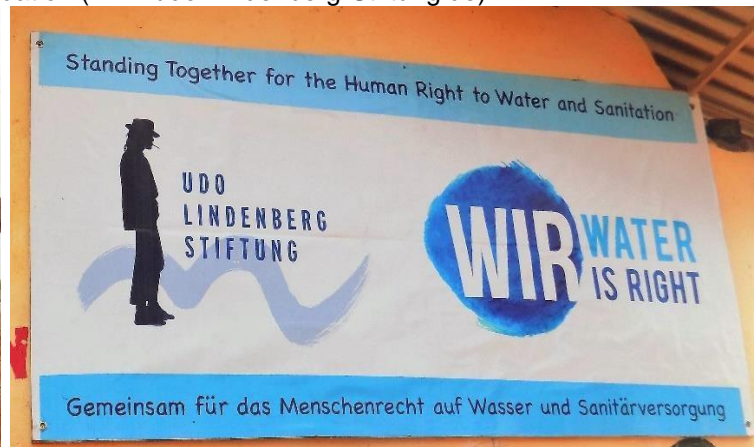




KENYAN CHILDREN HELP

Report of the year 2017

What an extraordinary year 2017 was! Never have we reached this much! It started with the successful digging for water, which we had already started in October. We found some very proper drinking water, even though we had to go quite deep. A bit later, the pump, working with solar energy from our own panels, was installed. Furthermore, we had to build a high house to put the tanks on, as to carry the water through a gravity system easily everywhere on the rather big campus. This required a distribution system as well as access. Before that, every child had its own water bucket for showering. All were just too pleased, since only one who knows Africa knows about the real value of water on this driest of continents. The digging was made possible because of the financial support of the Udo-Lindenberg-foundation (www.udo-Lindenberg-Stiftung.de)

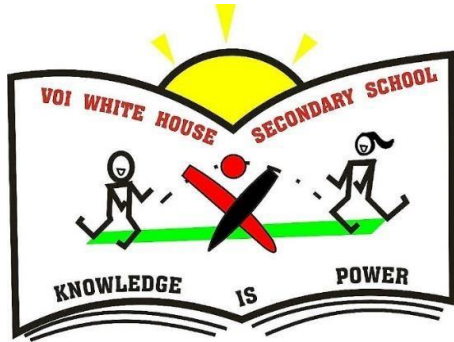


As well engaged in this project was the foundation «Water is right». Everyone who lives in a dry area where water pipelines do not exist, can understand how very thankful we are. As soon as we were provided with enough water, we had to build pipes all over the area. Well, this meant hard work for several months, because our red soil can become incredibly hard if there is no rain over a long period. But as time went by we had tap water everywhere. The very first room provided with tap water and showers was the dormitory in secondary school, because we were finished with it at the same time. Having showers, tap water and toilets in the same building, what a privilege this is for those girls! Once discovered how people here live makes it clearer why they appreciated it this much, or still do. Nearly in all homes of our school's children do they have to walk for several kilometres to get some water. To help themselves, they go outside.

All those works were quite expensive, and therefore we want to thank everyone who enabled the construction of those showers and sinks with smaller or bigger donations. Those taps are a further privilege, now we can use water everywhere on the area, either for drinking or for watering the flowers, vegetable patches or trees. Thinking of how small we started, and how incredibly fast we've developed, many ask themselves how this is possible. It took some other schools some decades to reach the same state as us, and compared to this, we can certainly be proud. It is as well a proof of how far one can get if every person involved, together with friends or family, participates on a 100% level of effort. Most people of our association are having a full-time job, but besides this, they love to invest many weekends and evenings in our project. In my opinion, there are not many associations whose members are that much engaged without expecting any payment. All they think of is to help those children coming from a very poor background.

But one shall not forget our very faithful sponsors who have stuck with us since the very beginning. They come as visitors, they tell their friends and family, and they help us finding new sponsors. Only because of all this help we can keep going, and we want to thank everyone who supports www.kenyanchildrenhelp.ch as well as our kids and teachers in school.

