leave their children in a safe room, where they mostly watched TV.

5.1.3 Projects

The preschool projects in Kosovo are located in the municipalities of Drenas, (since 2002), Gjakova, Prizren, (since 2006), Rahovec, (since 2012) and, since the school year 2013/2014, in Gjilan and Malisheva.

5.1.3.1 Preschools in the Municipality of Drenas²⁰

At the request of Caritas Luxembourg, in 2002 Caritas Switzerland established a first kindergarten in a social centre funded by Luxembourg in the municipality of Drenas. After consultation with the municipality, the first teacher was hired and in the school year 2002/2003 teaching began for the first kindergarten class. In Kosovo at that time, there were scarcely any infant school teachers available, not to mention preschool lessons as such. Also, apart from primary teacher training, there was no specific training at all for kindergarten teachers. Caritas commissioned educational expert Beatrice Rutishauser-Ramm to introduce kindergarten classes in the municipality of Drenas and provide on-the-job training for interested women to become kindergarten teachers. In 2003, a second kindergarten class was set up at the same centre, which was given the name *Dielli* (Sun). Within the context of two project pilot phases, by the summer of 2007 Caritas was able to set up kindergartens in four other villages in Drenas, and develop and test a practice-oriented three-year basic training course for kindergarten teachers, attended by a first group of eight kindergarten teachers. For pedagogical support, documentation and evaluation, Caritas worked jointly with the Solothurn-based institution 'Initiative for Practice-Based Research' (IPF),

²⁰ Contributed by Geri Meili (2004 to 2013 Caritas Country Coordinator in Kosovo; since 2013 responsible in the same function for the Philippines and Vietnam)

which has developed special expertise that applies a skills portfolio for the quality assurance of informal training and skills validation. In 2006, IPF and Caritas jointly organized final exams and awarded the course participants their completed-training certificates. The educational work was assessed in 2006 by Professor David Selby (University of Plymouth) in cooperation with the Kosovan State Ministry of Education (MEST). The evaluation praised the quality of both the teaching material and the training of kindergarten teachers, as well as the model function of the Dielli social centre, which by this time was being fully utilized for kindergarten work. Furthermore, the report recommended the MEST and Caritas to consolidate and expand this work. This work is an important contribution to the proposed introduction of legislation making kindergarten attendance compulsory.

Based on the positive evaluation, Caritas made two decisions: first, the kindergarten work was extended from the municipality of Drenas to the other villages, and pilot kindergartens were also opened in the municipalities of Prizren and Gjakova. Secondly, it was decided jointly with the municipal authorities in Drenas, to expand the kindergarten centre Dielli so as to make it a pilot competence centre for peace-oriented kindergarten teaching methodology.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to reach agreement with the MEST for the necessary collaboration on either of these projects. Caritas was, however, able to come to an agreement for collaboration to expand the kindergarten work over a several-year period in 2007-2011, albeit only at local level. The general content of this agreement covered joint annual planning of the kindergarten work and its extension to other villages and schools. Responsibility for the building and infrastructure rests thereby with the municipality, while Caritas has the task of equipping the kindergarten. The recruitment of kindergarten teachers is carried out jointly. Caritas bears responsibility for their basic training and for pedagogical quality assurance. The kindergarten teachers are first employed by Caritas. The municipality pays a progressively larger proportion of the salary costs of the kindergarten teachers until after the third year of training, when it takes them into its employment. The school year planning and funding of teachers' salaries had to be renegotiated for each new school year. These negotiations were always difficult because due to financial difficulties the Ministry of Education repeatedly had to postpone further the introduction of legislation to make

kindergarten attendance compulsory. The kindergarten work had therefore to be financed by the communities themselves, which led to considerable difficulties due to the lack of financial resources. Despite these difficulties, it was possible to develop the collaboration with the municipality of Drenas further. By the end of the school year 2012/2013, Caritas had been able to set up 19 kindergarten centres in Drenas, in which a total of 535 children experienced qualified teaching in 28 classes.

In order to secure long-term and sustainable operation of the Dielli centre, Caritas and IPF sought the cooperation of both the Ministry of Education and the University of Pristina. However, as a precondition for cooperation the Ministry of Education recommended Caritas first of all to have the training accredited in Kosovo. The University accompanied the accreditation process, but remained passive. For more details concerning the accreditation difficulties see chap. 7.13.

Since the Drenas municipality was very interested in the development of the centre of competence, and there was also a need for kindergarten classes and for the training of more kindergarten teachers, Caritas decided to carry out jointly with the municipality a complete renovation of the Dielli centre. In 2013, Caritas, in collaboration with the German company KUKUK, also set up a modern playground there. There is particular praise for the quality and atmosphere of the centre in the external evaluations of Rosmarie Lausselet 2011.



Fig.20: Children exhibit their artistic creation talents in front of the Dielli centre.

5.1.3.2 Preschools in the Municipalities of Gjakova and Prizren

As a result of the positive evaluation of the pilot kindergarten programme in Drenas, Caritas decided in 2006 to extend the kindergarten programme to two other communities. The focus of the preschool projects in Prizren and Gjakova is on the integration of Roma children into primary school.

In Prizren however, Caritas, together with the Roma partner organization 'Initiative 6' and the municipality, had to search for a long time to find a suitable room for a pilot kindergarten. Finally, in 2007, the municipality made a building available in the Mati Logareci district. Caritas was asked to renovate the building and furnish it for the kindergarten. In 2008, Caritas was able to set up a kindergarten in a further building. This means that two kindergarten centres with eight classes and annually 150 to 200 children are now supported. These kindergarten centres, called *mollekuqet* (ladybird), have since contributed to the inter-ethnic cooperation through the participation of children with different ethnic backgrounds (Albanians, Bosnians, Turks and Roma) in the preschool projects. In addition, the teaching team is also composed of Albanian and Roma teachers. A three-year

collaboration agreement was signed with the Municipality of Prizren, similar to the agreement in Drenas. At the 2010 elections, however, there was a political change and this brought with it new school coordinators. These showed little more interest either in the work of the kindergartens or their funding. The kindergarten work remained optional, and the municipality set other financial priorities. This meant that the project could not be further extended in the municipality. Currently, even the continuation of the multi-ethnic model kindergarten Mollekuqet is being questioned.

Since Caritas had gained some useful experience from its integration work with Roma that it had begun in Prizren in 2005, it was decided in 2006 to assist in the Roma integration work in Gjakova. The top priority here was the Roma community of Ali Ibra, which lives in a slum next to a municipal rubbish dump. In collaboration with the municipality and the Roma community, Caritas was able to set up a kindergarten in this settlement's social centre. In this kindergarten, since 2006, two kindergarten classes with some 40 Roma children have been cared for. The children will also be accompanied and supported by another charity project in the integration into the Albanian primary schools in the town.

The experience gained with preschool facilities in Prizren and Gjakova have meanwhile fully confirmed that a preschool facilitates the integration of children in general and Roma children in particular. "Roma Ashkali and Egyptian children have now registered good results at the school as they are integrated into society through the cooperation with the other children." ²¹ These Roma children were ready and able to begin primary school full of confidence, having grasped their opportunity in preschool to become familiarised there with the complex learning forms that are common in primary school.

5.1.3.3 Extension of the Preschool Programme

Although the quality of the Caritas basic and CPD training for the kindergarten teachers is rated very positively by the authorities, teachers, parents and external evaluators alike, Caritas has not been able to gain official approval in Kosovo for the trained teachers to receive confirmation of this by being

²¹ Hysni Elshani NGO Iniciativa internal report at the end of the first school year 09.06.2009

awarded the national diploma qualification (regarding the difficulties with this issue,

see chap. 7.1.3 Accreditation). Since 2012, the MEST requires that all kindergarten teachers must have officially recognized final qualifications. Otherwise, it cannot take over the paying of their salaries. Since then, Caritas has made efforts to ensure that the teachers shall nevertheless receive a recognized diploma and long-term employment, but as of September 2013 these efforts had been unsuccessful. Despite this, with a few exceptions all trained teachers have continued to work part-time without payment of wages. Finding itself in this situation, in order to make further use of the acquired professional skills, Caritas decided on a new project approach. Since 2012, Caritas has been working jointly with other communities and schools, provided that following conditions are met: that an appropriate request be made to Caritas; the infrastructure be provided; and the salaries of kindergarten teachers be taken over. If these conditions are fulfilled, Caritas sets up the kindergarten centres and takes over the training of the teachers. Based on this model, Caritas was able in 2012 to sign a new collaboration agreement with the municipality of Rahovec, and in 2013 with the municipalities of Gjilan and Malisheva. Twelve kindergartens were set up and teacher training was begun in the communities. Currently, negotiations are also being conducted with other municipalities.

Thus, since the year 2002, the Caritas kindergarten programme has evolved from being a pilot project to becoming a significant pedagogical programme. In the school year 2013/2014, 1155 children were enrolled in Caritas kindergartens.

5.2 Chechnya

5.2.1 Background and Origins

Two war periods lasting several years each (1994-1996 and 1999-2009) took a lot out of the people in this Russian republic in the North Caucasus. When the project began in 2006, many children in the rural region around Grozny were growing up in very poor circumstances. During the two wars, many children had been orphaned or had lost one of their parents and therefore acted frightened and jumpy. In addition, in many cases children displayed obvious physical and mental development gaps or disabilities. At the time the

project started, in rural areas of Chechnya there were very few preschool facilities.

