

## **Our Life – ashes from Icelandic volcano...a dramatic start...**

Memories from April by Mama Kajsa

We were on our way to pick up the three young persons coming from Nairobi at the Arlanda Airport. The tour with Our Life in Sweden could start. We hear the news...a volcano eruption on Iceland has stopped air traffic in Europe. We hear - The Stockholm/Arlanda airport will close at 6pm – our actors shall land 7pm. WHAT! CAN'T BE TRUE!!!

It is true. Their travel stopped in Amsterdam at Schiphol airport.

What to do now? We call KLM and the airport. No reply. We keep on calling all afternoon. No reply. We take a quick decision. Peroy shall rent a car and go to Amsterdam. Easier said than done. All car rentals in Stockholm give the same answer. – We have no cars. All are out. Peroy calls other places outside Stockholm and finally gets a car. Only one problem – the car may not be taken outside Sweden. We call a friend in Malmö, the very south city of Sweden. She says – Of course you can use my car. They will swop cars in Malmö. Peroy starts driving. A long drive from Stockholm to Amsterdam - 1200 kilometres!

I keep on calling KLM and Schiphol all evening and through the night. Peroy keeps on driving through Sweden – Denmark nearing Germany. At night I finally reach the staff at the airport. I beg them to make an announcement. Our friends don't hear it. It's chaos at the airport.

It's morning. - Where can we find them? Peroy asks. We decide Peroy will stay with his mother in Germany until we get contact with the three stranded at the Dutch airport.

Finally, at 10am, we get the call we are longing for:

– We are here. What shall we do?

– Find a meeting point. Peroy is coming to pick you up. Borrow a phone if you have no more cards for calling! Call back at noon!

The phone call is cut. Peroy continues the driving through Germany. I wait for the call at noon. No call. I'm on my way to a funeral. I check the mail and there is the information;

– Tell Peroy to meet us outside Schiphol Hotel on the side where the busses are. I call Peroy. I reply the mail and rush to the funeral. Torsten Föllingar, a very dear 88 year old friend of Globetree, a genuine Globeroot, has passed away.

After the ceremony I'm home, pack and go south of Sweden to Eslöv together with Emilia. We have managed to get the last two seats in the bus going to Malmö. We travel through the night. We keep communication with Peroy. He found the three and they are heading back to Sweden. No luggage! All luggage will continue to Stockholm. It couldn't be checked out.

No luggage means no clothes and no set designs.

One of them has high fever – he is shaking. Malaria. He needs warm clothes.

All are hungry. They haven't eaten the whole day. They got a voucher for food when they arrived. One meal in the evening. The day after no food. Most stranded people have business cards and checked out, went to hotels and got their food. Our friends had no business cards and no money. They were escorted to the airport in Nairobi and had one and a half hour to change plane at Schiphol and they were going to be picked up at the airport in Stockholm...

Peroy buys food and lend out his warm clothes and continue driving – back to Sweden. He must stop driving at night - something wrong with the lights. They try to sleep in the car at a pick area by the road. Road security people wake them up. – What are you doing here? After checking they are allowed to rest.

Emilia and I arrive in the morning to Malmö - with a lot of luggage. We carry drums and big, big bags. Finally we reach Emilia's parents house! All is prepared. Beds are made for 5 people. Parents leave and we wait for the car to come. They arrive in the afternoon. Tired – Exhausted! Where can we get malaria medicine? We can't go to hospital – in Sweden a person with malaria will be taken in. We check what is missing. It's everything! Not only personal clothes – also stage equipment and costumes. We go out to buy what is needed, jackets, shoes, underwear and all the rest. We start the rehearsal of Our Life.

We really need the malaria medicine! I call doctors in Sweden. Finally we get contact with one doctor who makes the prescription. Short before the pharmacy close at 10pm Peroy is there to get it. It works almost instantly. Fever goes down and after 3 days recovered!

We keep on working with the rehearsal and the Opening Day is there! The organiser cannot come, his wife has an early delivery – and is in the hospital. We make last minutes arrangements. 400 children are in full concentration and give a marvellous response. Our Life is a success!

Emilia has got an inflammation in a tooth. Unbearable pain. Pain killers don't help. Morphine finally makes the job. Emilia makes a great introduction in the evening and the performance is

enthusiastically received by the general audience and the dialogue between the actors and the audience shows people get the feeling and understand the difficulties children face living in the streets. The day after, the actors meet with pupils and students in schools and I meet with the mayor and others at the Municipal Hall. We plan for partnership between the city of Eslöv and the city of Lugazi in Uganda.

After lunch back to Stockholm and from there straight up north of Sweden to Kalix. We keep on listening to the news. It's not sure airports will be open. The ash clouds are moving...We have a rescue plan - tickets with the night train. The airport is open! We have luck - it is a question of one hour! One hour - on our side! We are on board!!! Celebration with sodas!

We arrive very late and continue with a rented car to Kalix. We fall asleep as soon as the head reaches the pillows. Up early. The children love Our Life and ask so many questions! We realize we should have planned for one hour performance and one hour talking with the audience. In the afternoon we join a special performance in a huge arena. Many hundreds of children perform and the big moment is the connection with Kampala, Uganda. Kalix and Kampala are in partnership and today they will have a direct line dialogue. It's a magic moment when it works – children and adults in Kampala talk to children and adults in Kalix – here and now! Wow!

The rest of the tour to Swedish cities and municipalities goes without drama – the only drama is the performance – Our Life. A few days before departure to Nairobi there is a warning of new ash clouds from Iceland. Airports are again closed in Europe but not Stockholm and not Amsterdam!!!

Our friends arrive to Nairobi without delays.

In Sweden we get the same question over and over again: - When are they coming back?

That's a great review and inspiration and that single question made all efforts worth while!