

## Annual Report for 2016

The year 2016 went by so fast and so much happened during that one year that I would like to describe just a few of the most important events. It was a good year: we achieved a great deal and gained a wealth of experience as well. The New White House Academy is already well-known. In our region people ask how we manage to enable our children, who come from very poor families, to earn such good grades all the time. But people on other continents are talking about us as well. It's fantastic that we've found friends in various countries who help us to provide a good education for the poorest of the poor and to give them a loving home. It is always touching to see how the children gather in front of the entrance to the dining room in the early morning and the teachers giving them instructions. The little ones must be taken to the toilet by the dorm mother



or dorm father and then washed and dressed.

Many things work well. We noticed that we needed to improve a number of things and we succeeded in accomplishing this.

Among the issues were the cleanliness of the entire property and taking immediate action upon the first signs of illness. In most African countries people are not so concerned about the proper handling of waste. Plastic and glass bottles are simply thrown away, but worn-out shoes and other pieces of clothing, empty toothpaste tubes and other everyday items are simply left lying around. That makes a bad impression - not only on inspectors when they come to check on us, but also on visitors (and we had a lot of visitors this year), who don't understand this.

In other countries, people recycle a lot and have a good waste management system. So a "Rwanda Day" was instituted, along the lines of the laudable model in Rwanda in which everyone stops what they're doing at a certain point and helps to scour the entire property for any trash that might still be lying around. Plastic bottles are collected - all of the children have their own bottles that they can fill with water in the morning to drink in the classroom. The other plastic bottles are filled with sand, and as soon as we have enough of these, we want to try to build a house made of plastic bottles. Glass bottles for which no deposit is paid are crushed and mixed into the foundations of new buildings. We are constantly building, and that won't change during the next two years. Metal is also collected, and scrap metal dealers pick it up free of charge. And the entire property was cleared of scrub and brush, partially to ensure that no rubbish landed in the vegetation, but primarily to make the work of our "askaris" easier. The entire premises are fenced in, but it is possible to cut through the wire fence. Now there is no more bush in which intruders could hide. The monthly health check by a physician who also provided us with malaria kits makes it easier to keep an eye on the health of our children and employees - the most important thing of all. Like everywhere else, some of our children are HIV-positive. They are examined on a monthly basis in hospitals or clinics and supplied with new medication as required. A special diet is also important for them. These efforts are undermined by parents who don't want their children to find out why they

have to take medication. Raising children properly is relatively easy when good teachers are available, but educating parents is another matter altogether. We were actually forced to ask the parents of an HIV-positive girl to come to school and explain their daughter's situation to her.

Initially, they refused, so that we had to threaten to send the child home if her parents continued to refuse.

Up to now, this school system has consisted of three years of kindergarten, eight years of primary school, four years of secondary school (roughly comparable to the Swiss/German "Gymnasium" or high school) and then university or university of applied sciences, teachers' college, etc. But that is to be changed soon, as described below.

The task force proposed a 2-6-6-3 system, in which pupils will spend two years in Kindergarten, 3-years in Junior Primary, Three years in senior primary, Three years in junior secondary, Three years in senior secondary and three years in the university or college. At the junior secondary level, the pupils will pursue a broad-based curriculum so that they can explore their own abilities, personality and potential as a basis for the selection of subjects according to career paths, which will then play a role in their choice of subjects in the upper level of secondary school.

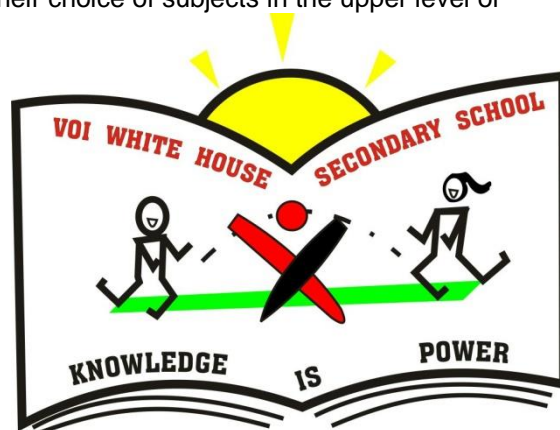
The main subjects at secondary level II will be English, Kiswahili, mathematics, integrated education, health education and pre-technical and preparatory education.

The pupils will also choose other subjects such as social studies, religion/ethics, economics, agriculture, life skills and sports.

The last three years will be spent at university or a tertiary institution in line with the students' abilities.

