



## Report for the year 2019

This year seemed to pass even faster than all the others. The many changes probably also contributed to this. So we attended seminars and meetings to learn more about the new curriculum. In kindergarten and the 3 first classes of primary school we introduced the system prescribed by the Ministry. This system is to support the children according to their abilities and not according to the achieved grades. There will then be 3 years Junior Primary, 3 years Senior Primary, 3 years Junior Secondary and 3 years Senior Secondary. Whether this can really be introduced everywhere remains to be seen. In contrast to most other schools we have enough buildings and classes to implement all this.

Last year we had 369 children, including the students in the Secondary School. It is great that we have found sponsors for 212 of them. But of course we are always happy to hear from dear people who are willing to sponsor more children. On [www.kenyanchildrenhelp.ch](http://www.kenyanchildrenhelp.ch) there are always some children listed who are in urgent need of support in the form of a sponsorship. Circumstances change again and again, and so this year again new children are added who are in need.

Every year there are relatives of children who have finished primary school who prefer to continue their studies in another secondary school. Sometimes it is certainly good to change the environment, but they always like to come and visit us and tell us how much harder life is there. Even every piece of bread has to be paid extra.



It is gratifying when sponsors who have sponsored a child with us from the very beginning are willing to take over another child after their child leaves our school.

Jacqueline and her husband visit us every other year. They have now taken over a child from the kindergarten as their new godchild so that they can accompany him or her as long as possible. Since you can visit the children with us, a close relationship often develops, which is very important for all is beautiful.

Our family continues to grow, last year we had 23 teachers and 30 employees living on our property in addition to the children and students. However, some of the workers come from the surrounding villages and go home in the evening to their families. It is nice to have a big family where people respect each other. As village elder I have privileges, but also a big responsibility.

In the first term the elimination matches take place in the chosen sport. We concentrated on handball and our secondary school participants reached the finals of the national games and again won top positions.



It is a pleasure to watch them. Antony, the captain of the handball team is not only excellent in sports, he is also a very diligent student and is a role model in everything. Although it's always very hot at this time of year, I don't miss out on this and together with our players I'm happy about their success. And of course we celebrate together afterwards.

The girls were also good again. After most of the players finished school with us at the end of the year and were able to defend the trophy over the years, they decided to give it to me as a gift, which touched me incredibly.



One of the players is in Form 3 of the Secondary and will be in the last class of the Secondary next year. Her fighting spirit was noticed and so she was asked by the National Handball Team of Kenya and agreed to support them. But she was mostly used when she had a few days off in school or when there were holidays. Considering that she comes from a small village and that her mother has

never left it, you can imagine the turmoil that was created at home. Asked about her impressions of flying, she said that the first time the plane took off was very special. But she quickly got used to the fact that her teammates are nice and she is very happy to have been to several African countries. Such a thing broadens her horizon and apart from that, it has also awakened her ambition to study. For example, she was the best student in the 3rd grade, next to Antony. This proves once again how important it is to participate in a team sport and that sport is not only good for the body but also for the mind.





After the 1st term the April holidays start, but some children and teachers stayed here and studied together. All the material has to be learned, since so many weeks of holidays have been introduced, a lot has to be made up for. During the long holidays the children help with the work in the fields or fetch water from far away and of course only few of them have electricity at home, so there is no possibility to learn.

Soon we realized that it was too hot for the tomatoes, they were stewing in the sun before we could harvest. So we made a greenhouse out of PET bottles, so we could soon expect a good harvest. As less and less people really understand agriculture, we got a good teacher who could motivate the students. Now they enjoy their work, learn a lot and are proud of their successful harvest. Agriculture is an examination subject, they passed their exams with flying colours. We all went to school once and know how important it is to make the lessons lively, even the driest material can be interesting..



In May, Mahdi came to Voi especially for this event and gave a vivid description of what goes on in the bodies of young people when they reach puberty. As a doctor she succeeded better than anyone else, she had the full attention of students and teachers. Instead of working in a practice, she supplies the women and girls in the slums of Nairobi with sewing machines and cotton and has them make reusable sanitary pads. She brought 5 of

them for each girl. Of course it's better for the Environment, but also healthier for the body.

