

Record of our meeting in Zoom on 4th of February, 2022 ; 11:00-1:00 pm in Guatemala and 6:00-8:00 pm in Germany; participating are Sister Rosa Maria, Sister Maria Teresa and Sister Gloria, Isabell Nordhausen, Erika and Heike Kammer and Irmingard Weise.

Welcome of the participants by Irmingard. Representations are not necessary, because the participants already know each other from the meeting in Zoom of last year and besides there have been personal meetings of the sisters with Heike and Erika and also between Maria Teresa with Irmingard.

Irmingard presents the agenda and then she is starting with giving a little lecture about the financial situation of the foundation RUVD.

The foundation now exists since 17 years. Its financial base consists of a little apartment house in Bavaria with 3 apartments in all. The incoming rents are the base of the money transfers to the projects. In addition there are numerous private donations, for example those, given by 12 friends of Erika, whose regular monthly transfers come to sums between 10 to 50 Euros; besides there is Bernd, friend of the foundation, who regularly gives bigger amounts, then we have also received bigger amounts from the collection of a church community in Berlin (7.400.- Euros) and finally from our bank 1.000.- Euro), who were very impressed by the work of the projects in Guatemala.

Thus we collected in 2021 about 18.000.- Euros as donations and together with the money from the rents we could dispose of 43.000.- Euros for the foundation.

One further remark to the apartment house: since 6 years there is living a family of refugees from Syria, who has been recommended to the foundation by a local catholic church community. At the beginning the German state payed for their rent, but meanwhile the father of the family had been able to complete a training as an electrician and now, since some months, he is working at the Deutsche Bahn (Railways) Now he can pay all the costs of the family by himself. His 3 sons are very good at school, the family is well integrated in Germany and thus we have a little story of success of its own.

Finally, Irmingard shortly gave some informations about the situation of the pandemic in Germany. Germany is in the 4th wave with actually some 250.000 infected persons per day, that means, these persons had positive tests, but not all of them are ill or show symptoms.

In the 2 years since the beginning of the pandemic, there had been dying some 120.000 people with or because of Covid in Germany.

Until the end of february the parents can send their children to school, but they are not obliged to. The children are also allowed to study at home.

Coming next, it was **Sister Rosa Maria**, who informed about her work in the boarding school at Chichicastenango: there are 45 pupils. In the precincts, there are many people, who got infected by the Corona virus, but life goes on like before the pandemic; there are days of marketlife and many tourist are visiting again. Some of the young women we support are living in the boarding school, others, like Lesly, who at the moment is starting her studies for becoming a graduated nurse, are living outside, but they are in constant contact with Sister Rosa Maria.

We had a discussion about the question what to think of the fact, that some of the scholarship-holders, who are on their way to become a nursery-school teacher, actually had expressed other professional aims as for example becoming a doctor. M. Teresa says, that for some the first training as a nursery-school teacher would be like a trampoline that should lift them up in higher

spheres. The three-year lasting training (like the bachillerato) grants access to the university for those who had not got the bachillerato, but now could study the subjects they want. Instead of absolving courses for the bachillerato during 2 years, it is of great advantage, to get at the same time plus one year a complete training in one profession. She says that it is common in Latinamerica that students at the university are absolving their courses at the week-ends while earning the necessary money during the week in their initial profession. As they then have a first qualification, they are not forced to accept exploitative second jobs during their studies.

Sister Rosa Maria also reports about the situation of poor people during the pandemic and if it would make sense to distribute food packages again. At the moment she is rather sceptical and would prefer not to, because the really poor don't dare to beg and then possibly the food packages could be taken by wrong people. In acute cases of emergency the sisters always help the families; but she doesn't think it necessary to provide a systematic all-covering distribution at the moment, because most of the families are doing quite well on their own.

Next is **Sister Maria Teresa**. She reports of the village of Lancetillo that is situated very far and isolated and for some unknown reason there is very little pandemic. In Lancetillo there are 2 scholarship-holders for auxiliary nurse, and there are 6 more for nursery-school teacher; all these young women are supervised by **Sister Romelia**. Sister Maria Teresa travels a lot, from El Salvador, Nicaragua to Mexico, where she is at the moment co-working at a nursery. There are about 50 infants /toddlers, who are cared for regularly in little groups, on alternate days of the week. As she is spanish, she can easily enter the country, in opposition to her guatemaltecan Co-sisters, for whom the entry becomes more and more difficult.

In Nicaragua the situation is very tense, reports Maria Teresa. The government is expropriating private schools and universities and also threatens a project of the Dominican Sisters. Also there is the fact that the work of NGOs is getting more and more difficult lately.

Heike is asking, if Maria Teresa knows something about raising numbers of rapes and resulting pregnancies during the pandemic and the answer of Maria Teresa is, that she cannot confirm this, she has no information to this issue.

Maria Teresa is planning a visit to the members of RUVD in Berlin this year; but she still does not know the date yet; possibly summer would be nice.

And finally there is **Sister Gloria** reporting of the situation of the School Francisco Coll near the garbage place. 15 days ago the new school year has begun, with 280 pupils. As before, they are working semi-presential -hybrid, meaning that they build little groups in the class-rooms, with large distances and everybody is wearing masks on one hand and on the other hand they have to learn at home with the help of learning-sheets. The distribution of the food-packages is continued and there is also the daily school-breakfast for the pupils.

Despite of all commitment and efforts the final result is unfortunately that, that the children do not learn much, meaning, that they passed to the next grade at school's end, but they do not have the competence that would qualify them for the new grad. Basic qualifications like reading, writing and calculating are only taught in an insufficient way and also the young people who leave school after 6 th grade are not well equipped for their future professional life.

These deficits are rather hidden by the government. It is hard to refill them. There is only left hope for an end of the pandemic.

Despite this rather gloomy summary we ended the session after almost 2 hours in good mood and we hope to see us again in one year.