Education CS has already confirmed that the curriculum will be presented on Thursday during a large education conference.

Those who are familiar with Africa know that politics is always the main topic of discussion. We like the new system. Whether it can be implemented might depend on whether Education CS Fred Matiang'i remains in office.



And that depends on whether the government will continue to be favorably disposed towards him or not.

And politics is also responsible for the transfer of our wonderful district education officer K. Machora. We will always be grateful to him for his unflagging commitment to us. He loves our school as if it was his own and is delighted at how smoothly everything functions here and how well we all work as a team.

Last year we were assured once again that we would soon have running water that would flow from the water line of Mzima Springs directly to an already laid pipeline behind our property. Only a pump house would need to be built, as the existing one was destroyed by the SGR - the railway that belongs to the Chinese.

Arno Köster and Karun Koernig came and talked to the secretary of the Ministry for Water. They took a good look at everything and declared and demonstrated their willingness to help with the financing. Of course, the prerequisite was that the water line to our property would function in the near future and would continue into the villages. The population in our area is incredibly poor for the most part. They live in dilapidated huts and have no furniture, and often they are able to eat only every two days. Because rain is increasingly rare, hardly anything grows and the few crops that would be ready to harvest are destroyed by elephants. The construction of the new railway, which was unfortunately built on a steep, elevated embankment, cut off the traditional migration paths of the elephants, which have followed these routes for centuries. It will take a very long time until they have gotten used to the new situation. It is heartbreaking to see how they wander in confusion among the new railway, which is partially 20 meters above the ground, the railway the English had built and which still works beautifully, and the main road. Every month there are collisions between elephants and trucks that are fatal to the animals, leaving many baby elephants orphaned.

But time and again, orphans are also brought to our school. They can hardly believe their luck, despite their mothers' recent deaths, that they can now sleep in a bed and have enough to eat. Many come barefoot, and have never before had socks or shoes.

And we are very grateful that wonderful people always come forward to sponsor a needy child. We were able to conclude 32 new sponsorships, while two were terminated and six sponsors simply stopped their payments. We still don't know whether they didn't wish to continue their sponsorships, became ill or just forgot about us.

A sponsorship is a long-term commitment, so people really need to think about whether they are willing to undertake such a project. We know very well that circumstances can change, and that someone may suddenly become unable to continue their sponsorship. Thus, we are grateful for notification if such a case occurs. Donations, whether regular or non-recurring, also help us greatly to continue our work for children born into poverty. No one can choose where they are born, so it makes us all the happier that there are so many wonderful people who understand this and support us.

Everyone that has visited us can confirm how grateful, happy and disciplined our children are. And we truly had many visitors. We are delighted with all of them, but we particularly appreciate the fact that our board members return over and over again, as they can then disseminate more information in Switzerland.





This is our dear friend and competent funding manager Margrith Ingold talking with our district education officer K. Machora. She books everything paid into our account in Switzerland, carefully books the incoming and outgoing payments and forwards the money to us in Kenya. With all the documentation, she then meets with our trusted auditor Eduard Gerber. The tax officials also know that he does good work and when he as a licensed auditor approves the orderly book-keeping, there are never any problems with the tax authorities. At this point I'd like to express our warm thanks to him - he does this valuable work for us purely on a voluntary basis.

All members of the association work tirelessly and

without pay, for the poor children in Kenya. Not only that - they also pay all costs incurred from their own funds. All correspondence with sponsors or authorities, every penny paid into our accounts, goes entirely to the children in Kenya. That's why I'm pleased that our secretary Hanna Zbinden together with some acquaintance; visits our school every year. It really makes a huge difference when you can see firsthand what our life is like here and the progress we are making. Elfriede Tychsen, who cares in an exemplary manner for the Masai children for whom the Massaihilfe Verein Mengkofen pays all costs, said that our school is a school with heart, and that she enjoys visiting us. Everyone knows that we have a place in Hanna's heart.

Our association differs in many things from all the others. But we are only a small outfit and depend on the help of others. And of course we are happy that we receive donations from many different sources. This enables us to help children for whom we have not yet found sponsors, but also to pay for exam forms, teaching seminars and the various activities and competitions as well as all the other costs. Our school is also different with regard to activities. We want to help the children to discover and develop all their talents. In many schools, all the academic subjects are taught, but sports, music, theater, dance and art are not available.



