

Pippilotta's Great Journey

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Foreword

Kids' Village (KiVi): A village by children, for children

Every child is unique, with their own talents and abilities. Every day, children show us what they are capable of. As adults, we must recognise these talents and help children develop them.

This belief is at the heart of Pippilotta, a project we launched three years ago. It began with a simple observation: the first years of a child's life are crucial to their development and lay the foundations for their future. That's why investing in early childhood matters so much – both as parents and as a society. After all, today's children are tomorrow's adults!

We believe that even the youngest children have plenty of talents. That's why we created the Pippilotta project not just for children, but with them. The children at Kannerhaus Wooltz dreamed up and developed the character of Pippilotta, while children from Jean Jaurès Primary School and Maison Relais Heemelmaus in Esch-sur-Alzette built her village, KiVi, at the Metzeschmelz site.

Since then, Pippilotta and her KiVi have travelled across Luxembourg, supporting the development of children aged 0 to 6. In towns and municipalities across the country, KiVi offers a space where children can try new things, make discoveries and simply enjoy spending time together, just as they would in a village.

Enjoy diving into Pippilotta's world!

Liz Kremer-Rauchs
President of UP_FOUNDATION



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How it all began

Something terrible has happened! The village where Pippilotta and her family have lived for as long as they can remember has been damaged!
Where will they all live now? There's no room for Pippilotta and her family in any of the other villages. And, after all, everyone needs a place to call home!
The whole family quickly agrees: they need to build a new village!
Everyone has their own ideas about what the houses and the village should look like. But nobody knows how to build them! How are they going to learn?

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Only one little mouse can help: Pippilotta!

Pippilotta has loved going on adventures since she was little. She's full of energy, curious about everything and has already seen and done all sorts of things on her many travels around the country.

So Pippilotta is given an important mission: to find out how to build a brand-new village.

On her last trip, she noticed building work all over Luxembourg. Everywhere she looked, people were building houses, schools, bridges and roads.

"All right!" cries Pippilotta. "I'll go and find out how to build a village! Maybe I can watch what happens at one of the many building sites. Or better still, join in! That way, I'll know just what to do. And when I get back, we can all build our new village together!"

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Pippilotta at the building site in Esch-sur-Alzette

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"I hear lots of noise. Isn't there supposed to be a building site somewhere around here?" Pippilotta wonders as she walks down the path.
"Ah yes, I can see it now! Everyone is working so hard!"
"Hi! What materials are you using to build your houses?" Pippilotta asks a group of children.
"I built my house with smooth, sturdy wood. It was really heavy. But together, we managed to carry the wood!" answers one of the older children.

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"I built my tall tower all by myself!" another child says proudly.
"I stacked these light cardboard blocks one on top of another. But I have to be careful – sometimes my tower wobbles!"

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Three other children come along, dragging different planks behind them. They're all very colourful: some have stripes, others have dots. Some feel soft, others are prickly.
"Why do you need all these planks?" Pippilotta asks.
"I'm building a bridge," answers the first child.
"I'm building a road," says the second.
"And I'm building a pavement," calls the third.
"I see! You really do need all sorts of things to build a village. But at least there's no time to get bored!" says Pippilotta.

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"Pippilotta!" calls a child standing on the roof of a house. "Come up here! You can see everything so much better from above!"
"I'm coming!" Pippilotta replies, running over to the house.
She tries to climb up, but she's simply too small.
"Here, take this box! If you stand on it, you'll be taller. I'll stay behind you, so I can catch you if you fall," explains one of the children.
"Good idea! Thanks!" cries Pippilotta as she jumps onto the box.
And up she goes! Now she can easily pull herself up onto the roof.

Focus on Motor Skills

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From up there, Pippilotta can see the whole building site. It's huge, and there's so much going on.
Some children are pulling heavy wheelbarrows, while others are pushing piles of boxes.
One child crawls under the bridge to fix something, while another jumps over some water to keep their feet dry.

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"Oh no! The box is gone! How am I going to get down now?" Pippilotta asks anxiously.
"Try sliding down!" suggests the child.
"Wheee! This is fun!" squeals Pippilotta as she whizzes down.

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"It's time for me to get going. I still have so much to discover!" says Pippilotta.
"Thank you for showing me that a village is much more fun when things go up and down!"
"Bye, Pippilotta!" call the children.
"Ciao, ciao!" shouts Pippilotta as she grabs her suitcase and continues on her journey.

Focus on Language

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Pippilotta at the building site in Ettelbruck

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When Pippilotta arrives at the building site in Ettelbruck, it's lunchtime. The workers are sitting in a circle, eating their sandwiches.
"Hello, children!" Pippilotta calls cheerfully. "I'd love to do a little work on your building site. Can I join you?"
"I'm not a child. I'm a worker!" replies one of them grumpily. "You'll have to ask the site manager if you're allowed to help."
"Why do you want to work here?" asks the site manager, who's wearing a yellow safety vest and a yellow helmet.
"I need to learn how to build a village, but I don't even know what all these materials are called! That's going to make shopping for them pretty difficult. Could you teach me all the words, please?" asks Pippilotta.
"I'm not sure we'll have time," the site manager replies. "We still have so much work to do..."