5.2.2 Motives

The good experience gained from the preschool approach in Kosovo prompted Caritas to expand the 'Step by Step' kindergarten programme (ISSA) that is run by Caritas Czech Republic with the support of UNICEF and the Save the Children Fund. In Chechnya, play-based or action-based (enactive level) learning was pushed aside in favour of the image and symbol levels. Therefore, the children did more work sitting at tables and were busier with formal tasks. It was found that due to the severity of negative stress and traumata of the children, the implementation of this programme in the various activity centres did not bring the desired results. Consequently, the health-fostering pedagogical approach developed in Kosovo was adapted to suit Chechen circumstances. This enabled not only the complex learning to be reinforced and parallel school subjects to be avoided, but also, symptoms of stress and traumata in the children were reduced, which in turn contributes to a healthy learning biography of the children under care.

5.2.3 Development of Preschool Pedagogy in Chechnya

In contrast to Kosovo, Chechnya has very strict curriculum requirements, which results in a standard school-type institutionalisation of the early childhood upbringing. Similarly, an early childhood education concept must also take into account the fact that Russian is the only language spoken in Chechen schools. Although many parents fear a loss of both culture and their own language, they have to respect this fact. A further difficulty is presented by the traumata suffered by the children as a result of their wartime experiences, which often lead to children being unable to speak. In the first year of the Caritas project, to start with, around 80 % of the children remained silent or exhibited either aggressive or extremely introverted behaviour. Thanks to the well-compiled documentation of the experience in Kosovo, it was possible to convince both parents and teachers that the children would not only rediscover their capability of expression and zest for life but also fulfil the curricular requirements. It was also possible to take bilingualism into account. Thus, poems and fairy tales are recited in both languages.

In each of four rural communities, Caritas set up a COBEC kindergarten with a grand total of 16 classes. These are structurally connected to the respective primary school and care annually for 320 children (in each class there are some children with disabilities).

As in Kosovo, the kindergarten equipment, lesson contents and teacher training are coordinated. Eight local teachers were given CPD training to become teacher instructors. They can now pass on their practical experience and theoretical knowledge in the form of regularly organised training courses to other preschool teachers, who work mainly in private day-care facilities. Many of these pedagogical all-day kindergarten workers reach the limits of their pedagogical knowledge when children display increasing resistance to the mere copying of learning material that forms their learning activities there, and are therefore dependent on methodology / didactic assistance.

To foster pedagogical knowledge (in particular methodology / didactic concepts), in 2010, the NGO *Initiativa* was founded. Since then, *Initiativa*, working jointly with trained instructors, has carried out the pedagogical consultation and run CPD training courses at regular intervals.

5.3 Republic of Moldova

5.3.1 Background and Origins

In Moldova, there are many children who for a certain period of time cannot attend regular school. Most of them are children affected by poverty, some of whom suffer from tuberculosis. In addition, there is a small but almost completely forgotten group of small children who grow up in prison with their mothers.

5.3.2 Motives

Caritas supports children who have to spend months in hospital, by providing them with supplementary food. It made sense also to provide pedagogic assistance, especially as children in hospitals are forbidden to have any form of playthings, a practice which denies their souls nourishment.

Since Caritas, in partnership with other donors, had built a “mother-and-child house” in the women's prison in Pruncul near Chişinău, this presented an opportunity also to offer mothers and children pedagogical help.

5.3.3 Development of Preschool Pedagogy in Moldova

Since 2010, two trained pedagogues have been working part-time to care for between 20 and 50 children in the tuberculosis departments of the hospitals in Chişinău and Bălţi. In the mother-and-child house of the prison in Pruncul, ten places are reserved for mothers with children, and in the burns treatment section of the Chişinău Children's Hospital there are 20 beds and outpatient treatment therapy available for children.

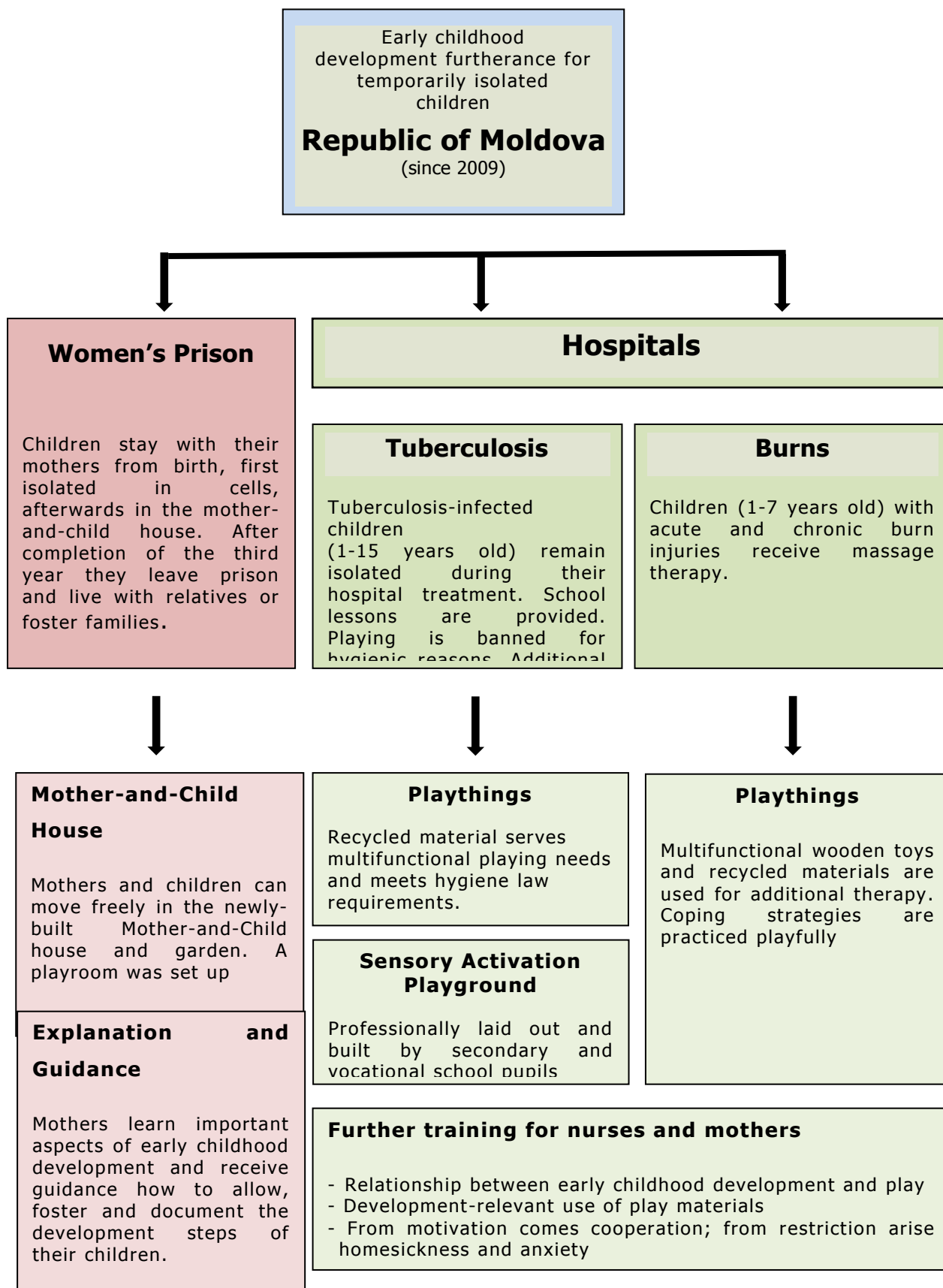


Fig.21: Caritas Programmes in the Republic of Moldova

5.3.3.1 Tuberculosis Clinics in Chişinău and Bălţi

In the tuberculosis hospital of Chişinău 2009, all playthings were banned because they did not meet the strict disinfection criteria. Because this led to the children being under-occupied, they often became frustrated and aggressive, especially those who had to spend months in the clinic. This caused them to be scolded, mostly either by being hit or promised sweets if they would behave. This tactic was also used in the administering of medicines. Many children had to be held down in order for medicine to be administered to them. The nurses admitted candidly that they look the other way if they see children busy doing something “forbidden”. Their task as nurses, they said, was merely to ensure that the children received medical care. The children, however, always managed to fool the nurses by hoarding play materials. The result was that in the hospital a parallel system developed that served no purpose, either for the staff or for the children. The very young children, who were not allowed to hold anything at all in their hands, were given no stimulus whatsoever (e.g. through a mobile sculpture) and were not taken into the nurses’ arms to enable them to experience regular physical contact. The nurses were forbidden to pick them up because of the risk of infection. Accordingly, the children did not respond to stimuli as children normally should. In addition, children from the age of three were given standard school lessons (every day, they had to copy numbers and letters into handed-out exercise books), something which many children, screaming, refused to do. A way had to be found to re-stimulate their natural motivation need, which is established through play. Thanks to a variety of pedagogical experiences with recycled materials and wooden toys in Kosovo and Chechnya, the health authorities were able to be shown that these toys could be disinfected regularly in a way that complied with regulations, or even simply discarded after use. In this way, it was possible to eliminate the parallel system, and correspondingly re-stimulate the children’s motivation need.

