



World Social Initiative Fórum Japan 2018

“Knowing Self through Others: Empathy, a Path to a Just and Fraternal Society”

March 29th to April 2nd



Event Report

The World Social Initiative Forum in Japan had as its main objective the reflection and celebration of multiculturalism, diversity and the future of humanity. People from all over the world with an interest in social issues, education, youth, politics, economics and arts worked together, discussed and explored key points to help build bridges across nations, cultures, beliefs and worldviews. The Forum included lectures from leaders in the fields of education, social service and anthroposophy, as well as offered group activities to explore the meaning of true connection and communion and what they can contribute to our society today. Together, we explored what the future of education could become if we begin to understand what empathy means, as a tool to build new communities of respect, acceptance, and integration of our differences.

About the WSIF (World Social Initiative Forum)

WSIF has been an initiative of Ute Craemer and Truus Geraets since 2001, which today has the support of the Goetheanum run by the Section of Social Sciences since 2011. The WSIF connects and strengthens social initiatives that are based on anthroposophy with the aim of reducing poverty and marginality and minimize social inequality in communities around the world.

Below is the program for the World Social Initiative Forum:



WORLD SOCIAL INITIATIVE FORUM 2018

Knowing Self Through Others:
Empathy, a Path towards a Just and Fraternal Society

Pre-forum event
March 29–30
Minobusan University (Yamanashi-ken)

Main Forum event
March 31–April 2
National CHUO Youth Friendship Centre
(Gotemba, Shizuoka-ken)



World Social Initiative Forum 2018

"社会イニシアティブ"世界フォーラム
 他者を通じて自分を知る：
 エンパシー、公正と友愛の社会への道

3/29-30 Pre-Event
 プレ・イベント / 身延山大学 山梨県

3/31-4/2 Main Event
 メイン・イベント / 国立中央青少年交流の家 御殿場

PRE-FORUM EVENT	Minobusan University (Yamanashi-ken)	
	March 29 (Thu.)	March 30 (Fri.)
10:00 – 12:00	Social activities to get to know each other	Dialogue between Buddhism and Anthroposophy Tankyo Iwama (Shofukuji Temple) / Ute Craemer (Brazil)
13:00 – 13:30	Eurythmy presentation with Buddhist prayer Rieko Hata (Japan)	Empathy, Anthroposophy and Societal Threefolding
13:30 – 14:00	Welcome message from Buddhism Naoto Yoshikawa / Katsuhiro Sasuga (Tokai University)	in the Age of Artificial Intelligence Nicanor Perlas (The Philippines)
14:00 – 14:45	The World Social Initiative Forum and Projects Worldwide Joan Sleigh (Goetheanum)	Closing remarks
15:15 – 15:45	Long term voluntary service as biographical event Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners (Germany)	
15:45 – 17:00	Experiences of Monte Azul and trauma pedagogy Ute Craemer / Nelson Avella (Brazil)	
18:00 – 20:00	Dinner and World Cafe Reflection, Q&A, cultural exchange	

MAIN FORUM EVENT

National CHUO Youth Friendship Centre (Gotemba, Shizuoka-ken)

	March 31 (Sat.)	April 1 (Sun.)	April 2 (Mon.)
8:00 – 9:00		Coming together in small groups Re-living key questions from the first day	
9:00 – 10:30		Workshops A Variety of activities to choose from, taking place in 8-10 rooms simultaneously	Coming together in small groups Re-living key questions from the second day
10:30 – 12:00	Bamboo art workshop Akio Hizume (Japan)	Workshops B Variety of activities to choose from, taking place in 8-10 rooms simultaneously	Creative encounters presentation A space to share creative responses to the Forum's questions and discoveries
13:00 – 14:30	Ice-break and orientation sessions	Challenges in Community Life: Social organizations from around the world	Closing remarks
14:30 – 15:00	Welcome remarks Joan Sleight / Ute Craemer	Transforming is possible! Monte Azul, a shanty town turned into an international cultural center Ute Craemer (Brazil)	
15:00 – 16:00	Challenges in Education: Multi-cultural schools in South Africa and the need to develop Empathy Joan Sleight (South Africa / Goetheanum)		
16:30 – 18:00	Diversity in education is for the future of humanity! Exemplar efforts in Japan and in the world Daisuke Onuki (Tokai University / CRI) Panel discussion with leaders of Waldorf, alternative and multicultural schools	Empathy, artificial intelligence and the future of humanity Nicanor Perlas (The Philippines)	
19:00 – 20:30	Creative encounters 1	Creative encounters 2	

EXAMPLES OF WORKSHOPS

Deep discussion: Transforming is possible!
Ute Craemer

Growing self-awareness through social exercises in encounter
Joan Sleight

Capoeira and Anthroposophy: How inequality can positively transform the world
Nelson Avella

