

Content

1. **Reports from the countries – “How do we experience this special period with Covid-19 in the past, the presence and the future”**
2. **1st Inclusive Congress in Zürich, Switzerland, from June 2 – 5, 2021
“Moving borders”**

1. **How do we experience this special period with Covid-19 in the past, the presence and the future”**



- **Casa Rozei, Urlati, Romania**

We are a residential centre for adults, most of whom have the common factors of a cognitive impairment and no family support having been in the State institutional system since early childhood. So, when the critical moment of the growing first wave of coronavirus infection affected the country in March and lockdown measures were strictly implemented, we simply retreated into the shell of our community bounds. Perhaps “simply” is not the right word, for lockdown involved changing habits and routines that had been taken for granted and had been a major element in individual wellbeing and security. We, like all the other institutions in the county, had to find our own feet in a new way.

The first week and more was spent in taking measures and establishing cautionary procedures: temperature and health checks for anyone entering the centre, obtaining and using protective gear, setting up an assessment tent with pathways to and from, learning physical distancing, new hygiene routines and so on. The discipline was conscientiously maintained (sometimes it helps to have a director who is also a medic – and an anthroposophic one at that!) but the mood was upbeat. We set up an internal WhatsApp group for staff so that news of new measures, information about the new coronavirus and its effects and internal issues could be shared in real time and openly. Lockdown was total for the first month: staff had to stay on-site for two weeks, one half at a time; the replacement group was tested before returning to work. The two-week rhythm of testing of all staff and residents has been maintained until now.

The challenge was felt by all and the county authority for our domain, the DGASPC (Directia Generala de Asistenta Sociala si Protectia Copilului - General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection), had the good sense to invite us all to meet it



The jury is out!

together. At the end of the first week, all centres were invited to participate in an online “competition” with the theme “**All will be well!**” with presentations about how we were coping through painting, poetry, cooking, drama, etc.

Casa Rozei was asked to select a jury and award the prizes – there were no losers! This cultural event helped create a necessary climate of awareness for each other between the centres, which was helpful for later when the virus began to penetrate and sometimes ravage one or the other institution.

In Romania, the first wave was brought about mainly by the huge number of migrant workers returning from – fleeing! – Western Europe and the Mediterranean countries already strongly affected. As everywhere, each detail of the growing epidemic was examined and discussed. We learnt fast and tried to integrate the lessons into daily life and consciousness. This has been a great help for confronting the far greater second and third waves in summer and now in autumn due not to importing but through community spread.

Sharing the lockdown together was a source of strengthening for our three house communities, each now living a daily life apart. A heightened concern for each and all of us, exercised in new behaviours and transparency, has given us the confidence to affront and cope practically with the worrisome situations that inevitably arise as the epidemic claims its victims ever closer to us. The regular testing gives a certain clarity and reassurance. Let’s hope the “positive” result one of us received last week turns out to be a false positive – but we have no illusions: our precautions mitigate the risks but cannot prohibit infection within our community. We trust that a successful management of risk factors will have prepared us to cope if and when severe circumstances arise.

We are confronted with so many civilization crises today, asking of each us to wake up and take a stance both in society and our personal choices. This forms a backdrop to our daily life and work together. We are living in a self-isolated island, focused on the needs of the community: gardening, penetrating and clearing out those corners that hadn’t been touched for years, taking more care of each other, trying to find the right balance... Trying to prepare the ground for the social and healing impulses and opportunities that the future may present.

John Byrde, October 2020

- **ACESTA - UK**

Dear friends and colleagues in ECCE,

Thank you for your warm interest. I will start my response by placing our news in context.

Many of us here in the UK have felt the double pain of Brexit and the present pandemic.

These resulted in more isolation as free travel and trade negotiations were reduced or obliterated; one after the other gatherings and conferences became impossible for all but a few; and relationships between the United Kingdom and mainland Europe became more and more strained.

It goes without saying that the UK and Ireland are part of Europe both geographically and culturally and have much to bring and to receive from this belonging.

Whether the EU embodied this cultural manifoldness and its belonging in the whole is maybe a different question.

In the UK it seems that – although outwardly – a referendum gives the vote to the people; it is perceptible that it has undermined parliamentary processes and caused nothing more or less than an increasingly totalitarian government without a functioning parliament or even an independent legal structure to mirror or reflect or dissent.