Examples of possible measures from the tuberculosis clinics:

- The little children were given PET bottles filled with seeds. Also, they were able to handcraft their own mobile sculptures and hang them over their beds.
- It was observed how older children helped the younger ones. By giving the older children a positive feedback, this help can be made use of and reinforced.
- Thanks to special carpeting, playing on the floor was made permissible.
- While small children practiced building games with empty medicine boxes, the older children played with wooden blocks and PET bottle caps.
- Role play was introduced, and was enhanced by the children.
- Fairy tales were adapted to the children's actual situations (loneliness, homesickness, illness). In this way, discussion of these topics was stimulated and the children had a chance to say something about themselves.
- Since the medicines are administered rather rhythmically, to match this rhythm a synchronised ritual was created and performed that figuratively communicated to the children the feeling that they were little "heroes".
- Sensory activities were made available in the clinic and its attached garden and this too gave the children stimulation. In addition, a sensory activation playground was set up to accommodate the children's urge to move about.
- Painting was done using various materials other than paint, such as PET bottle caps, string, and sand, and ways were sought to make it possible for those children to paint too, who, for example, could not hold a paint brush.
- Each child was given his own play-box (a shoe box, on which the child then depicted its own pattern) with their very own PET bottle doll.

- Every child knows “Tubercle’s Journey” and is thus aware of their illness. Previously, the word tuberculosis was taboo and was regarded as being more like an evil spectre than a defined, curable disease.

In addition, when the one-to-fifteen-year-old tuberculosis patients were given the chance to go outside regularly and play in the open air for some time in a sensory activation playground, this too had a positive effect on the children’s health; indeed, this is a recognised health improvement measure in tuberculosis cases. After playing outdoors, children also eat, sleep and digest better and it is also easier for their bodies to absorb medication.²²

In 2011 Caritas extended the activities to cover a second tuberculosis clinic in Bălți. In the autumn of 2013, when the Bălți TB clinic was renovated by Caritas and other NGOs, the children there were also provided with a games room and a sensory activation playground.



Fig.22: A little girl helps another child in the clinic to get dressed

²² Feedback from questionnaires to doctors, nurses and parents, 2012

Alongside regular pedagogical work with children in hospital, educators actively provide advice and instructions, an activity which takes place in the hospital jointly with nurses and kitchen and cleaning staff. So that all those involved can better recognize the children's various age-dependent needs, the instruction sessions convey to the participants the general aspects of children's development furtherance. This not only simplifies for the hospital workers the task of dealing with the children under their care, but also improves the children's healing process. Furthermore, new rules have been introduced for dealing with sweets. Rather than sweets being given to children as an educational measure solely to reward good behaviour, they are now handed out to all children every day.

In the context of a hospital stay, it must be pointed out that children not only have the right to play, but they also derive positive pedagogical benefits from doing so. At the same time, the fact must be noted that the children affected have to ingest powerful drugs and have memory problems, which render their fulfilment of the curricular requirements considerably more difficult. In this respect, it is important to continue the explanatory work.



Fig.23: Children in hospital play with matchboxes

5.3.3.2 In the Pruncul Women's Prison

The situation in Pruncul prison is particularly precarious both for small children and their mothers. Mothers are allowed to keep their children with them until they reach the age of three. From then on, the child is not allowed to continue its life in prison. The temporary horizon of coexistence between mother and child often affects the mothers' behaviour, leading them to commit actions which unintentionally have negative consequences for the child's development. Mothers constantly carry their children around with them in the cell so that they shall on no account let go of them. In many cases, the mothers spend their whole day in front of the television without talking with their children. This prevents the children from learning their mother's mouth movements and body language or, at the most, makes it only partially possible.

Opened in 2008, the mother-and-child house allows mothers and children to move about freely within the house and its small strip of garden. A playroom was set up, and the mothers are regularly taught in practical instruction modules how they can actively support their children in their physical, emotional and cognitive development, with particular emphasis being placed on the importance of physical activity in infancy. Through these measures, the children no longer have to grow up in a cramped cell, and have the opportunity to experience a daily routine that is as child appropriate as possible. Insofar as it is possible within this context, during their time in Pruncul prison the children have a chance to develop in a way appropriate to their age.

5.3.3.3 In the Burns Ward of the Main Clinic for Children in Chişinău

The only treatment which children are offered following the acute phase of a burn injury is massage. Children are in their growth process however, so their burned skin stretches and causes them additional pain. This makes the children afraid of movement and massage. The children's pain sensation can be alleviated prior to a massage by letting them play, for example, with wooden building blocks, or by painting, which results in the children's limbs (especially of those suffering from burn-injured hands) already being somewhat relaxed at the start of the massage. In addition, play activities immediately before a therapy session provide the children with a distraction

so that they are no longer anxiously awaiting the approaching therapy. Furthermore, play trains the children's coping strategies, because while playing they are also learning to make optimum use of their hands. The children are given wooden building blocks in various sizes, without any further explanation as to how they might be used. If afterwards the children are relaxed and anxiety-free for their massage, then the effect is evidently better. The parents of children with burns are also taught how the "play therapy" can be continued with recycled materials at home, so that the healing process can proceed more quickly. Play and therapeutic measures can be unified, since they effortlessly support and stimulate each other without much effort.

5.3.4 Summary

In the Republic of Moldova, the law denies children who have missed school through sickness the right to re-join their old classes, unless they take and pass all the exams. This imposes an immense pressure on the school children and so they become victims of structural violence.

When the little children are allowed to use recycled playthings, the satisfaction that they so derive can be perceived immediately, since they can now finally live out their natural motivation urge in an accepted way. This situation has been recognised by medical students who since recently have been visiting the TB clinic and the children's burns ward as part of their training, and comprehend and discuss how important play is for sick children.

It will be clear from the examples given, that the work in emergency pedagogy is carried out in a manner which complies with rules of child development that are tailored primarily to the actual needs of the children.

Another advancement in Moldova is that play is now used therapeutically in the project-assisted hospitals, where, as is often the case in conflict zones, only very limited therapy possibilities are available for children.

5.4 Effects of the Caritas Projects: Before – After

A successful Caritas early childhood furtherance programme is able to adapt itself to the children's prevailing life and school lesson situations. In addition, the school lessons, being consistently oriented to practical needs, prove their worth in the child's further education. Much content can be taught in a short time, and participants are continuously enabled to seek solutions independently in their everyday lives.

5.4.1 Kosovo

At the beginning of the Caritas early childhood education project in Kosovo, life and preschool conditions for children of kindergarten age were extremely difficult due to the post-war situation. However, thanks to a health-promoting pedagogy, children were noticeably able to overcome their traumata or severe stress. This is an important prerequisite for a healthy learning biography in the future and for active prevention of violence.

In Kosovo, the project also stimulated some local toy production. The firm Agron Krasniqi in Drenas produces furniture and toys also for privately sponsored new facilities. This approach was highly esteemed by the education authority, as it stimulated a new kind of responsibility among the teaching staff. In their training, aspiring teachers have to learn to deal both with the varying quality of play materials and their production costs. This creates an emotional relationship to the play materials. In addition, the teacher bears responsibility both for the care of play materials and their supplementation with recycled materials.

In addition to play materials, an extensive collection was also compiled of new poems, stories and songs, which are passed on in the teachers training courses.

5.4.2 Chechnya

Through intensive monitoring of children's behaviour in a post-war situation, it was possible in Chechnya to develop a pedagogy which enables fulfilment of a relatively rigid, state-prescribed curriculum.

The playthings from Kosovo served as models, which were then culturally adapted in Chechnya and also produced locally there.

Parallel to the children's gardening work, the pedagogical work was constantly gone into in ever more depth, then augmented and passed on in the CPD training courses.

As in Kosovo, in Chechnya too the living conditions of the post-war generation have changed. However, in order that children shall be able to pursue a successful learning biography, the primary task is still to relieve them of negative stress of a structural nature.

5.4.3 Republic of Moldova

In Moldova, the children play with play material that must meet special needs. This has increased the authorities' awareness for children with temporary learning difficulties. Furthermore, it has been possible to achieve a situation in which the health-promoting significance of play and the associated return of the children's satisfaction derived from this play activity is now recognised.

Nowadays, more attention is being paid to children growing up in prison with their mothers. Through the mediation of the laws of early childhood development, the mothers' feeling of responsibility has been strengthened and small children can now develop much better.



Fig.24: Self-made racing car

5.5 5.5 Parent Involvement is fostered in all Project Countries

In crisis zones, the motivating learning environment in the project kindergartens often stands in stark contrast to the principle of upbringing as perceived by schools and parents, which mainly operates according to the principle of punishment and reward. Motivated learning fosters the child's interest, supports its curiosity and creates a space in which it not only gains experience in an age-appropriate context but also further develops these learning achievements at home. The latter activity is particularly stimulated in

the kindergarten by recycled materials and everyday objects, which are easy to find and in particular do not additionally disadvantage poverty-affected children. Since recycled materials acquire a positive value in preschool, the notion is taken up and used by the children outside the school environment. The handling of recycled materials was discussed as part of the parents' involvement, and the parents were made aware of this topic. Discussion of the protection of natural resources, waste recycling and keeping public spaces clean, contributes to the children's environmental education.

In Chechnya and Kosovo, parents' evenings are seldom held. One innovation was to make parents' evenings or even courses available at each school, at which not only administrative information but also background information about children's development and the importance of play was imparted.

In the case of the Roma kindergartens, parents evenings were carried out during the first phase in the form of individual home visits, which only in later years became conventional-style parents evenings. At these meetings it is explained and conveyed to the parents with practical examples, what and how their children learn in Caritas early childhood education projects.