A good education is the only reliable thing to escape poverty. We've reached a state where it is not possible to learn a profession with only finishing primary school. Up till now, the school system was 3-8-4-4. This means 3 years of kindergarten, 8 years of primary school, followed by 4 years of secondary school (the equivalent of the swiss gymnasium/high school), and in the end 4 years of university. In 2018, there will be a new system introduced, named 2-6-3-3, which therefore is closer to the western systems. Our school had been chosen to be one of the schools in the piloting project. Of course, one starts with the changes in kindergarten and the younger classes. So far, in kindergarten they must learn to write, to calculate and to read, but for the future, they are supposed to be drawing and playing. If it is possible to realise those plans in 2018 shall be questioned, since most of the schools



do not provide the required resources. As an addition to those changes, we have been building, renovating, and changing a lot, but, most important, we've reached a lot.

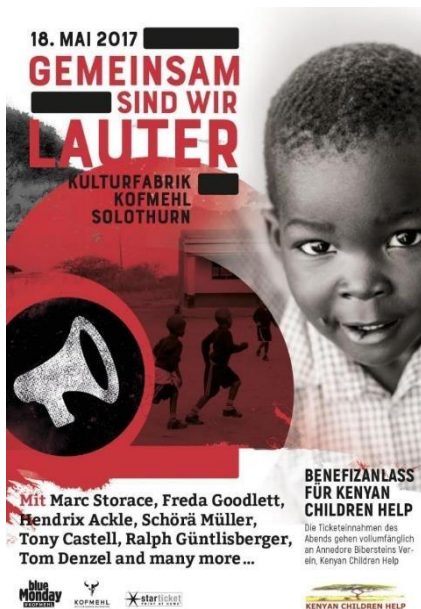
After several stranded attempts of registering the secondary school we found out that the actual problem was the name. Therefore, different names have been proposed, once more refused, but in the end, we managed to register the name you can see on our logo.

But, of course this was followed by inspectors of education, health, fire prevention etc. who criticised some things. Because of this, we changed kitchens and canalisation systems, then we provided every room with a fire extinguisher, we tried them out and put some fire assembly points.

Occasionally, we do have fire drills to make sure that in a real case of fire, everyone knows how to behave.

For it is a fact that in Kenya every year a few children burn to death in fire in schools. Those fires are usually put on by rebellious teenagers. We are not endangered of this case, since we do have an adult in duty in every single dormitory. For the girls it is a woman, for the boys a man. They do not only keep the kids quiet, but inform us instantly in case of sickness. If even we do not know what they are suffering from, we bring the child to the closest hospital.

To avoid an electrical, short-circuit, our pipes and cables are regularly checked by our man for electricity, Frederick Banda. In all new buildings we have solar panels, considering all the power break-downs and the high prices for electricity, this is a profitable investment.



Now, let's talk about Brigitte Geiser. She was told about our school from one of our sponsors, and from the very beginning she was this enthusiastic and impressed. Therefore, she decided to organise a benefit-concert with the motto "GEMEINSAM SIND WIR LAUTER" (together we are louder). This event was a huge success! Brigitte is an intelligent, warm-hearted and pretty young woman, who can affect many people with her very agreeable and understanding character. In my opinion, this might be one of the reason why this many talented and well-known musicians went on stage and gave their everything for us.

Even though the entrance was very cheap, we managed to collect over 10000 swiss franks. Even newspapers, radio and the concert hall did promote us for free. Furthermore, all people employed there collected their salaries of the evening and gave them to us. The atmosphere was outstanding. Brigitte as well as Phipu Gerber did lead in a sympathetic way through the evening. Everyone who attended this event still adores to talk about the special vibes that charmed everyone at the evening in the concert room Kofmehl AG.