The present Covid 19 is a global phenomenon. As in other places around the world, questions about the origin of this illness and the way Covid 19 has become a political and financial tool. It has been and is dominating the press and the resulting cutting back of the most basic human rights: of gathering, socializing, protesting, asking questions, debate, individual responsibility and freedom of choice abound, is tearing apart whole economies, industries, tribes, and even families, neighbours, and groups with common interests, faiths and culture.


“The Science” has come to mean one view fits all, instead of a healthy questioning of hypotheses.

Any questions on efficacy, origin, treatment, and societal lockdowns have come to be considered conspiracy, yet that particular boot appears to be on the other foot as it has become increasingly difficult even for bona fide specialists, barristers, judges, professors and scientists at the forefront of their disciplines and status to get a hearing without being taken off line in the media.

For our places it became necessary to be role models and follow guidelines. Care and health care staff were faced with unexplained conditions and symptoms. Specialist units had to learn how to cope as responses did not fit the usual way of understanding the underlying causes. Many care homes lost their elderly vulnerable and ill people with the added strain of this illness.

For some people the possible difficult answers to some of these questionings were and are simply too overwhelming to be allowed. Fear on many sides of the arguments is rife. The future is insecure especially for the young, their work, their studies, their outlook, their free travel, their social life; all have disappeared almost overnight. The financial outlook for the UK after already a decade of austerity looks bleak indeed. If there was no money available for necessary social and health care before the lockdown, how is there going to be anything in the kitty for it now, as we will be paying for recent and present losses far into the future?

Yet human relationships are showing that each moment, each meeting, each small deed done truly out of the moment with good and selfless intentions shine out through the darkness. Global attacks on the human ego can and are and must be answered by each individual. New awareness of our relationship to nature, the Earth, plants and animals is slowly rising. The purely materialistic paradigm needs to give way to a spiritual understanding. Our biodynamic farms are thriving.



Within these circumstances to create a wholesome, fear free, harmonious environment for social therapeutic organisations has been ongoing work. The usual inspiration and support from our regular face to face gatherings and events had to cease, as all or most conferences or real meetings were cancelled. People found other ways of meeting electronically, which was often helpful but never adequate. The Medical Section in UK has renewed will and vigour, there is a full international anthroposophical medical training that largely happened at Emerson but now also electronically. ACESTA is now representing our movement on the new UK Medical Section Council. All of the Ruskin Mill Educational Trust places have continued to function, as has Pericles and Nutley and many of the places elsewhere. Communication between places has suffered however and apart from personal contact through phone or email people have struggled with their own situations too much to engage or collaborate. Emerson is recommencing bookings under the present guidelines, The Mount re-opened and Pericles is in negotiations with social services and we are interested in Buurtzorg and domiciliary care, which we heard about at the Partner meeting in Dornach last year.

The ACESTA website is slowly getting nearer to being up and running, as under the present circumstances it has been a more difficult process to fill it with adequate content. If you have any links or content you think will be interesting for a UK audience, please let me know.

The ACESTA conference that included and hosted ECCE and which had to be postponed now has new dates: 27th – 30th May 2021. You would all be most welcome. It will still have the same contributors: Joan Sleight, Richard Steel, Aonghus Gordon, Hartwig Ehlers, Jon Geelmuyden, Wendy Cook and others and the feedback on the title was that it was felt to be even more apt than before so we will keep it: Courage Love and Meaning: Tools for Resilience in the Here and Now.

We hope that this time it will go ahead and that you will be able to join us at Emerson College.


With warm greetings from UK,
Paulamaria Blaxland-de Lange
Chairman ACESTA, October 2020



- **Associazione Italiana per la Pedagogia Curativa e Socioterapia
Antroposofiche (Italian Association for Anthroposophical Curative
Education and Social Therapy), Italy**

The current time is marked by an experience shared by all human beings: the Covid-19 pandemic with its many unavoidable consequences that influence and shape all spheres of human existence. If we look at the situation from this point of view – *sharing* – we notice that it is the reversal of our actual perspective and experience. What we actually share is indeed isolation (not only physically, but also in our soul life), vulnerability, bewilderment, fear, lack of a solid base for the present and uncertainty towards the future. Our inner and outer life seems to be torn between opposite and dissonant polarities, preventing us from experiencing whatsoever feeling of sharing or connection, and leaving us deeply alone and shaken.

Our Association has tried to offer opportunities for sharing and discussion, in the attempt to “weave” – so to say – and renew the network of people who feel connected to Curative Education and Social Therapy, through a calendar of Zoom meetings. The first meeting, held in the month of June, had a meaningful title: “The fragility of the present time”.