6. Implementation Challenges

6.1 Problem Analysis

With its comprehensive approach to early childhood education, Caritas has taken on a pioneering function in all project areas. Nevertheless, the introduction of the reform-oriented early childhood advancement in Kosovo was met with various difficulties, for example in the pedagogical field (concerning the difficulties in the political sphere, see chap. 6.2). Particularly noteworthy are the following problem areas:

- Limited funds for the preschool sector (so that there are only privately run kindergartens and day structures); no training of kindergarten teachers;
- Specific difficulties with traumatized and negative stress-exposed children and the requirement to integrate these children into primary school;
- Lack of resources and insufficient quality of teaching in the state schools, lack of teacher training, emphasis on formal knowledge, frontal teaching, too-large classes, lack of teaching materials in primary school;
- Lack of parental education;
- Lack of lessons to meet special education support needs.

Because the intent of the Caritas early childhood development education system is to put care and quality into lessons design, its pedagogy is tailored to meet the actual needs and demands of the children. This approach, however, is not always fully understood by the authorities, as in their understanding, play could not be counted as learning, and the curricular requirements of the students must enjoy a clear priority. Also, no special value is attached to the Caritas CPD training courses. Early childhood upbringing is often viewed as an activity that every woman can perform without any special training. A nationally recognized training has been available in Kosovo since 2006, but only in the form of a university degree.

At the universities, the individual core subjects and teaching expertise are taught by different, highly specialized university professors; and there, practical aspects, such as, for example, how curriculum-relevant subject matter with corresponding methodology / didactic aspects can contribute adequately to child development, are scarcely taught in a manner that

interlinks all the respective facets. This view is confirmed both by students and the MEST. Furthermore, in the early childhood upbringing, learning is still equated with the traditional formal learning style. This results in children being forced, at as early an age as possible, simply to carry out the operation of copying learning material into a preset school book. This means that already at preschool the learning objectives stated in the curriculum are conveyed to the children in the form of separate lesson units. In the early years of the projects, this approach was also in line with the expectations of the parents, who wanted to ensure that their children could already read and write before entering primary school. This leads to a differentiation being made between useful learning on the one hand and play as a pure pastime without significant educational benefits on the other.

Complex and process-oriented learning during early childhood upbringing is only gradually gaining recognition in the countries mentioned. Only since 2011 has a change been taking place. Especially in Chechnya, primary school principals reported that children who had attended a Caritas preschool project displayed fewer memory problems attributable to traumata and negative stress than children without Caritas background²³ The pedagogical work of Caritas in all countries, has been given positive evaluation both by external experts and the appropriate authorities.²⁴ In addition, UNICEF pointed out as recently as 2011 the importance of preschool upbringing for later life (UNICEF 2011a). Now, in crisis zones too, there is increasing perception of the values of early learning support and that early childhood education projects can strengthen the educational opportunities of children and result in long-term returns on investments made in early childhood. “Because early childhood education is particularly effective for disadvantaged children, they need fewer special education support measures, there is less need for them to repeat classes and they also display less delinquent behaviour.” (Stamm 2009) This knowledge carries even greater weight in crisis zones because during their preschool period the children can succeed in overcoming traumata and severe stress; for “the first years of life are the most critical period for the development of a child” (Stamm 2009).

²³ This statement is based on interviews with primary teachers. It is also scientifically recognized that traumata and negative stress cause memory problems. See J. Bauer: *The Memory of the Body*, Munich, Piper Verlag, 2006

²⁴ See evaluations in Kosovo, 2006, 2010 2011,2013; oral statements by Chechnya Educational Authority 2011, 2012, 2013

6.2 Political Challenges²⁵

With its work, Caritas is constantly in a position between the actual problems of teachers in practice and the ever-changing requirements of the authorities, which further complicate the Caritas early childhood education projects. Consequently, the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was not able to be observed by the side of the authorities (Kosovo and Chechnya).

After the war in 1999, Kosovo had to rebuild its state structures from scratch. In the upbringing field for children, the backlog of reforms was particularly pronounced. There was a lack not only of funding, but also of qualified teachers and CPD training for them. Only since 2006 has Kosovo had preschool legislation with modern curricula, in the design of which Caritas was able to collaborate. Since 2010, there has been a new academic training course available for kindergarten teachers, but this, however, is still very much aligned to formal skills. Furthermore, a lack of resources prevents the introduction of compulsory preschool lessons. Only about 50% of children have access to an early childhood development programme. According to MEST planning, obligatory preschool education should be in place by 2015. Finally, there are uncertainties regarding the responsibilities of national and local authorities on the one side and the responsibilities of primary school principals on the other.

Within this field of tension, Caritas is committed to better development prospects for children, especially in rural areas and for minorities. For the kindergartens, Caritas has also trained women from rural areas as kindergarten teachers. The three-years of on-the-job basic training that the kindergarten teachers have received enables them to work as independent and qualified professionals. (Selby, Evaluation, 2006) At the institutional level, only in the municipality of Drenas did Caritas succeed in developing a good working relationship to the extent that it became possible to extend the kindergarten work by 2013 over almost the entire municipality. The municipality of Drenas also supported the practical, on-the-job basic training of kindergarten teachers, and in collaboration with Caritas created a kindergarten centre of competence, which now has six groups of children in kindergarten in premises that can be used

²⁵ Political challenges pertaining to Kosovo – G.Meili

multifunctionally to work with parents, and also for educational conferences, and the basic and CPD training of kindergarten teachers. By organising the training sessions to take place regularly on Saturdays, they were able to be held in appropriately equipped kindergarten rooms, which provided useful support for the trainee teachers' practical exercise tasks.

In contrast, the Ministry of Education could not be convinced to provide active support to this educational approach. It demanded that Caritas obtain official accreditation for its education methods. Regarding the difficulties of accreditation, see chap. 7.1.3.

The lack of support from the Ministry - in the implementation of the accreditation decisions; in the case of diploma recognition; in the funding of teacher salaries; and especially in the repeatedly-delayed introduction of obligatory preschool education – remains a challenge for Caritas. Without the recognition of qualifications and without securing funding for Caritas-trained kindergarten teachers, the sustainability of the basic training of teachers is not ensured.

In Chechnya too, compulsory kindergarten has not yet been introduced. Therefore, just as in Kosovo, there is a lack of state kindergartens and trained preschool teachers.

For the Republic of Moldova, this form of emergency pedagogical work is new territory. The educational support through Caritas is not carried out as a teaching assignment at a school, but as support in hospitals and prisons, in which small children in precarious development and learning situations are provided with pedagogical support adequate to the situation. In most cases, no public budget exists for this type of pedagogical work. This fact alone highlights the need to make emergency aid funds available for educational work with young children in difficult situations.



Fig.25:Expression is tried out in multifaceted ways: here, cutting geometric shapes from paper.

6.3 Summary

In all three project countries Caritas Switzerland has taken on a pioneering role in the establishment of sustained early childhood education. Caritas acts situation-dependently and puts the actual needs of the children in the foreground. The fulfilment of curricular requirements by the children also is always taken into account. Within those societies racked by crises, which in the case of Kosovo and Chechnya were wars, Caritas was confronted with multifaceted difficulties. the work was negatively affected on the one hand, by unstable political conditions; and on the other, by a lack of awareness of the importance of high-quality early childhood upbringing. This lack of awareness was reflected in inadequate financial support from the statutory education budget. Particularly hard hit are those children growing up in rural regions and belonging to minorities, such as the Roma children in Kosovo. In this way, new structural violence is growing because disadvantaged children are rarely able to participate in a private early development programme.

7. Basic and CPD Training of Early Childhood Education Specialists

7.1 Modular CPD Training for Preschool Teachers

The practice-oriented continuing professional development (CPD) training conducted in the project countries for professionals in early childhood upbringing is tailored to suit the actual needs and ages of the children and takes into consideration the customary early childhood upbringing of the respective country.

Over recent years, a general module catalogue was built up, which was re-compiled in each new project area and was designed based on actual needs of children, teachers and parents. The Caritas training modules also present and bring out the history of reform pedagogy, to make clear that a parallel system should not be fostered and established within the child upbringing system of the state. On the contrary, a state curriculum should be supported, in which teaching content and objectives are characterised by knowledge of child development, as well as by formal and informal instructional design (methodology / didactic). In addition, health-nurturing aspects of early childhood pedagogy should be taken into account.

In the early years, the modules were accompanied by practical research within the context of a master's degree thesis. (Rutishauser Ramm 2004-2007) Each of the various modules was conveyed with the aid of practical exercises. Depending on the respective time frame, the modules were either expanded or reduced to an absolute minimum. Whereas in Kosovo the modules were taught on Saturdays, Chechen teachers are instructed twice a year for three consecutive days for each module. The teachers are mentored during their lesson practice, and care is taken that the module content and the practical work shall stimulate each other and be interconnected.

The course module instruction sessions are frequently visited by university graduates, as methodology / didactic skills are rarely taught in the universities and the trainee professional newcomers cannot therefore apply their previously acquired knowledge to the currently actual teaching and living conditions of the children. It is a central problem of university education that there is a lack of complex learning, which cannot be experienced and learned there because the core subjects at universities are taught separately; but it is nevertheless of great importance in preschool education. Even the students

themselves have been influenced by having been compelled to learn subjects separately; so much so that they also claim the right to teach the children in this way. From the Caritas viewpoint, however, the lessons at preschool should be redesigned to the extent that priority should be given not to the learning of separate subjects, but to enabling the children to execute development and cognition steps independently. However, this reform-pedagogical inspired approach must be practiced by the university graduates themselves, so that they can understand its benefits and then verify it later on in their preparation and implementation of lessons.