This year our girl's handball team was simply unbeatable, in all matches, both at the regional and national



levels. For the first time in the history of Kenya, the coveted trophy came to the Coast Region. But our children also earned trophies and certificates in other activities, like drama, choral verses and dance competitions.

This is what champions look like! They traveled throughout the country. And when they marched into stadiums with their song "We Are the Champions", many teams already knew our girls were a force to be reckoned with. They

were smaller than their opponents, but thanks to the daily workouts with our teacher Roman, they were unbeatable. Our boys also enjoyed great success, but reached "only" 4th place at the national level.

This is the trophy that our teacher Roman is proudly holding.

He was accompanied on all the trips by Alice - the two of them are a wonderful team.

And we are very proud that our Mary is the best handball player in all of Kenya. When asked what could be expected from her next year, she replied, "I will be even more dangerous". A healthy competitive spirit and team sports are good for all young people.



I am sure there is something to the expression "a healthy mind in a healthy body". We are also happy to make sure that our soccer team as well as the handball team have an adequate and balanced diet. We've also introduced volleyball as well as track and field.



Not everyone is good at sports, so it's a good thing that visitors occasionally come

who give music lessons, do handicrafts with the children or draw with them. Thus, we now have a lovely collection of music instruments and sheet music, as well as teachers who happily learned to play the instruments to be able to continue music lessons with the children. The only problem is time. The days are filled with lessons and various activities. That's fine, and with so many children it's important that they are kept busy.



The favorite toys of the little ones are still the old tires. The kids really have a lot of fun with them and reach incredible speeds when they're underway with the tires. The minute they see someone with a camera, they pose for photographs. And they love receiving photos from their sponsors - they treat them like treasures and are delighted to know what their

benefactors look like. And all the children enjoy answering the letters sent to them and enjoy the dialogue with people in a completely different world they can barely imagine.



The children particularly liked the harmonica lessons given by Sonja von Mühlén. The teachers as well as the children

were fascinated by this instrument and the perfectly prepared lessons were a complete success. And Annina expertly assisted her mother in teaching. It is truly delightful to see how connected Annina is to our school and our children. She is always eager to return to her friends in Kenya. This year she became acquainted with Tanja, who had come to write a project report for her studies. She had chosen our school as her project. The two girls had never met before, but got along well from the very beginning. The time with these two committed ladies was wonderful. They cooked for me, they went shopping, they often slept with the girls in the secondary school and helped out everywhere. We never had to assign any work to them, as they saw everything for themselves, and helped with office work, at school, simply everywhere. Annina is a genuine expert in creating films. Shortly before her departure she wanted to teach me how to do it, but what looked so simple when she did it was too complicated for me, so I am looking forward to tutoring in this regard this year.

Karibuni sana, Annina and Tanja! I'm looking forward to your help in the future!



Many other visitors came as well - describing all the wonderful encounters would fill a book.

However, after Karun spent months inquiring at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, there was still no solution with regard to the water line that had been promised to us for years. Thus, the Udo Lindenberg Foundation started a campaign to collect enough money for a borehole and Udo's fans once again demonstrated their willingness to help our

school. Arno Köster advocated for us and even came personally to see whether the drilling would really take place. The drilling team actually did appear and after a few days it was established that adequate quantities of water were available at a depth of 136 meters. Water samples were sent to the KENYA WATER INSTITUTE in Nairobi; the report contained precise information about all the substances present in the water. Among other things, these included calcium and magnesium.



Almost simultaneously with Arno, a wonderful lady arrived. I didn't know her personally, but friends had told me about her and I found that she was not only extremely likeable, but we clicked right away as well. She is truly a high-powered person. The minute she was back in Switzerland, she began organizing a fundraising concert in Solothurn for us. Under the motto **"Together we are louder"**, she wants to team up with various renowned musicians to draw attention to our work here in Kenya. As she herself plays in a great rock band, she knows everybody who is anybody. We rapidly discovered that we have numerous mutual friends, and we never ran short of things to talk about.



She met all our children as well, showed a great love for them and liked to spend time with them. She even decided right away to sponsor one of them herself. What a kind gesture of her

The long Christmas vacation began in late October.

It lasted nine weeks - actually too long for the children, but a number of them live here permanently. For us, the construction work began. And a great deal was built during this time, without any machines or equipment. My respect goes to the construction workers, who sometimes worked day and night. A dormitory for girls was built, the entire Secondary School building was plastered, another classroom for Form 2 was finished as well as another house for a teacher, along with a toilet for the teachers and a water tower. It was amazing how many construction sites were worked all at once, all supervised by our master James and his cousin Samuel. Not only had our employees helped with the building - some of the teachers helped too, as well as four students, who thus showed how important the school is to them.