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"Maybe I could help you finish faster?" asks Pippilotta. "Then perhaps you'll have a little time left for me at the end."
One of the workers jumps to her feet.
"You could sing us a song while we work. That would cheer us up and keep us from thinking so much about all the hard work," she says. "And to thank you, I'll tell you what all the different things are called," she adds.
"Is that all right with you, boss?"
"Oh, all right then! We do work better when we're happy," replies the site manager.
"Hooray!" they all shout together, pulling Pippilotta into their circle.

Pippilotta's Song

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"Time to tidy up!" calls the site manager. "It's almost time to finish for the day!"
Everyone starts putting the tools and equipment back in their places.
"Now I have some time to help you," says Charlie, one of the workers.
"Take the wheelbarrow and pick up everything that's lying around!" she suggests. "My legs are tired and I've run out of energy. When you come back, I'll tell you what everything's called."
Pippilotta takes a wheelbarrow and begins picking up the different things, one by one, and placing them inside.
It fills up very quickly.

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"Now I need to stack everything carefully," thinks Pippilotta as she picks up something grey and rather large.
"Wow, this is heavy!" she groans, trying as hard as she can to push the wheelbarrow.
But suddenly, the wheelbarrow bumps into something, and everything starts to wobble!
"Oh no! Help! Everything's going to fall!" cries Pippilotta, trying to hold on to the wheelbarrow.
But she isn't strong enough.
All the things she collected tumble out and land on the ground!
"That's not fair!" Pippilotta complains.
"Yes, that's really annoying. You tried so hard," says Charlie.
"Come on, we'll put everything back together. And while we're doing that, I can tell you what each thing's called."
Pippilotta is grateful and eagerly repeats every new word after Charlie.

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Focus on Free Play

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Pippilotta at the building site in Wiltz

Focus on Social Skills

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There's a lot going on at the building site in Wiltz.
Lots of children have come to celebrate their new village, and Pippilotta can't wait to join them.
Together they climb and crawl, slide and run, hop and jump all over the place.
There's calling, shouting, banging, grumbling and singing.
Suddenly, Pippilotta thinks: "I don't feel well. It's too noisy. People keep bumping into me, and it doesn't smell very nice in here anymore... I'm thirsty, and now my tummy's starting to rumble too!"
She sits down on the ground and looks around uncertainly.

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"Are you okay?" Finn asks from the roof. "There's a lot going on outside. Sometimes it's a little too much for me too."
Pippilotta waves for Finn to come down.
Finn climbs down from the roof and sits beside her.
"What usually helps me is taking a few deep breaths," Finn explains gently. "Would you like to try? You can close your eyes or keep them open."
Pippilotta nods.
"Would you like me to hold your hands?" Finn asks.
"Yes, please," Pippilotta replies, holding out her hands.

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Together, they breathe deeply in and out. In and out… In and out… In and out…
“That feels better. Thank you!” says Pippilotta.
“My heart has calmed down, and now I’m looking forward to going back to my family. But my tummy’s still rumbling. You don’t happen to have something to snack on in your bag, do you?”
Finn takes an apple out of his backpack and wishes Pippilotta a safe journey home.

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Reunited with her family, Pippilotta tells everyone about all the things she experienced and learned at the different building sites across Luxembourg.
With lots of patience, care, love and humour, the whole family builds their new village together.
At last, the village’s finished.
It’s time to celebrate!





Afterword

For three years, Pippilotta and her KiVi travelled across Luxembourg. It was an exciting and rewarding journey, filled with wonderful moments, valuable experiences and countless encounters with children and their families.

From Esch-sur-Alzette to Luxembourg City, via Ettelbruck and Wiltz, Pippilotta and her KiVi invited children to explore the space freely and make it their own. They built, carried materials in wheelbarrows, balanced on planks and tried out new things. Children who had never met before played together, helped one another and created something together.

For us at UP_FOUNDATION, it was inspiring to witness what children can achieve when they are given the space and confidence to move, experiment, make mistakes, start again and bring their ideas to life.

Over the past three years, around 2,300 children had the opportunity to play in Pippilotta's KiVi. But the project brought people together in other ways too. Experts shared their knowledge, while parents met, exchanged ideas, made new connections and enjoyed time with their children.

What stays with us is far more than these numbers. It's the little moments: a child stepping onto a plank for the very first time, two children building something together, or a child having another go when something didn't work out the first time.

Pippilotta has shown us just how important it is to offer children and families open, accessible and stimulating spaces. Building on everything we've learned, we hope to develop the project further and bring it to new places.

We hope that many more children and families will get to experience KiVi for themselves, and that Pippilotta's journey will continue for many years to come.

Nathalie de la Fontaine
Pippilotta Project Manager