Since practical training also includes observation elements, this enables the teachers to take into account changes in the child's behaviour with each new school year. For example, in Chechnya immediately after the war, the power of expression of 80% of the children who entered kindergarten was severely impaired. The following years saw a notable reduction in this number. Each year, the teachers document and discuss changes in the children's behaviour. The aim in proceeding in this way is to be as objective as possible with aspects that lead to decision-making as to how preschools, play utensils and materials, and pedagogical implementation of lesson content, can contribute to achieving the curricular goals.

Using practical exercises, the participants of the course modules go through the different stages of a child's development and experience complex learning; for children link experiences together, which stimulates and strengthens their synapses and neural pathways (Eliot 2001). Because: "only when we are experiencing rightly, do we learn. Only when learning is involved in a deep, diversely lived-through event does the latter become an experience which remains; one that lets us continue researching." (Arnold 2011, 15) This process can be experienced similarly in the CPD training of adults, because "learning is only effective when all systems in the body and in the brain that are for learning are used in the same way as in the child." (Arnold 2011, 34) Depending on the needs of the participating pedagogues, successive practical modules that go into ever more depth can always be appended, e.g. for music and rhythm, handicrafts, language and theatre, mathematical exercises, nature observation, and so on. This procedure allows an effective deepening of the skills of the teachers, who are also invited to introduce their own experiences.

Module - Topics – Selection Catalogue for Practical Continuing Professional Development

Selection of topics depends on participant’s individual choice and time frame and is compiled on the spot. All modules relate to current, cultural, everyday and

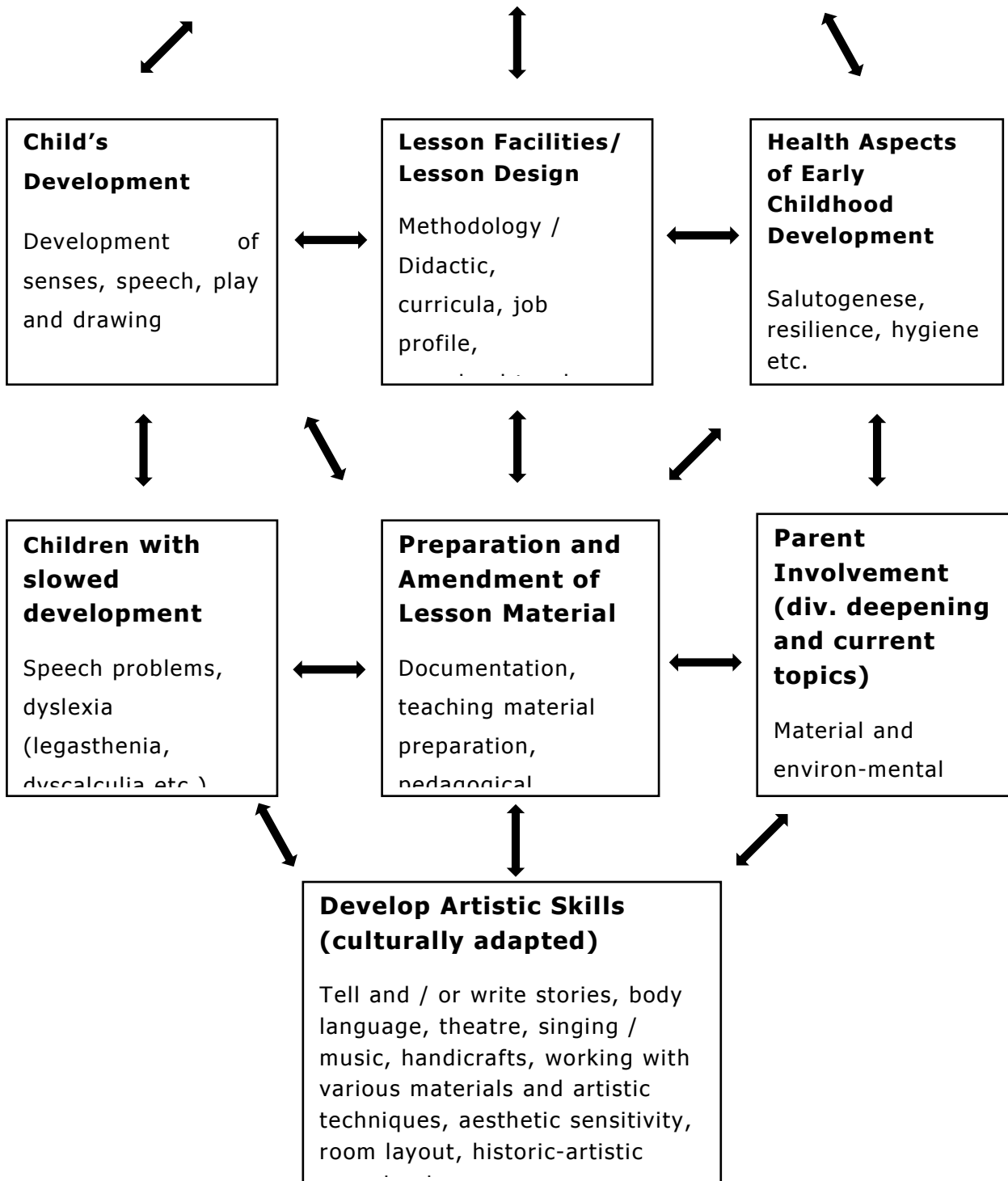


Fig.26: Module Catalogue

In the modules it can be seen that a simple structure and many practical examples stimulate the self-activity and the cognitive faculties of both the trainees and the instructors. In addition, care is taken in the modular training that in a pedagogical discussion (reflection period) subsequent to the practical exercises in the course, the participants find, analogously to the experience gained, answers to their questions on current pedagogical issues.

In the courses, work is done in groups, so that participants take over either the role of observing teachers or of a child busied with some activity or other. Body language and improvisation are likewise used as a methodology to convey the creativity and spontaneity necessary for pedagogues. Through this approach, students learn to assess their own skills better and to develop beyond themselves.

In Kosovo, eleven summer academies were also conducted, initially with ten participants, but since then the number has risen to 160. These two-week continuing professional development courses in the summer holidays in Drenas and Prizren were also open to teaching personnel who had not participated in regular training courses. These intensive training sessions also called in skilled specialists from Switzerland and Germany, who thereby made an important voluntary contribution. Thus, alongside complementary theoretical inputs (e.g. special-needs teaching, health promotion topics and environmental issues), the participants were also able to practice artistic exercises, music, theatre, clowning and body work over a longer period of time, and so gain new experiences.

7.1.1 Lesson Methodology during Teacher Training

With the modules, “integrated lesson subjects” were created (for example, the practice of the morning circle, the introduction of play, or singing) that are not taught at university. These various task allocations can be used for shaping a poem, a story, or some handicraft task. These processes are jointly designed and tested. In most cases, out of all this a good poem or a good song then crystallizes, which is further practiced and integrated with movements. In this way, the teacher groups develop their own individual, culturally adapted class lessons material, because there are seldom any textbooks available, especially in rural areas. This observation practice (accompanied by diary entries) is a good way to learn how to observe development steps

independently. In addition, observation of nature is helpful for obtaining tangible illustrative material and for acquiring a feeling for teaching topics such as are required by the curricula of the various learning areas (motor skills, mankind and the environment, language, music, mathematics and art). The training of these six skills was added to the subject "sensory education". Also, the same subject areas are dealt with from different points of view, so as to go even more in-depth in the practical methodology and practice. This practicing element is important because in areas of conflict, neither in school nor in university education are artistic skills continuously practiced (e.g. music, forms and shapes (both artistic and in handicraft), theatre games, nature observation). This has a negative effect on lessons in early childhood pedagogy, in which artistic skills play an important role. These skills also foster individualized lesson design, which in a city looks different from that in a rural area, because the respective children experience different everyday lives. Live observation is also important for children to recognize themselves in their surroundings and get to know the area in depth. For example, children independently discover new animals and plants in their environment, which can then be portrayed accurately in the classroom in a story. (Weber 2011) Thus, during early childhood upbringing, the relationship with nature is consciously strengthened through training of the senses; to create a counterweight to the "Disney childhood" conveyed by the media, in which animals are experienced merely as anthropomorphised caricatures rather than animals with their individuality and characteristics.²⁶ In areas of conflict, this colourful, beautiful "Disney World" is still widespread, because children - or so it was often expressed - who have experienced so much unloveliness should at least be able to spend some time in a perfect world when they are in a kindergarten. That is why no pictures of real animals, plants or landscapes were ever hung up. This example illustrates just what a field of tension early childhood education finds itself in in crisis areas.