The house looks great, completely plastered in front and back. Until now everyone thought it was still "under construction". And at the right, the girls' dormitory is nearly completed. Everyone worked



incredibly hard - nobody bothered with Sundays, Christmas or New Year's Eve. It was obvious that our great employees were unable to go home, so I invited their wives and children to come to us. It was lovely to see how well everyone got along and how the children immediately played together. But in



between, we still needed to sit together and celebrate, even if it was only for a short time. But everyone noticed how much we appreciated their hard work. Rain was expected during this period, but apart

from a few brief showers, the rainy season failed to materialize. Trees are being felled everywhere, either to burn charcoal or to clear land for building. The result is climate change, here as well. Thus it is even more important to have our own well and thus our own water.



This is what our water tower looked like shortly before completion, and Karun came during his Christmas vacation to have a look at everything. From the roof of the secondary school building, you can see the entire property. We were talking about where

the water lines have to be laid. The building

was finished, but then the water tanks had to be installed so that the water could flow everywhere using the force of gravity. That was a piece of work! As I observed the process, I suddenly understood how the ancient Egyptians and other peoples erected their monuments.

Thanks to Karl Heinz, a former neighbor in Switzerland and a dear friend, a new work shop and carpentry shop was established. He also bought numerous machines and tools and taught our people a lot. Everywhere he saw things that needed to be repaired and replaced. He is a true master and friend - we hope he comes again and





we thank him from the bottom of our hearts. He bought the right wood and showed us how it is processed. Friends like him are invaluable.

The vacation period, which initially seemed long, was suddenly over far too soon, so that we worked without a break right up until school started.

A lot of money was required to accomplish everything, and we want to tell you how very much we appreciate your help. Without your numerous donations we could not have done all this. It's a good feeling to have such wonderful friends and helpers and it is



further evidence that there are plenty of good people with their hearts in the right place. You have proven it. We love wish you all that all the good you are And we mustn't forget our faithful staff Without them, much of this would be hours, they are ready to help at any is to them to belong to a large, wonderful family. People in other places can only dream of such team spirit.



you and appreciate you and doing will come back to you. members of many years. impossible. They don't count the time and show how important it



Particularly in Africa, employees are generally not really appreciated. What can be done without them? They care for each other and way they celebrate and sing is fantastic as well - they have not lost their good spirits. It is wonderful to be surrounded by such people. Life is not easy in this region, but we try our level best and we are a big family!

We need everyone to achieve something. If all the people in this world were respected and treated well, things would be a great deal better. We must

never forget that we are all connected - humans, animals, plants - they all contribute to our survival. Our souls are one.

We also would like to thank our great teachers, cooks, dorm mothers and dorm fathers, for caring tirelessly for all the children. All of them are committed and understand our project. Which is a charity and that's why all of them do their best.

Our Principal Moses Gichuhi has a great love for the children, cares about the teachers and is a good leader.







Africans are patient - they accept their fate and trust that things will get better. We share their hope for a better Kenya and trust that our children will take what they learn from us into their future lives. And that they can be proud of Kenya, their beautiful country. The people are peaceful and cheerful, and the natural landscape is still beautiful, even though much has been destroyed. And we hope that future generations will be able to experience animals in the wild, as well as the beautiful environment.

As previously mentioned, politics plays a major role in everything and the constantly changing laws do not make life easier.

**You have all contributed to enabling us to help many children in this beautiful country**

**- please forgive us for not being able to mention you all by name.**

As water is the most precious asset in Africa, I would like to thank the Udo Lindenberg Foundation and all the fans for ensuring that we now have the most important thing for survival.

Water is life - without water there is nothing. There's still a lot of work to be done - let's get to it! Laying the pipelines will still take some time, but we already fill bottles with the excellent mineral water for our visitors and for myself every day. We no longer need to buy water, what an achievement. Water is life - without water there is nothing. There's still a lot of work to be done - let's get to it! Laying the pipelines will still take some time, but I fill bottles with the excellent mineral water for our visitors and for myself every day.



*I thank you all from the bottom of my heart and wish you peace, joy, health and all the best in 2017.  
And I look forward to your visits.*

*A. Biberstein*

Annedore Biberstein  
**KENYAN CHILDREN HELP**

