

"Krigsbørnskaravanen" on tour in Denmark.

Members of the "Danish War Children Association" (DKBF, www.krigsboern.dk), want to tell the stories of their own parents to schoolchildren – and they want to do so themselves while they still can (70 to 75 years of age). The parents of "war children" in Denmark are typically a Danish mother and a father of the German Wehrmacht of WW2.

The Educational Caravan of War Children in Denmark, an idea of Journalist Lotte Printz, was in 2016 established by a project group of DKBF, which has achieved some financial support. The Caravan makes arrangements with schools across the country to have a one or two hours meeting with a single school class or a larger group of children. A Caravan visit may typically involve three war children of DKBF (possibly from the local region) ready to tell about their story and answer questions – all moderated by Lotte Printz such that a fruitful discussion may evolve.

The purpose is to give the young generation a more nuanced impression of the time (1940-45) of the German occupation and its effects, and to enlighten on various aspects that were taboo-issues and "never" or rarely open for debate. The hope is that by telling these stories and by using the experience of war children and their parents - also on the many dilemmas – may contribute to an updated dialog and debate. Likewise, the Caravan may emphasize the concept that storytelling promotes the understanding between people. It may prevent or lessen that suppression and community attitudes give rise to personal trauma and the like for generations. The intent is also to show that it may be possible to turn a tuff start of life to something good.

About 15 Caravan visits are planned and 11 have taken place so far. The activity and message of the Caravan has also been noted in other parts of society, e.g. a Women's Museum, a Historical Society, "Mothers Help" Organization, An Adult Educational Centre etc. and some of them have already been visited.

This summer the Caravan also organized two debate events at the annual Danish "Folkemøde" on Bornholm on June 16 and 17 <https://folkemoedet.dk/>. The topics were "Taboos and silence/suppression" and "Know your Roots"? It was a success. Journalist Lotte Printz composes relevant panels and moderates the debate.

(Reported June 30, 2017, by Henny Granum, Project head, Krigsbørnskaravanen, DKBF)