Old bonds of friendship

were refreshed, and new ones made. Unluckily, the main sponsor of the event was not staying in Switzerland at this very day, but he wanted although contribute as much as possible and get to know more about our project. For this reason, in July 2017 we had a gathering in July in the restaurant "Vini" in Solothurn. It was a special evening, since one does only rarely meet this many pleasant individuals in one room.



Furthermore, this was the beginning of the **Gerber-Geiser-Mathys-Project**. What could not be paid by the money of the event was donated from Hugo Mathys. This means that everything missing for the construction of the boys' dormitory as well as for the first floor of the secondary school was fully paid! Brigitte and Phipu are going to visit us in the beginning of January. We are all looking forward to this reunion to show them what we've achieved since their benefit concert. They already have further projects in the making, which we will go through during their visits. Moreover, they want to report explicitly what their money was used for.

I want to make an excuse to everyone who is not mentioned by name. There are so many private people, churches, associations,



foundations etc that are somehow involved in our project. All the bigger or smaller amounts of money donated by them contribute that our now big school can function. Repeatedly do we have to change, renovate or expand buildings. All costs can only be covered because of you and your faith. It would cover many and many pages to name all the visitors of 2017. Therefore, I am limiting myself to mention only few, so as Hanna Zbinden, our secretary. She visits us every year again and always brings some friends or sponsors with her. She lives with the school; her heart is always with the kids. She was there from the very beginning, she experienced every little step, she suffered and cheered with us.

Someone else I'd like to name is Karl-Heinz Johnson. He visits us 2 times a year, brings loads and loads of tools and machines, and still goes regularly to Voi to buy further material that is needed in our carpenter shop. He works from sunrise to sunset in the work shop that thanks to him now has a wide range of utensils. He teaches our dear Stanley a lot. He sees everywhere parts and things that might need some tinker. For example, he installed rainwater pipes, so as not to lose a single drop of the very valuable rain water. Everyone knows him and is very pleased every time he comes. As well as in school, he is known in the small town of Voi. If he needs to get there to make some shopping, he awaits a Matatu, one of the vans that stop everywhere to pick people up. He knows exactly what he needs and where he gets it, and before returning, he treats himself with his beloved fish with in a small restaurant. He returns usually with more than he can carry, so that he needs a delivery van. One remarks quickly that he feels home. He eats with his friends and only comes to the house to sleep. He is a very orderly person, and he insists on having everything cleaned up. If ever I want everything to be clean, I only need to tell everyone that Karl-Heinz is coming.





Let's now talk about the successes of our children this year. During the first term, there are usually qualifications for Drama, Dance, Choral verses and various sports. As usual, our very talented actors won all the competitions and were invited to the finale in Kisumu for a week. But, as we are registered as a private school, there is no support of the government. Kisumu is very far away, and the costs for the transport would have been immense. We were sad having to disappoint our kids, and even the teachers were sad. But somehow, the people from the organisation understood our situation and offered us the possibility to save our performance on a video. All we needed to do was sending it to Kisumu, together with a teacher that replaced us. But, unluckily, the DVD player did not seem to work, and organising another one was just not possible. Well, first come first served... Knowing some clichés of actors, one can imagine the Drama they can make if all their practising, the

costumes and the perfectly by heart known texts are not valued enough.

Well, we had to learn from it. Soon, we won't participate in qualifications like this. One can't know, why exactly this certain group wins. Corruption is all over. Of course, we will continue promoting the talents. Dance, Singing and Acting will only be shown in school, at events as parents visits and more. We really want to promote talents, but it can't cost more than we can afford. Everything keeps getting more expensive, and therefore we must handle money careful.

The conditions of the sports competitions are better, since the finales mostly take place somewhere in the coast region. Therefore, we do not have to go far. Our handball champions fought this year again for our school, they could win in every single game. Because of this, they already have a wide number of trophy's to show. Our girls are just always the number 1. The boys are strong players as well, but still they have to be happy with being the number two, which is remarkable as well. Last year, it was Voi White House Secondary School that participated in the qualifications, together with Coach Roman. As well as being a Coach, he is a teacher by heart that knows how to catch his students. He is well valued! In 2018, our team will get some newcomers, because we have got talented



players in secondary school as well as in class 8. The jerseys the children were wearing at the festivities held for them were sponsored by the governor of Taita Taveta. We are very pleased, since it happens to be the first time someone from the government does anything for us.