The observation exercises show the participants initial approaches from practice research and enable teachers to begin to document children's development stages. For this reason, forms were prepared for recording the observation of children. Forms like this are new to crisis zones. They are used mainly in Kosovo, but were rejected in Chechnya due to lack of time. The

²⁶ Rutishauser Ramm, *Naturerziehung in Krisengebieten*, 2013, unpublished manuscript

systematic preparation of lessons in planning them per year, week and day, in which a review is documented, was adopted in a slightly modified form by the Kosovo authorities. This planning work is also practiced in the continuing professional development courses, with the inclusion of curricular objectives. The experts' report on the occasion of the accreditation of the training programme (see chap. 7.1.3) describes the teaching methodology as follows: "Teacher training takes place not so much in lecture form but more in the seminar form in tutorial groups. The training programme places great emphasis on learning by doing; it does not expect its students merely to listen to lectures on the subject of teaching but experts encourage the students to experiment with and try out classroom practice. In turn this approach makes the theory driving the practice both more accessible and memorable." (Sarbach 2010, 3)²⁷

Caritas also wanted deliberately to avoid designing an early childhood development programme that can be implemented like a recipe. On the contrary: for the Caritas approach, a context-dependent methodology was chosen, which opens up ways to further development, for both children and pedagogues.

In the three project areas, a team of skilled instructors has been built up which works with the approval of the ministries.

7.1.2 Challenges and Qualities of Modular CPD

Since the participants return to everyday school between the course modules, they bring back specific questions to the subsequent modules. The going into depth in the further methodology / didactic practice begins with the awakened interest of the participants. Self-interest in educational issues is an important factor, particularly in crisis zones. Based on wide experience with pedagogues, it has been found that when one of them begins employment somewhere, they often expect to enter a work environment in which there are clear, pre-defined structures and a requirements profile that has to be met. In the first module, therefore, instead of day structures being specified, only experiences are presented. The reason for doing this is that when designing a daily structure, it is necessary to take into account existing predicaments or

²⁷ Sarbach S., Expert Report for the attention of the Accreditation Authority in Kosovo 25.5.2010

dilemmas (e.g. temporal, spatial or age-connected). In addition, it is important to make use of the participants' experience. Participants feel that the others too are interested in their current problems, and this not only gives them strength but is also reflected in the quality of their teaching. Thus an understanding slowly dawns, that individual methodology / didactic actions can be pedagogically justified. In this way, peace-fostering upbringing is used both for the education of the children and during the training of their teachers. (Rutishauser Ramm 2011).

This method of approach makes clear how the discussion about early childhood upbringing (e.g. the establishment of a kindergarten) stands in conjunction with curricular requirements. The form of teaching used, which is related to the complex teaching form, is active and self-creative, and is based on the actual, specific status quo of knowledge of the course participants. Since knowledge that is acquired through practical exercises stimulates discussion, it is possible to carry out the same module both with university students and with mothers in prisons. These mothers said after their seminar that this was the first time that they had really been taken seriously. The mothers were aware also of their great responsibility for their tiny infants and young children. The result of this is that, thanks to this knowledge, they now take on the responsibility for their small children and let them crawl about, without this responsibility having to be checked daily.

The lesson principle of the modular continuing professional development described above is applied to all projects, but it is, however, refined and adapted to harmonise with country- and user-specific viewpoints.

In addition, an attempt is made to integrate into the modular training courses the latest scientific findings. This is particularly important, because in recent years, brain research has enabled verification of important findings made in the field of early childhood upbringing. Because getting access to scientific literature in regions racked by crises is often a very laborious task, despite increasingly available Internet access, the continuing professional development courses are also one way to gain information about the latest scientific developments and possibilities.

Since attempts are made to check and compare all findings against one's own observations, this causes pedagogically valuable discussions to arise which in practical terms can lead to changes in the lessons. In Chechnya, for instance,

module-based observations led to a change being made in the preset weekly schedule. This change was then tested in Kosovo also, after which it was adjudged practicable. The change meant that freestyle painting was positioned in the day after the construction play, since the latter stimulates the understanding of form, and in the child's development both activities inspire each other. This practically investigated experience in Chechnya was thus made available to other projects. Such an approach can be seen as a quality characteristic of the modules, since theory and practice are directly linked together and always stay up to date.

Even though the modules convey only the most important theory of early childhood upbringing, experience has shown that from year to year, the same modules can be looked at from different points of view, because teachers, due to the additional experience that they had gained, were able to ask more in-depth and more broadly-reaching questions regarding the theoretical principles. During such in-depth courses, however, the practical exercises are no longer predetermined, but are suggested and designed as lesson material content by the participants themselves. The in-depth knowledge and additional skills gained by the teachers enables them later to become mentors or teacher instructors themselves and pass on their knowledge. In addition, this approach lets teachers see which individual talents they have (e.g. handicrafts) and how these skills can benefit other teachers. This approach is particularly valuable in crisis zones, since skills can be honed through self-responsible reflection and with little financial outlay.

7.1.3 Accreditation of the Basic and CPD Training Programme in Kosovo²⁸

In Kosovo, Caritas has been trying since 2007 to obtain official recognition of the successfully tested basic training approach in Drenas. For the Caritas approach method to be officially accredited as standard practice, both the MEST and Pristina University need to be convinced of this pedagogy. On the recommendation of MEST, from 2008 to 2010 Caritas compiled and documented a comprehensive accreditation application, which was approved in June 2010 by the Kosovan Accreditation Council and recommended for

²⁸ Contributed by Geri Meili, see footnote 20

implementation in collaboration with the University of Pristina. Unfortunately, the university showed neither interest nor willingness to work jointly with Caritas and IPF for the implementation of this recommendation. Also, Caritas could not depend on the support of either the MEST or the Accreditation Council. For a whole year, the negotiations were unsuccessful. In 2011, Caritas decided not to pursue this perspective further. Although the University of Pristina and IPF did sign an MoU, to date this has not yet been implemented.

Due to this lack of implementation, in 2013 Caritas had to deal with two challenges. First of all, without implementation, there can be no accreditation process for the recognition of the Bachelor degrees in Kosovo. Thus, the jobs of the preschool teachers trained by Caritas cannot be considered secure. Secondly, the long-term management and use of the Dielli Centre as in the concept is not yet clear because the planned academic training work is not possible without the cooperation of the University of Pristina.

7.1.4 CPD in Chechnya

At the beginning of the project, for reasons of security, the continuing professional development could not be held in Chechnya itself, so it was transferred to a spa hotel in the neighbouring republic of Kabardino-Balkaria and carried out each time there in the form of a three-day session. This permitted the course to be conducted twice per year in a stress-free environment. Here, because the Chechen teachers could be trained only for two three-day sessions per year, the project leader adopted many of the artistic exercises which had been introduced by specialists in the summer academies in Kosovo. It turned out, however, that thanks to the mentoring and great self-activity of the teachers, the quality of teaching steadily improved. Only after the individual teachers had completed four years of successful teaching practice, were they trained in other modules to become teacher instructors themselves. In the school year 2011/2012, 280 teachers absolved a module that was taught in six one-day seminars during the school year. In the school year 2012/2013, the CPD was continued in a second module. Since this approach has proven itself, the first module is also being taught again.

7.1.5 CPD in the Republic of Moldova

In Moldova, at the beginning of the project, courses for nurses and teachers were held in the hospital. However, this process turned out to be difficult, because all the proposals were dismissed either with the comment “This is forbidden” or “We have to do that like this”. The result was that twice a year during the monitoring, half-day courses took place, consisting of a mix of the passing on of innovative knowledge and joint searches for solutions to current problems.

The continuous pedagogical work was not begun until Caritas took on two part-time teachers through a partner organization. And even then, it was not until after Caritas had organized a round table meeting, at which, for the first time, members of the education and the health authorities were sitting at the same table, that the need for continuing professional development gained recognition.

Pedagogical training was also conducted in the Pruncul women's prison. The mothers were shown how important movement is for young children. At the same, it was possible to discuss the mothers' own needs. Whereas the children's health depends on their being released from almost uninterrupted hugging, the mothers for their part want to hold their children as close as possible for every minute of the time that they are with them.

Both in the prison and in the hospital for treatment of burns, project work is done with small groups in short units and care is always taken that the course content be really up-to-date. With few exceptions, the participants of the training courses provided very positive feedback.



Fig.27: Nurses put into practice what they have learned: hand washing and play

7.2 Successes and Difficulties in the Formal Recognition Process

Caritas activities begin with the involvement of local education authorities, and are then developed further. In general, it can be said that the Caritas continuing professional development programmes are very welcome in the project countries, but in the final analysis, however, they are only partially recognized. Thanks to the comprehensive concept for early childhood pedagogy (facilities, training of teachers, mentored lessons, part-renovation of the kindergarten, setting up of a playground) and affiliation to the state schools, it was possible continuously to put increasing emphasis on early childhood upbringing. The result of this can be seen in the fact that Kosovo and Chechnya have both now made it state policy that preschool should be accepted as a compulsory school level.²⁹ In each subsequent year, however, the implementation of this objective in both countries has been further postponed. Lack of budget resources in the respective countries is a major reason why to this day the preschools are run mainly as private schools.

²⁹ According to the latest strategy in Kosovo: (http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/documents/KESP_2011_2016.pdf) all children should be granted a preschool place by 2016. In Chechnya, this statement was made on the occasion of an interview of the author with the education authorities in Grozny in 2012 and confirmed by the NGO initiative.