Mapamundi: A reflection on cultural diversity, global current affairs and the future
Juan Facundo Bottero / Andrea de la Cruz

Developing social altruism through a lifstory
Vanusa Coutinho / Regina Wrasse

Phenomena-based science to understand the world around us
Henry Saphir

Social painting
Yumiko Abe

The invisible relations are revealed!
Eurythmy in social life
Michitaka Seki

Bamboo music and geometrical art
Akio Hizume / Natsuki Matsumoto

Art of bodily expression
Moka Tsunoda / Yuko Urakami

Biodanza: Dance of life
Yoshiko Uchida / Sanae Onuki

Biography work through body movements: What do you do in your 20s?
Yuko Hibara / Kaori Akimoto

Old tales of Japan: Puppeteering and sprachgestaltung
Sakae Kekuguchi

Trauma Care: Form drawing / massage / body exercises for the recovery of the Self
Mayumi Takeuchi / Yuka Kobayashi / Fumiko Miyata / TENKO

The Forum

On Thursday 28/04, we had a special program for those participants who were arriving from different parts of the world to the pre-forum. The day was of meetings between people and the Japanese culture, since for many this was the first time in Japan. The event's organization included in the program very significant visits for a better understanding of the culture, and later, a better understanding on the subjects developed in some lectures, for example, Anthroposophy and Buddhism.



(Arrival of the first participants to the Pre-Forum)



(Visit to the Museum of antique dolls)



(Visit to the Buddhist temple)

On the next day the Forum officially began. About 150 people participated in the first moment, and 300 people in the main Forum. Ten countries were represented there, among them; Brazil, Switzerland, Germany, South Africa, South Korea, Argentina, Philippines and others. Many people from other states and cities of Japan came to participate, too. These were representatives of social organizations and initiatives, independent people with an interest in the international social movement, people who came to meet other people, teachers and students as well as many young people. Many people were there mainly because of the presence of Monte Azul Community Association and its founder, Ute Craemer. We have heard this from many people, in fact, at this meeting, we became aware of dimension and impact of Monte Azul Community Association work's to the world.

This event was held at the most expected period of the year in Japan, the blossoming of the Sakuras (flower symbol of Japan). They begin to bloom from the southern region and rise to the other regions of the country, this happens in late March to early April, when there is a rise in temperature. The flowering of Sakura is very short, from the appearance until fall is about two weeks, and the wind or rain can shorten even more this period. The blossoming of the sakura is so important to the Japanese people that it even has a special prediction of the beginning of the blossoming and peak by newsletters, broadcast on TV, newspapers and the internet.

The enchantment and enthusiasm of the people were at their peak. The weather was sunny, and photographers from all over the world came to record this breathtaking moment of nature.



The first day of Forum, also included a visit to the temple of Minobusan. Minobusan, or Mount Minobu, lies by the Fuji River and is a tourist region known for the large number of Buddhist temples, very green and secular trees. The view inspires meditation, portraying a bit of Buddhist history in Japan. Every year many people go to the Minobusan to make pilgrimage as the mountain is considered a sacred place.



(Forum participants in front of Minobusan Buddhist Temple)



("Ciranda" in front of the Temple)

The lectures

The lectures brought reflection and provoked movement. Current issues involving anthroposophy, education and social subjects have been explained in the most varied fields and aspects. See below the list of main themes developed:

- The World Social Initiative Forum (WSIF) and its projects worldwide
- International volunteer program (Freunde Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiner)
- Experiences of Monte Azul / Transforming is possible!
- Buddhism and Anthroposophy
- Empathy, anthroposophy and artificial intelligence
- Multicultural schools in South Africa
- Diversity in education for the future of humanity

All the themes won attention and interest from everyone, even the youngest who in this forum seemed to me as the meeting's soul. To show that despite industrial progress and the digital age, it was never so necessary to look at social issues in the world, was the point of impact in this event. As counterpart, people responded to the call by showing that the quest for empathy and for the certainty that

transformation is still possible is big. What people are looking for nowadays is not visible to the eyes, but something that brings without doubt, breath to the soul.

Monte Azul's participation at the Forum



Ute Craemer e Daisuke Onuki

Once I learned that people's encounters during life are not coincidences, but something well planned and purposeful. Today I believe a lot in this, and I think Ute and Daisuke's encounter is an example of a planned and purposeful meeting. Much has been accomplished by the initiative of this brave woman throughout her career, and many come to learn from her and take her seeds worldwide. Daisuke was one of the first seeds that bore fruit on the other side of the world.

Ute's presence at this meeting was expected and applauded by all. From the oldest to the youngest who were looking for inspiration for their future. Ute brought to Japan the result of her work at the Monte Azul Community Association in Brazil during 40 years. It was presented through the reports of some ex-students who have a very important role within the organization today.