Indeed, we experience this special period as a time of extreme frailty: as the connection with the past and the sight towards the future seem to waver, it is extremely difficult to be present in the actual moment. However, this is exactly what we are asked to learn, to develop a conscious presence *“without any security in existence”*, through a continuous path of self education. While the current attitude is to separate and uniform the individualities, we are called upon to develop an inner gesture of care towards the oneness of every human being, preserving and supporting it.

The encounter with special needs people demands and awakens the ability to look at the others with an open, non-judging sight, and to create an inner – as well as outer – space where the other can manifest and be acknowledged. Even though this is increasingly difficult, it is the fundamental gesture or attitude that has to be preserved and enhanced, despite the growing hindrances. What Karl König said, is today very real and urgent: that Curative Education is a human attitude that can provide care and healing to those who are under the threat to human individuality, *“this, however, is the fate of every human being today”*.

While the opportunity to meaningfully educate seems to be hindered and the efforts to protect and develop a healthy social life seem a danger, to trust in the childhood healing forces and care for the small gestures and actions, appear to be the only possible ways to preserve the human core in us – as Dr. Leonelli stated in the words that inspired our second Zoom meeting *“Our real being human is in taking care of transitions”*.

Our work in schools and day care or life communities has gone through massive changes and adaptations, and still is under constant transformation. The dominating issue of distancing and avoidance of sharing (spaces, objects...) – though necessary – has made us develop new ways that enable us to experience warmth, inner connection and mutual acknowledgement, trying to overcome the physical distancing and to reach the inner – therefore spiritual – core of the other person. This theme will inspire our next Zoom meeting upcoming November.

Nevertheless, we can't help but point out that disability is liable to become more and more invisible and confined, on one hand because of the limits and regulations set by unappropriate and too rigid restrictions, on the other hand because of the globally increasing and rapidly evolving social inequalities. We also ask ourselves how can we really meet the needs of children and teen agers, more and more confined in spaces (not only physically) where it is hard to find adequate nourishment for the soul.

Bearing this all in mind, we can say that it is the experience of being at the threshold that unites all of us as humanity, and calls upon us to care and value the small and smallest, so as to see our tiny actions as *“distilled”* from light-filled purposes, replenished with heart forces.

Luisa Valeria Sapia, October 2020



Matthias Spalinger from VAHS, the Swiss federation, will collect reports from the Swiss institutions on this question.

These reports will be visible at <https://www.vahs.ch/49.html> by mid of November, in German language.

2. 1st Inclusive Congress in Zürich, Switzerland, from June 2 – 5, 2021
“Moving borders”



«Moving borders»

Inclusive European Congress
2 - 5 June 2021 | Zurich | Switzerland

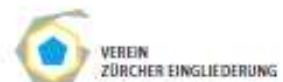
Dear border movers

In summer 2021 one of our big congresses is finally to take place again. 500 interested people, persons with disabilities, their assistants and professionals are invited to Zurich, the beautiful Swiss city, situated on the lake and with a view of the mountains.

We want to have encounters and exchange ideas, want to learn and experience new things. The theme of borders, with which

we are concerned, has become very topical again. Borders can be obstacles, but also promote development. Together we want to explore them, understand them and of course move them: outside, within ourselves and between us.

Warm greetings
The organisation team





Design: hb.werkstatt.ch, Bern

Program | Informations

| Time | Wed, 2 June 2021 | Thu, 3 June 2021 | Fri, 4 June 2021 | Sat, 5 June 2021 |
|-------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| 09:00 | | Talks «Borderline experiences» | Panel discussion «Border crossings and pioneers» | Plenary «Border expansions» |
| 10:00 | | Break | Break | Break |
| 10:30 | | Workshops | Workshops | Closing Ceremony |
| 12:30 | | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch to go |
| 14:00 | Registration | Lake Tour | Excursions | |
| 17:00 | Opening ceremony | | | |
| 18:00 | Dinner Culinary and cultural event | Dinner | Dinner | |
| 20:00 | | Public cultural event «Game without limits» | Congress Party «Unlimited inclusive» | |

| when | where | accommodations | costs | registration |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| 2 - 5 June 2021 | Volkshaus Zurich | Youth Hostels, Hotels | 500 € for participation, accommodation, catering | www.vahs.ch/k21e |

October 2020, Thomas Kraus
www.socialartist.events



The **ECCE General Meeting 2021** will take place in Switzerland, Zurich, in connection with the planned Congress "Moving borders".

Please save the date - June 2 - 5, 2021.

It is planned to hold the **official part of the General Meeting on June 5th in the afternoon.**