

Things are moving ahead in Malawi

Kumbali Projekt volunteers visit kindergarten children in Southeast Africa – and are happy about the results of their work

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Waiblingen-Beinstein / Malawi, March 2013: Six volunteers transport 180 kilogram school materials, tools, children's clothing and books to Malawi. One year ago, Kumbali Projekt originating from Beinstein supported establishing a Kindergarten there. The association's founder Grit Wagner-Strohn was very touched by the amazing development of the kids.

Near Malawi's capital Lilongwe in Southeast Africa, all the kindergarten kids met to welcome the committed German guests. Devotedly they serenade the newcomers. "God bless you", it sounds from all sides then. The small singer's parents show their gratitude as Grit Wagner-Strohn and her five companions played a definitive role in making it possible that the kids can attend a kindergarten at all.

A few days more than a year ago, together with two other women the resident of Beinstein had made the journey on occasion of the inauguration of the kindergarten which was established in a former stud (*we reported*). The reconstruction was and is being financed by the Kumbali Projekt whose members are mainly from the Rems-Murr-District. At present, the kindergarten provides for one group of about 30 children; an expansion for a second group is intended.



The kindergarten kids from villages near the Malawian capital are happy about the visit of the German volunteers

Lots to do by the volunteers from the "Ländle"

The volunteers, who generally bear the cost of the journey themselves, spent their three weeks stay with plastering and repainting the rooms; flooring also required renewal. The works dispelled also the musty smell, and termites and bats as well. Instead, now a bookshelf contains the English books collected by Grit Wagner-Strohn in Germany from rummage tables.

The kindergarten organisation was subject of many meetings and discussions. Wagner-Strohn's husband Michael Strohn explains that the kindergarten has been designed as kind of self-help

organisation under the parent's active participation including cutting grass at the outdoor area, minor works and assisting the teacher. Coordination is done by the local Sali Mwale employed by the association – a capable man who is in continuous contact with Beinstein. The Wagner-Strohn couple became fond of him and even paid for his driving license from their own pocket.

But the probably most important job is done by the teacher exercising maths, English, religion and the national language "Chichewa" with the kids. Proudly the children demonstrate Wagner-Strohn their calculation skills and recite verses. "They have developed so great", the German says enthusiastically; she was quite touched. By the way, the Malawian teacher is being paid by the parents through a kindergarten fee of 400 Kwacha per month equivalent to approximately one Euro. In cases of shortage, contributions from Swabia help out.

Inter alia, such contributions came from the Educational Establishment Hohenacker this year. During their charity race at the "Finnenbahn", pupils and kindergarten kids sprinted for around 3000 Euro for the aid project. Wagner-Strohn is very pleased and would like an even deeper cooperation with local child facilities. She could well imagine a partnership between a Remstal kindergarten with one in Malawi. As yet, the establishments having been approached act coyly. "That must not necessarily involve donating money. The children could also make toys and exchange notes later on."

The Beinstein resident loves developing such plans. If possible, the secretary and her fellow campaigners would even more often visit their African friends. There are still lots to do; a large toilet building shall be completed soon. And the small library bookshelf would enjoy further growth. The active Kumbali members are looking forward to the next journey in the forthcoming year.



Gerhard Bieger from Beutelsbach has been made aware of Kumbali Projekt through WKZ.

The Kumbali Projekt

- Further information about the project:
www.kumbaliprojekt.de.
- The association is always looking for new members and young people who would be ready to **locally work as volunteers**.