7.2.1 Formal Recognition of CPD in Kosovo

In Kosovo, the Caritas approach was welcomed. Caritas participated in the steering group for early childhood education issues (including with UNICEF, Save the Children and the Kosovo Education Center), a working group the proposals of which were accepted by the MEST in 2006 and incorporated into a first curriculum for early childhood education. Since the project approach leans very comprehensively and indeed is very focused on quality, and goes into even more depth in each passing year, it was subjected to local limitations from the start. Following the accreditation of the programme in 2010, some of the teachers were in some cases even (individually, depending on the municipality) entered on the official list of teachers, despite the fact that in Kosovo the recognition of diplomas issued must be officially validated. In Kosovo, the University of Pristina has been training the first preschool pedagogues since 2006, and some of the latter even completed an trainee period with those teachers already practicing, whose diploma was not yet recognized. Thus the paradoxical situation arose that the teachers trained by Caritas - of whom the first ones educated already have 11 years teaching experience - do not have a diploma that is officially recognized in Kosovo.

Despite these circumstances, a Caritas Switzerland module is now available for officially listed teachers who are intending to teach in preschools. This CPD training was desired by the MEST and an application submitted for the licencing process. Since Caritas Switzerland does not provide all participants of the modular CPD training with a kindergarten facility, model kindergartens will be set up in the regions where the CPD training for preschool teachers is available. The preschool teachers are called upon to attend these CPD training sessions by the local education authorities. Thus, the education authorities of the communities that make an agreement with Caritas for support, independently provide more kindergartens with play materials and equipment. In this way, the responsibility for the kindergarten facility is increasingly transferred to the education authorities. This means that Caritas thus reinforces the training and relies on the education authorities' self-activity to include costs of infrastructure and teaching material in the education budget.

7.2.2 Formal Recognition of CPD in Chechnya

Unlike in Kosovo, the aim in Chechnya was always to strengthen the four preschools and parallel to that, make available a continuing professional development programme. The preschools are viewed benevolently by the authorities. Therefore, it has been possible to work out an MoU with the education authorities that safeguards the sustainability of the facilities. In addition, the training in Chechnya by the NGO Initiativa will safeguard trained instructors.



Fig.28: Social get-together at lunch in Chechnya

7.2.3 Formal Recognition of CPD in Moldova

For Caritas, it counts as a success that development-related needs of children with temporary learning difficulties, living in temporarily difficult circumstances, are now being addressed by the Moldovan authorities. Caritas has therefore taken on the important lobbying job of being these children's spokesman, because previously their voice has in fact hardly been heard.

It cannot be expected in future that emergency pedagogues in Moldova will be paid by the state, since the Government does not have budget items to

allocate local resources for the fostering of early childhood pedagogical support in hospitals. Moreover, it is difficult to predict the future development of emergency pedagogy in the Republic of Moldova, should the emergency relief funds for the two part-time employees be phased out.

7.3 Preparation of Teaching Material

As will have become clear by now, in the course of the different versions, teaching material was created increasingly at the various levels (for preschool, concepts for training modules, documentation for instructors etc.) and this work has intensified over the years. The continuous, process-oriented development of this material contributes to the stimulation of the self-activity of the teams bearing the respective responsibility (local project manager, instructors for continuing professional development, mentors, teachers). This approach was deliberately constructed in this way so as not to undermine individual and cultural aspects and in order to follow the principles of sustainable education.

For the CPD course modules, a brief working manual was created (text and drawings) that captures the essentials. This enables instructors and trainee teachers to develop their own teaching material, incorporating ideas and suggestions derived from the modules and in accordance with their own respective needs. A deliberate effort was made, not to create a mere reference work, but to ensure that the observation capabilities of the teaching staff be so stimulated, that they are then able to 'read' the children's needs based on their development. This observational approach is practiced and is supported by photo material. The courses are designed as though the group of children addressed by them were present in the classroom. It often happens that teachers take their own (natural) children to the continuing professional development courses.

In addition, modules have been developed for future instructors and mentors. These instructors learn to understand how they themselves learn as adults, and on their self-initiative develop modules of their own that they also need to modify individually, depending on time constraints and clientele. Furthermore, practical exercises are carried out and evaluated and future mentors are prepared specifically for their task.

7.4 Lessons are Mentored

The lessons are mentored regularly: in other words, an experienced teacher, in the function of mentor, visits the lessons of less experienced colleagues to monitor and support them with methodology / didactic instructions, which are immediately carried out. Thus, not only can the reaction of the children be taken into account but also the teacher's methodology / didactic learning process can be supported. (Rutishauser Ramm 2010). In addition, the interplay can be balanced out between the needs of the child (the basic needs and requirements of which, depending on the project, are different), of the early childhood facility and of the curriculum. One of the major goals of mentoring is to examine the interaction of these factors. The reason for this is that even the best curriculum with instructions to integrate the play aspect into that of learning is useless if no adequate facility with suitable playthings is available. This form of mentoring likewise has pioneering character, since it differs from the usual inspection system. Although the mentor system has proven itself, it is not certain whether the ministries will provide the mentors with sustained support.

So that the respective teaching situations can be jointly discussed and mutual solutions found to problems, helpful hints for mentoring were drawn up which also touch upon the actual observations made during the lessons. This mentoring process corresponds to coaching and must not be equated with a conventional lesson inspection. This form of mentoring was therefore new for most teachers and was highly appreciated both in Kosovo and in Chechnya. The teachers even wanted to participate in the mentoring because by doing so, they lost their fear of making mistakes and therefore of being dismissed from their job.

7.5 Teaching Material for Teachers and Parents

Neither in Kosovo nor Chechnya was there adequate teaching material to hand. Therefore, the teachers used self-initiative to become active themselves, and collected culturally handed-down teaching material (poems, songs, finger plays and verses, games, fairy tales) from the elderly or created their own teaching material according to the respective topics. Within the Caritas facilities in the respective country, this teaching material was passed on, optimized and kept in a folder at each facility for use as teaching material.

This approach has proven successful in Chechnya as well. Thanks to having learned storytelling and poetry writing during their CPD training, teachers were less inhibited when they were confronted with the need to compose perfect poems. In many cases, the rhymes were given a final polish with the help of the children.

This process-oriented approach also proved itself in the Republic of Moldova, where, among other things, a story about tuberculosis has been tried out jointly with the children and proven to be pedagogically useful. Meanwhile, "Tubercle's Journey" has been compiled as a little booklet.

In crisis zones and in times of crisis, active attention must also be paid to the involvement of parents. The problem here is that there is a lack of parenting classes and adequate brochures. In Moldova, a brochure was compiled for parents, in which play with recycled materials is gone into in more depth and the link with the child's development laws is explained. (Caritas brochures 2012)

7.6 Summary

In crisis zones, the recognition of the teachers' diplomas in preschool education is often a risk factor. This risk is particularly high if the training is started before conventional universities make this course of study available. Regardless of the aforementioned issues, the Caritas CPD courses help to improve the teaching quality of early childhood education and thus to increase educational opportunities for children. However, there still remains a risk for the teachers trained by Caritas that they may remain recognized only for as long as it takes the universities themselves to educate teachers for early childhood upbringing, who will then perhaps displace teachers who have completed only the Caritas training courses. Teachers who live and teach in rural areas would be particularly hard hit by this approach, because a higher education is not feasible for them due to the often long distances to the universities and the high cost of such training.

In the Republic of Moldova, the emergency pedagogically oriented training is relevant for hospital staff and wherever possible for parents who are involved regularly in the normal form of early childhood upbringing.

8. Multiplier Effect: the Example of Successful Facilities

From the aforementioned, matched components (basic and CPD training, curriculum, methodology / didactic, setting up preschool facilities), the following products have emerged, which are fully compatible with one another and can be accordingly modified both culturally or to suit individual needs:

- Modular, practice-oriented CPD programme;
- Recommendations for the setting up of early childhood education facilities;
- Implementation of a health-fostering educational programme integrated with the curriculum, in particular advisory instructions on methodology / didactic for implementing development-promoting complex learning.

Over the past twelve years, a field-proven, development-oriented and health-promoting pedagogy has been developed which focuses on crisis situations. The benefit of the Caritas early childhood education approach for later academic and personal development of children has been repeatedly confirmed by project evaluations in the years 2006, 2011 and 2012. Children who undergo a situation-specific early childhood education learn to process both negative stress and traumata, and learn strategies which they can then apply to cope with new, potentially harmful, stressful situations; for the solution of a traumatic reaction “sets up a natural resistance to stress.” (Levine, Kline 2004, 149) Two exemplary statements of this from a Kosovar grandfather and a father, respectively, confirm the positive developments of their children: “A grandfather referred to his shy and retiring, somewhat isolated, grandchild who, through attending the Dielli preschool, had become much more sociable and able to engage with others. She now surprised her family by coming home with something new every day. A father at Dielli referred to his rather aggressive and pugnacious daughter who had learned to handle her frustration and disagreements with others non-aggressively.” (Caritas Evaluation 2006) From Chechnya too, comes positive feedback to the Caritas early childhood education approach: “Before COBEC preschool, my son Rahim was a closed child, with poor communication skills and shy. Now Rahim is a very active boy. He helps his mates in class, his behaviour is more free and confident.” (Caritas Evaluation 2013) The mother of another child describes the development of her son as follows: “Kerim's character was very restless. He could not speak before entering COBEC preschool. In COBEC he has learned to speak, he likes to draw dinosaurs,

likes to watch cartoons, and likes his grandmother more than his grandfather, because she spends more time with him.” (Caritas Evaluation 2013, interview enabled by NGO Iniciativa).