We are really satisfied with the marks the children from the primary- and secondary school get. There are 2 teachers who left us to work for a public institution. Because they had informed us in time, we could find replacements very fast. All the other teachers and workers stayed. Some people had to be newly employed, this is one of the reason our village keeps getting better. We are family, and family always sticks together. It is a very good feeling, knowing that everyone wants to help everywhere and that people help each other, just as people do in a family.

I am pretty sure you have heard of the drought in eastern Afrika. This time was hard, for people as well as for animals. Wild cats did not suffer this much, they found prey very easily in the depilated animals. For the people in the villages it was a fight for survival. Nothing grows without water, cows and goats, those who did not pass away, did not give any mild anymore. Even we had to buy hay for immense prices from the mountains for our donkey Obelix, since the grass did not grow enough. We had to buy milk too from the mountain regions, again for higher prices. We did not want to, but had to, milk is important. In Voi, Milk and butter was not available for several weeks. For us, this confirmed that not only we but the whole country suffered because of these climate changes. Is this because of the global warming? Personally, I think this is very well possible, but the deforestation of our big, old and sacred forests has its responsibility in it. Summer is getting hotter, and winter brings stronger wind and lower temperatures. Rain is a rare phenomenon, we only could enjoy a little bit in November.



I was thinking about a bottle house for quite a long time. I had already seen examples from other poor countries. But, because of the different environment, those have to be built differently in every country and area. During their summer vacation in August, children around the area were recruited, voluntarily of course, to help. I told them to collect all the empty plastic bottles they could find, as well as glass bottles and metallic things, and to bring them around. Like this, everyone profited from this. Important for me was the reduction of the waste in the environment, for the kids this signified having some lunch every day as well as some money to take home in the late afternoon. But the children filled the bottles with our soil, and before they left in the evening, we counted who managed to fill how many of those bottles. Then, they were paid. We made the base out of everything that can neither rot nor burn. Everyone had great fun with this construction, and the result of it is a comfortable guest house with a veranda with view on the Sagala mountain. Furthermore, one can enjoy the sunset and a sundowner, while looking at the Sagala Hill. This is a result that can really be shown off. For the construction, we only use materials found in the area. The beds are made of bamboo and hemp cords and even the lamps are made of big plastic bottles. They are coloured nicely, since and look great. The aim of it was to set an example for people living in the area, so that they would perhaps follow. One does not need a lot of money to build it, and it is not a lot of work as well. But people only want to know the architects name, which is not what I wanted, but a sign of success. The story of our bottle house was spread quickly, repeatedly we have safari busses full of visitors who want to see. Since all of them want to pay a little for visiting, the expenses were covered within a few weeks. The total duration of the construction was 5 weeks.



All the other constructions we could do thanks to your donations and financial supports, we used the long holiday of Christmas. We are indeed skilled in finding good workers, we managed to finish really everything within only 9 weeks. Thus, the new first floor of our secondary school was finished by the end of the year, and we could even install the solar panels again. Some of us found time as well for fumigating the dormitories. Bedbugs are often brought in, when children travel in Matatus. We had to accept a few changes of the originally plan. Because of security reasons, it is not allowed to have a chemistry laboratory in the same building. Now it is in a little outbuilding next to the school. It is very well equipped with water, gas and all kinds of utensils. The experimenting can start now. It is extraordinary that we have only women in our

school that teach physics and chemistry. It is a pleasure to see, how enthusiastic they are about the subject, and how easily they can fascinate their pupils. We hope that they can affect our students, since many of them want to become engineers.