How we even managed to get this extraordinary woman to come to us, I can only say: my great friend Tiju Aziz fights tirelessly for the environment, the animals and also for the poor children. She is a very valuable comrade-in-arms, I am always impressed by her energy, but also by the joy of life she radiates. She can achieve more than anyone else I know. Such women are needed to enable a fairer and better life in our world. Together we are strong, please join us. Everyone can make a difference within his or her own possibilities. Together we are strong, even in a country marked by corruption.





For years Dr. Brian has been coming to us at the beginning of school and also after the holidays to deworm the children and examine them all. He keeps a record of each child, so he can determine whether healthy growth is guaranteed. Many of our children do not have a real home, they can often go to distant relatives, who usually do not have much themselves. They all sleep on the floor of a room, water has to be fetched from far away, and often only one meal a day is affordable. So it already happens that children show deficiency symptoms when they return from holidays. In this case additional vitamins are prescribed.



Maureen, our hard-working and long-time teacher, has learned a lot from him and can now treat simple illnesses herself. With the simple malaria test kits that we have available here you can quickly determine whether it is just a normal malaria that is relatively easy to treat - or one that needs to be treated immediately in a hospital, because otherwise it leads to a quick death. Fortunately we have never had such a case.

Although we have a large public hospital nearby, we rarely visit it. Theoretically, malaria diseases would be treated there free of charge, but since there are never medicines available and there are still long queues, it would be illogical. You would first be sent to a pharmacy to buy the right medicine. So we rebuilt a former classroom into a patient's room with 2 beds where patients can be cared for around the clock.

This relatively large building, which is directly adjacent to our sports field, was built by our much appreciated late Mzee Mwamunga. We always keep him in honorable memory. From him we received the large property for a relatively good price and his legal heirs want to give it to us very gladly. It still needs to be roofed and furnished and also the fence would have to be modified to integrate it into our property. His heirs expect us to set up a hospital there and to put up a memorial plaque for the deceased. However, all this also causes costs, so we wait until we take over. Of course it would be a relief for the many children and employees, but the construction of the medical station is not enough. It also needs doctors to run it properly, and that can be expensive if volunteers cannot be found. At first we were happy that we had built a chemistry and biology laboratory, but we did not expect the high follow-up costs. So now we are trying to pay back everything we needed for the final exams last year. The medical station should also help the very poor from the surrounding villages who have no money to go to a hospital in the city. So it needs to be well thought out, but it would be great.





In the meantime we have found some foundations active in Kenya, which support us with material donations. From Europe we could certainly get a lot, but there the customs is again the problem.



One of them is this foundation, it wants to preserve and honour the memory of an Indian freedom fighter. From them all children, teachers, employees and also all workers received warm woollen blankets. In January they will bring us books for everyone. An enormous help for us, books are expensive.

In public schools, books are given away for free by the government. But although we are a charity we were registered as a private school. Here only public or expensive private schools are active and then there are many that belong to church organizations.

Although I am not a member of the Rotary Club, I am regularly invited to the annual dinner. Our school was the first to be chosen to be trained by the Rotarians as Interacts. This was true for primary and secondary school and there are also annual elections, as is the case with the Rotary Club.



In the Secondary School Adhnan Nordeen was elected for president, here he sits at the table with the officials and probably does not know what is happening to him. If members prove that they behave like true Rotarians, they can later wear the pin that is recognized among members around the world. Surely this can be helpful.

When Dirk and Ines Apel visited us at the beginning of the year to finally get to know our school and their godchild, we talked seriously about giving us optician material and equipment with other visitors. Her son Bryan is an optometrist and they wanted to persuade him to sacrifice his holidays and teach our teachers and children how to measure their eyes. Bryan proved to be helpful and agreed. There was a lot of interest from some teachers. Before Bryan and his future wife Deborah started their trip to Kenya, they sent out many educational films so that the biology and physics teachers could prepare themselves well for the topic. Because of lack of time I almost wanted to stop watching everything, but then I found everything so interesting and watched it together with the teachers. We were looking forward to the visit of Bryan and Deborah, but we could not have imagined how great the cooperation with them was and what pleasant and interesting guests they would be.





