

Second Report by Jana Mengeu

First of all I have to say, that I am very happy most of the time and that I love working with the children of Aikiyam. They are so utterly open and sincere that sometimes I can't believe what is happening in that very moment. I really feel that the love I give them is mirrored back with an even bigger power. Also, the teacher with whom I am working with did really help me to get into teaching. But not only do I enjoy working with him, which means planning, preparing and eventually teaching, I also feel that I found somebody trustful to talk to. Whether it may be topics related to India as a whole and its politics, things like casts, poverty and arranged marriages I can speak frankly with him. Not only this, also about the situation of the children and their families.

Concerning harsh treatment or even beating, I sadly have to report, that this does not only occur in most of the homes of the children, what would be sad enough but is not for me to change at the very moment. But there is beating happening in Aikiyam itself, a school which particularly describes itself as a non-beating school. So of course, this really has been saddening and discouraging me in the last few months, even more in times when there was a fresh incident brought to me. There I have to add, that I have never seen a teacher beating with my own eyes, but it has been brought to me through a large diversity of people in whose judgement I trust and what has been confirmed and admitted by one of the main persons doing it himself as well. One can understand with the preceded paragraph that this really was pushing down my mood more than once and it has been a topic often discussed with friends and in the meetings of weltwärts. Another topic bothering me a lot is the regularly happening miscommunication in Aikiyam.

Instead of addressing people directly it has been happening more than once that one came about to know something from another person. This in combination with the missing appreciation which I felt quite often also has pushed down my mood quite some times because it has hindered me from doing projects on my

own. This is, as far as I came to know about, caused by the missing faith in my skills because I am not a trained teacher myself, even though I have gotten some compliment for things I actually was able to do myself. Here I also have to mention that I have been able to do a bit of Integral Art with my own students of 4th grade about the 5 senses which they seemed to enjoy as much as I did. It was so nice to hear in the end, that they liked it and some even shared that they actually learned something. Besides I also helped a student of mine, who is of the special needs kind, in maths, more precisely the topics of tables, where I could see quite a bit of improvement and increasing faith of him in me.

Throughout all these difficulties the friends that I gained here were indispensable to me. A lot of them are from my own weltwärts group and not only do I enjoy their company to share problems but also to just talk casually, going out in Auroville or even to do some little trips to the surroundings. Besides meeting them I also found great joy in participating in a theatre workshop as well as doing art in a kind of a group, both on a weekly basis. Doing theatre, as well as some other things like bio danza in the beginning, helped me gaining more self-confidence and being able to focus on things I want in my life. Additionally, art is not only a great fun for me but also serves as a preparation for my studies, as I want to become an English and Arts teacher.

As I mentioned above I did some travelling already but now I also have two bigger travels booked to see more of India. Both I am going to do with some of my co-volunteers. One of the two will be more in the south of India and the second, bigger one, is going to be in the north of India and I am very much looking forward to both of them.

To conclude I would say that, even though there are a lot of things that make me uncomfortable in Aikiyam, it is because of the children of my class, my co teacher, my friends and the whole lot of activities I can do here in Auroville that I still feel at home.