Douglas (Monte Azul's ex-student) telling his story.

Douglas has been at Monte Azul since he was born. His mother (picture on the screen) came to Monte Azul when she was still a child. Douglas grew up in the favela, and always participated of Monte Azul's offered projects as other countless children assisted by Monte Azul in these almost 40 years of work. The difference lies in the choices Douglas made, even with difficulty; studying and acquiring knowledge through the opportunities life gave him was his choices. Through contacts and projects, he had the opportunity to leave Brazil a few times and today he speaks five languages besides his mother tongue. He'd traveled to 10 countries and I'm sure his career is just starting. Today he is an English teacher and interpreter, always engaged in some social organization here in Brazil.



Nelson Avella's presentation (Ute's assistant)

At Nelson's presentation he told us about how he got to Monte Azul two years ago. He spoke of his encounter with anthroposophy and how much it awakened him. He spoke especially about the work of Capoeira, which he is developing with the children from favela, and the importance of its cultural and pedagogical work that gives children opportunities for better choices within the reality they live.



Vanusa Coutinho - Coordinator of international relations telling her biography (Monte Azul's lecture Transforming is Possible!)

And this is me, sharing my story in Monte Azul with people in the forum. My parents were still young when they came to São Paulo, and coincidentally came to live at Monte Azul's favela. They were very poor like all the other residents of that humble place.

When the work at Monte Azul Association started in the favela, my mother who at the time had three small children went to work in one of the kindergartens. And this was how my brothers and I arrived at Monte Azul. We grow up there, learned many things, took the opportunities offered to us, and today we all work so that other children and generations have the same opportunities we had. We are very grateful for the work of Monte Azul in our lives. Today, as coordinator in the international area of Monte Azul I lead the international volunteer program. Through which we receive volunteers, trainees and visitors from all over the world.

My gratitude in the moment of that speech and in that place on the other side of the planet, brought tears of emotion to my eyes, which in a few minutes infected all

those present. Even having a very short time to say so many things, people said that my emotion conveyed far more than the words could say at that moment.



Regina Wrasse – Administrative Manager telling her biography (Monte Azul's lecture Transforming is Possible!)

Regina is a true example of perseverance and ideal for social issues. Different of Douglas and me, she came from a middle-class family and did not live in the favela. But even though she came every day to participate in the projects of Monte Azul since she was a little child. And so she learned to value social work and wanted to help other children to have the same opportunities she had. Today Regina is a great force in favor of social issues here in Monte Azul. At present, her work is focused on health in the fight for human rights of the local population.

A Forum participant told me that different from general organizations presentation and lectures model he was used to, where the speakers bring the attended and graphic numbers, it was the first time he did really absorb the essence of a work that was shown through its results. Ute brought the results in person and that made him believe that "transforming is still possible!"

The workshops

The workshops added movement and interaction to the Forum. And much better than listen and reflect, is to share, ask questions and give opinions. So, current issues and subjects were addressed in smaller groups that allowed the opportunity for participation and interaction of all.

In this case I will tell particularly about the workshop offered by Regina and I, under the theme "Developing social altruism through a life story".



First of all, I want to say that the presence of so many young people (very young) enrolled in our workshop surprised us. For the theme was complex and so we imagined that older people would be more interested in the subject. But to our surprise was not what happened, and in the end most of the participants were elementary school students and high school. Teens and young people who came seeking to understand the true meaning of empathy in their lives. They wanted to understand, they wanted to have an idea of what they could do about empathy in practice. And what came in the course of this reflection in the group surprised us even more.

The exercises followed in a calm way, and we let everyone talk in their time, without haste. So we had to cut some programming dynamics.

The question key was: How to transform life into social development from an ideal?

Objective: To awaken, sensitize and mobilize people for social development and support their practice.

To begin with, we start from something very simple:

- Where do you come from?

- What do you do?
- What brought you here?

These questions led us to find out who those people in front of us were, what they came to do and what they were looking for. It was impressive to see the depth of thoughts and questions of those young people. Everyone wants to do something for humanity; everyone wants to give their share of contribution to change the world. They just need guidance and tools.

In one of the interaction dynamics, there were those who could not interact, or who could not make a single stroke on the white paper. They were left with the task of reflecting and exercising afterwards, calmly. But there were also those who shared extraordinary experiences and thoughts and made beautiful paintings.

At the end, Regina and I finished the workshop very grateful for the result achieved. I particularly reinforced within myself the importance of being able to give young people more tools so they can make their contributions in the world. I left the group with this goal.

Some people in the group still had many questions about our own life story (from Regina and mine) but unfortunately the time was short to get back on this subject.