Further examples also came up in connection with the project monitoring and these have also been documented by Caritas during evaluations and discussions with teachers who had continued the supervision of children that had previously attended a Caritas preschool. The surveys show beyond doubt that the children grasped the advantage of their opportunity during their preschool years to work on and overcome traumata or negative stress. This can also be evidenced by their drawings, which are documented for purposes of individual development observation. At the end of the preschool period, when the children enter their new phase of life, they and their parents are given the drawings.

In addition, the trained pedagogues became self-reliant and developed into independent instructors. The feedback from their self-designed courses has been positive, as the following statement indicates: “All participants express their grateful thanks for the multi-faceted day of the training course and immediately fix a date with the local instructors for the next meeting.”³⁰

8.1 Recommendations

The building up of differing early childhood education facilities (day-schools, child-carers, preschools) is also successful when initially just one centre is established, with a core team that can then go on to set up, independently, more early childhood education centres or kindergartens. In this way, special circumstances, such as the living conditions of Roma children in Kosovo, can be taken into account.

The early childhood education approach of Caritas Switzerland is suitable for:

- practical CPD training in crisis zones for teachers who cannot attend university, and for small NGOs that operate local preschool facilities in different countries and are forced to depend on being able to be trained practically in early childhood education;
- the economic, ecological and sustainable solution of equipment and material issues;

³⁰ Masina E., Internal Report of Caritas Switzerland , 2013

- for the integration of early childhood upbringing in newly built schools (e.g. after a war or a natural disaster) by interlinking facilities, CPD of teachers and the accompanying mentoring process;
- providing emergency continued schooling for children who find themselves in specific, temporary circumstances (hospital, prison, refugee camps or refugee homes and other temporary facilities);
- for DRR as part of early childhood upbringing and in processing post-emergency situations, especially after a natural disaster.

The last point deserves special attention, because every second child on Earth is affected by a natural disaster. (UNICEF 2011) It is especially important to prepare children for such events during early childhood upbringing, as indicated by the DRR approach. This endeavour is now supported by the UNICEF curriculum (Selby, Kagawa 2013). From this point of view, emergency pedagogy also fulfils this forward-looking role, and is applied immediately after a sudden event and in times of overwhelming negative stress, providing health-promoting education that helps affected children to process and overcome their traumatic experiences.

This new specialist field is particularly suitable for growth in countries that are regularly exposed to the danger of natural disasters. (Kagawa 2005) Thus there is here a great potential for sustained upbringing approaches, including DRR and emergency pedagogical, to alleviate or even prevent prolonged suffering.

8.2 Lobbying for the Interests of Children, Women and Disadvantaged Groups

Caritas Switzerland takes lobbying for early childhood education seriously. In the project areas, all disadvantaged children, such as those in rural areas and children from minority groups are, without exception, taken into account. In terms of location and project targeting, collaboration with local authorities begins already in the project planning phase. After the wars in Kosovo and Chechnya, training was given in particular to women from rural areas and from minorities, who had neither the opportunity to attend a university, nor job prospects. Through the work of Caritas in the project regions, the potentials of women were strengthened and fostered in many cases. Besides furthering the advancement of women and their right to education, which is contained in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations

and in Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Caritas, with its early childhood education projects, promotes primarily the right of children to education³¹, which is recognised in Article 4 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child³². Through the work of Caritas, the rights of children both to education and health are strengthened and consistently afforded support. Caritas has also intensified lobbying for children with temporary learning difficulties.

The Caritas early childhood upbringing projects are long-term, which enables the work to be gone into sustainably and in depth, in the interest of the children. Actual issues and needs of teachers, parents and children are presented and explained in dialogue with authorities. The focus is always on the needs of the children. This collaboration with the authorities, has already led to some mutually agreed solutions being found which, although they still rarely correspond to the aspired-for optimum, do nevertheless meet the needs of the current situation.

8.3 Summary

All matching components of early childhood education approach of Caritas are designed so that they can be used as multipliers in many, varied crisis situations. At the same time, serious lobbying is undertaken by using official contacts to do justice to the current needs of children, teachers and parents. In addition, the Caritas early childhood education approach enables children who are in danger of dropping out of the current education flow or have already done so, to reconnect, and then, having recovered, enter primary school.

³¹ UN Doc., A/RES/217, 1948, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 26; U.N. Doc., N6316, 1966,

³² International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Art. 13
UN Doc., A/RES/44/25, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 4

9. Conclusions

The 11 years of experience of Caritas Switzerland in crisis zones show that early childhood education can not only provide children who have been traumatized, physically impaired or left exposed to negative stress with self-assurance and a new esteem for their own bodies, but can also re-invigorate their motivation urge and, by doing so, catch up on their impaired development. Based on general development principles, supportive methodology / didactic tools are used that are adapted to suit the actual situation. The Caritas early childhood furtherance method harmonises with reform pedagogy and is sustainable. Equipping of the kindergarten and teaching structure are coordinated and culturally adapted. In addition, ways are sought to fulfil curricular requirements. Practice-oriented basic and CPD training enables training course participants to combine methodology / didactic teaching practice with the theoretical course contents. Thus, they are able both to harmonize the development of the child, and comply with curricular demands. Furthermore, the Caritas preschool projects are supported by a mentoring process in the respective facility, so that training and everyday work can be linked harmoniously together and the process-related practical ability increase. Early childhood pedagogy in crisis zones requires a flexible approach which makes it possible to respond to the current needs of the children, since different developmental deficits provide guidance for a lesson design that enables the children both to practice coping strategies and build up individual resilience. The emergency pedagogy starts out from the children's actual life situations, takes into account their skills and tries to stimulate and further each child in the best possible way. In early childhood, peace and health promotion conjoin and complement each other. This is also taken into consideration in the basic and CPD training, which is why a motivating style of lessons was chosen similar to that of early childhood education, in which the main focus is on complex and process-oriented learning. The modular design is thus adaptable and can be multiplied to suit multi-faceted, varied crisis situations. The courses take into consideration and deal with, interdisciplinary fields of topic.

The Caritas approach is networked, both in the early childhood furtherance in preschool education and in the basic and CPD training, and is designed for quality. Nevertheless, in the implementation of Caritas educational projects in the respective project areas, some problems with the authorities did arise.

The feedbacks from primary school teachers and parents statements confirm, however, that the efforts of Caritas in the project areas occupy a pioneering role in early childhood education. In the Republic of Moldova, the first task was to obtain approval for the children in hospitals to be able to play and thus legally enshrine play activities as such. This undertaking was successful thanks to the use of recycled materials. As a result, play is now being used both for learning and providing therapeutic support in children's development. Good health is also fostered by providing playgrounds, which activate sensory stimulations that support the children's joy of movement. Thus, in all project countries the Caritas approach has contributed to early childhood education being seen as a relevant field of expertise. Although the training programme was accredited in Kosovo, problems persist regarding the accreditation of diplomas. Despite this, the trained teachers are continuing their work in their kindergartens, since their long-standing experience is undisputed.

After having put the main focus first of all on the efforts to realize the UNO Millennium Development Goal to provide all children with a school place by 2015, an increasing comprehensive awareness for early childhood education in crisis zones is now coming to the fore. Preparations are already under way for the new, farsighted goal that in the future will make early childhood education possible for all the children of this world. With its innovative emergency pedagogical approach, Caritas has anticipated what is summarized in the UNESCO Declaration on "Education for Sustainable Development" (2009). In the respective countries, lobby work on behalf of small children was taken up and official contacts were used to draw attention and recognition to the current needs of children, teachers and parents and bring about improvements. This movement for betterment has now spread further afield to cover not only lessons and facilities, training and parent involvement, but, depending on the situation, also supplementary food, and renovation work on school and hospital infrastructures. Moreover, the playgrounds that have been built to activate sensory stimulations are helping to improve the children's zest for life and movement.

Now it is important to apply the Caritas early childhood education approach in other crisis situations so that even more practical experience can be gained and further researched. These findings can be fed back to the teachers to be discussed and reflected upon. It is pleasing to note that in recent years, the importance of early childhood education has also been confirmed in crisis

zones. For that reason too, it will play an increasingly important role in the future: it can be of special benefit to those children who are affected by structural violence, war and natural disasters.

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11. Photo Credits

All photos were taken within the various Caritas projects. The children pictured are proud of their work and were happy to be photographed.

12. Author's Note

The author of the study, Mrs. Beatrice Rutishauser Ramm, has been initiating and managing educational development projects in crisis zones for more than ten years. She is a qualified primary school teacher with many years of professional experience in Swiss schools and has completed a Master's programme in "Global Education". For Caritas Switzerland, she co-developed the kindergarten projects in Kosovo and Chechnya and is accompanying the emergency educational programme in Moldova.

Beatrice Rutishauser's task in Kosovo was to develop the Caritas kindergarten pedagogical concept, provide technical support and guidance for the local teaching staff, develop the curriculum and also measures to help the latter to gain public status.

In Chechnya, the foremost tasks were the training of local pedagogues who work in the Caritas kindergartens, and providing this teaching staff with practical support and advice. Caritas kindergartens were from the very beginning *de facto* public facilities within the state structure, but because of the existing Russian training curriculum, it was decided not to integrate the Caritas approach into the official training curriculum, instead confining teacher instruction to CPD of teachers, mentors and instructors.

In turn, in the Republic of Moldova, although it had originally been intended for Mrs. Rutishauser to be employed there primarily in the function of pedagogical leader of the small local team, her first task in the country was to respond to an emergency need to implement a pedagogical intervention.

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