Unluckily, our vegetable garden suffered a little bit during the vacation, since the students are responsible for it. But they are all very talented gardeners and will revitalize it within a minute when school starts again in January. We managed to provide our kitchens with a lot of self-grown vegetables, thanks to the agriculture club. Not only the agriculture club, but certain others were founded. One of it focuses on journalism, another on environment protection etc. During environment protection, they talk a lot about the importance of trees, which matches perfectly with one of our projects, "Planting trees".

With the help of «JICA Japan» and the education centre of Kenyan wildlife, we managed to plant 240 trees. Every child is responsible for its very own tree. To keep them motivated we set on a competition where the best-looking tree was regarded. Furthermore, we keep planting bushes, flowers and other plants, since they help to reduce the unbelievable amount of the dust. It is not only disagreeable in eyes, ears and nose, but also computers and other machines suffer.

There were problems in the primary school because of some inspectors, since some of the smaller children shared a bed to be more comfortable and to save space. For the kids this was great, but regulations are regulations. Thus, we are thankful, that the extension of the dormitories was made possible by a company. This company informed their clients, that the money they usually spent on their Christmas presents, would in 2017 be donated to our project and another swiss project. With the motto "The future depends on what you do today", inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, they committed themselves to do good during Christmas time.



We could finish the extension of the girls- and boys' dormitories perfectly in time, but there was still a little showdown in the end. We needed more beds and mattresses that needed to be covered in a Canvas. Some children do wet the bed, and up till now, we had to buy new mattresses again and again. Therefore, we employed some tailors for a few days to cover them.



Well, if you see the homes of the kids, this manner can be understandable. The picture you see in this document is an extreme example, but many houses in our region do not look any better. No one has any sanitary places, to help themselves, they go outside. They sleep on a mattress rolled out on the hard ground made of soil, and those mattresses are being hanged outside during the day. People cook on rocks, and they eat directly out of the frying pan. Only few eat with forks or spoons.

I can only admire those people. They are always in a good mood, they love to laugh and never complain. This is one of the reasons I like being here. Everything that is not necessary for survival is regarded as useless, and so they do not keep it. They take very good care of the things they have, they appreciate them a lot. I am thankful for everyone supporting us. I know that many organisations ask for help, but insecurity is often big. How know can someone know for sure if the money is used for what they tell?

But people here are stunning. For this very reason am looking forward to every visitor, so that they can convince themselves what their money is used for. Many are shocked about the fact, how much with only very little money can be achieved

All our teachers and employees live on the compound, they are glad that they do not have to look for an apartment in the surroundings. They can eat here, and have water and energy. But, since we are growing, we often need

to build a new room to be able to offer this privilege to everyone.

After Easter holiday, we could open the new boys' dormitory, the dining hall and the new built kitchen. They are as well provided with toilets and showers within the building.

Since we always have enough sun, all the rooms in secondary school are using solar energy. The cooks and kitchen staff are as well thankful for the water taps. Having to carry this much of water was a lot of work. But every single person really knows the value of the water.

Because of these changes and

renovations our staff did not have the time to travel home during Christmas to visit their family. But Christmas is a family holiday, and shall be spent with who is loved and close. We used this opportunity to invite their families to the New White House Schools, so that no one had to miss out on celebrating Christmas and New Year's Eve with their families. All workers and employees were just too pleased to participate in it.

The small ones were fascinated by the Bengal lights, never have they ever seen something similar.

We could achieve incredibly much in 2017, but have also come to some conclusions. We are happy the way we are now, and we do not want to expand any further. The way it is now, we can control everything. But, we are always expecting new regulations. So, we will have to change and renovate, and we need to replace things. For this reason, we are still more than thankful for your support. We still got some children that need a sponsor urgently.



I want to thank all of you from all my heart. And wish you a lot of joy, health, peace and just all the best for 2018! I hope to see you in Kenya!

A. Biberstein

Annedore Biberstein
KENYAN CHILDREN HELP