Other interaction workshops



Capoeira



Bamboo workshop

The “creative encounter”



The idea of the "creative encounter" came when we were looking for something that represented the essence of Monte Azul's work. The person who immediately remembered "the integration day" (Aino Gusewski a volunteer from Germany) could not go to the forum in Japan at the end, but he participated in some preparation meetings. The "creative encounter" or "integration day" as it is called in Monte Azul, aims to integrate. Through a reflection on some suggested theme, followed by artistic, musical or corporal activity that is at the discretion of the group. This activity is held in the Monte Azul Community Association once a month with all employees working together.

The idea was taken to Gotheanum and worked together with the Forum organizing team. The result of this forum activity could not be better. It proves that despite the digital age, and the physical individualization and isolation of people through social networks and the internet, the human being is a social being, who needs the presence of the other to interact. And even with the barrier of the different languages, beliefs and cultures, the interaction in this activity was total.

Closing and Possible actions for the future



On the last day the participants had the opportunity to plan possible actions related to the topic empathy. After listening, reflecting and discussing on topics so important to the future of humanity, what could we do concretely for the other? Or how could we help for an issue that we would like to contribute to improvement? What initiatives can be taken immediately, considering the reality of each one?

These were questions that guided this last encounter. And that in the end showed how deep this forum touched the life of each of those people.

Everyone left with something latent in their hearts. Each one in their own way, wanted to be able to contribute to some initiative, collective or organizational. Here I bring some examples of the group where I participated:

A group of Korean high school girls were very touched by Professor Daisuke Onuki's lecture on "Diversity in Education for the Future of Mankind." They said that they live in a Korean community in Japan and study in a Korean school. Although born in Japan, they do not have much contact with the Japanese, and so speak very little the Japanese language. Their plan of action for the future is to go back to school and create a youth movement with the goal of seeking financial support for the school that receives no support from the Japanese government and therefore risks of closing their doors. They also want to create projects to improve interaction between Japanese and Korean youth. And create a group of volunteers to help the literacy of children who yet cannot read or write.

Two other Japanese girls, about 15 years old, were very impressed with the workshop that talked about accidents and nuclear issues. They said their plan of action is to study hard on these issues, so that accidents like Fukushima, for example, never happen again.

There were also small entrepreneurs who left the Forum with ideas on how to enable people with less resources to access their products.

Therapists who will volunteer once or twice a week.

Many young people willing to take a year of volunteering in Brazil and, etc.

I more than ever come back to Brazil with wishing to be more engaged in the movements of the forum and to multiply its ideals.

Anyway, after this workshop for possible actions, the will to transform is no longer a dream and now takes a step to reality. Small actions have been planned and they can be a flame that lights up through this movement of the Social Forum to change many educational and social issues in the world.

Conclusion and Acknowledgments

When I was invited to participate in this event on the other side of the globe, in a country that I imagined would never be possible for me to be one day, the first thing I thought was what it would be like to meet the Japanese people at close quarters. What would be the reality of that people, their joys and needs. I knew that the customs, culture, and beliefs were very different from those I know, but what intrigued me most was what kind of people I would meet, in the sense of the soul and considering what I knew of Japan through the media.

But despite my worries, I found people like me there. People like the ones I'm used to deal with every day. People with doubts and fears, people with difficulties... Joyful people who wanted to meet other people and share their experiences...

Young people with a great desire to change the world ... People who have suffered from some disaster, and some who have heard of such a social work and came to know what it was about... People who came only because they knew that there would be other people from all over the world ... And many other possibilities of encounters were there too.

Once again I realized that social and human issues are the same around the world, perhaps with another name and treated in other ways, not always better, but with the intention of improvement. Being able to leave my country and be like an example for people who are fighting for better conditions in education, health, culture in various social issues, or just struggling to be accepted in the country where they were born, makes me very happy. Knowing that my life story can inspire others who are looking for hope and strength to believe that transforming is still possible, gives me the assurance that I'm on the right track.

Here in Monte Azul there are many people like me, those who arrived as a child, and who even with difficulties chose to fight and win. Today they are teachers, educators, administrators, coordinators, managers, and they are carrying the organization's work today. And they also want to give others the opportunities they had as children.

Thank you from the heart to those who through financial support made possible our participation in this event.

The results have already begun to appear. One of them is the Mini-Forum that will be held here in Monte Azul on the 24th, 25th and 26th of August. With the presence of Professor Daisuke Onuki and his students from Japan, our foreign volunteers, young people attended by Monte Azul and surroundings, some social organizations, friends and interested. We want with this initiative give young people the space to reflect, question and share their dreams for the future of humanity. After all, the changes we want to see in the future depend on our actions today.

Any difficulty is overcome!

And to overcome any difficulty is necessary:

Overcoming ourselves in the eternal challenge of existing and surviving,

Without ever giving up!

Gypsy proverb

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