Bryan proved to be an excellent teacher and so it was very instructive for anyone who was seriously interested. Our teachers were very enthusiastic about him, because in addition to his expertise he showed them how to always ensure the attention of all those present as a teacher, and he also dealt sensitively with all questions.



In a very short time, some learned how to measure eyes. But he also taught them how to grind glasses so that everyone could get the glasses they needed for their eyes. It was really great how he did that and his future wife also proved to be a good assistant and a wonderful cook. I would not want to miss the days with them.

They were even able to go on safari for a few days and then see for themselves that their students were able to measure and make some glasses correctly. And Bryan saw that everything was done perfectly.



When Jens Beulich came with his family shortly after, Allen, one of our best students who finished secondary school in November, was able to demonstrate how to measure out the eyes.

Allen was happy to demonstrate what he had learned and confirmed that Marie has eagle eyes. Since it takes time for students to be appointed to a university after finishing secondary school, even if they have achieved top grades, he will be working with us at the beginning of next year and will also test everyone in primary school for their eyesight. In the future Allen wants to become an optometrist, which is certainly a very good idea, there are probably not many of them in Kenya. Of course we are happy to support him in this way.

In 2019 we had a lot of visitors. Please forgive me if I don't mention them all by name, but please believe me, I am looking forward to meeting everyone who wants to get an idea of how their godchildren live here. Of course it happens that I am asked which toys they can bring for their children. Fortunately we have absolutely none here and you can always see how creative the children are. Of course we live in such a different world here and I know that everyone who knows our life here understands this very well. We are probably one of the few organizations that make it possible to have close contact with the sponsored children at all times.





Since Jens is an excellent photographer, we now even have a photo of all the teachers in the primary school. This is more or less up to date, we only changed one of them, this is the advantage of being registered as a private school. We are happy to keep good teachers for as many years as possible. It is a good idea for them to go with their students from class to class. Every teacher who starts with us gets a contract for one year, which we are happy to renew if we are satisfied with the performance. This system has proven itself.

Here is an example of what ideas our children get when they are not busy playing ball games or singing. Some have the feeling that the days are long for the children. Of course this is true, but since the children are here all the time, it is good if they are busy. Be it learning, sports, crafts or playing and sharing with others. Again and again we see how touchingly older children take care of younger ones. Until after dinner, after the little ones have showered and gone to bed, life usually takes place outdoors..

I would especially like to mention the visit of Hanna Zbinden, we are always happy to see her with us, after all she is the one who is in constant contact with many of our sponsors and so she can always provide competent information when someone inquires



So she also was the one who brought these hats for all our cooks. You don't see this in any other school, but we are always asked for something more and we have to fulfill this regulation. After all, the school is run by a Europea.



Again and again parents come to us to bring their children to us and to get a sponsorship for them. In the meantime we strictly control whether these are cases that only want to profit. Furthermore, we cannot accept any more children when classrooms and dormitories are full. Only in very extreme cases an exception is made. It happens again and again that a single parent suddenly dies and no close relatives can take care of the child. The village chiefs are aware of this and they help us with this task.





In October, the graduation of the children from the preschool takes place, who will enter the 1st grade of primary school the following year. This is an important step for the little ones. The celebration is always festive and it shows again and again how well our teacher Neema has prepared the children. On the same occasion many come to pray for the children in the final classes of the primary and secondary school. It has proved to be very successful that we have installed removable walls in 3 classrooms, which can be opened for such events.



Then the tests begin. First in primary school, then in secondary school. We got used to all the requirements for the final exams. Fortunately, all secondary school students did so well that they will be able to attend university or college next year. After the exams all students can go on the much too long Christmas holidays..

I cannot thank you enough for all the donations and sponsorships. Without your help we would not be able to run the school so well.

*With all my heart I thank you all and wish you peace, joy, health and all the best in 2020.*

*And I look forward to your visits!*

*A. Biberstein*

Annedore Biberstein  
**KENYAN CHILDREN HELP**

