

*Haba na haba, hujaza kibaba*¹ could be the motto of this report. Although our foundation looks like a little boat at the side of the grand NGO-ships or even NGO-tanks within the ‘sea of African development aid’, it left clearly visible traces since its establishment in March 2009. From August 10 to 29 this year we travelled again in Kenya and Tanzania in order to visit all our projects. The aim of this journey was also to make sure whether we are still on the right track.

Or is it high time to withdraw from this ‘business’ and to follow the advice of a prominent African scientist “to take a five-year unpaid leave of absence” ?² This, so the argument goes, is the only way for Africa to remember its original identity and to definitively extinct the traces of colonialism and the wrongdoings of neo-colonialism. Foreign aid in general and the NGOs in particular are not the solution but the problem. In the meantime, many intellectuals in Africa share this opinion, for instance – apart from the author just quoted – Auma Obama, the half-sister of former President Obama, or the famous Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o. Our travel, however, encouraged us to continue, although with more sharpened senses.³

We had a full programme in Kenya which was well prepared by our partner *Wallace Amayo*. In *Mutonga* we met all current and some of the former supported scholars and also most of their parents. The area is currently hit by drought, and its people are longing for the rain season in October; UNO and the Kenyan government are alarmed. Our scholarships allow not only the attendance of a good boarding school or a College in Vocational Training, they also relieve the families from the related costs, an additional hungry person or the consume of Kerosene due to homework in the evenings. The parents were very grateful for our support; yet the confrontation with this drought let us feel helpless and lost for words.

¹ ‘Little and little fill the measure’; or: ‘Persistence in small things pays off’.

² The full quotation is: “As a start, as we reorganize our house, let us ask the foreign ‘donors’, NGOs and investors to take a five-year unpaid leave of absence. When we have put our house in a better state, we can invite back the few whose presence will truly benefit the common person, and who are willing to work with us on the basis of equality.” It is taken from the autobiography of Karim F. Hirji (2017), *Growing up with Tanzania. Memories, Musings and Math*, Dar-es-Salaam, Mkuki na Nyota, S. 167; Hirji is Professor emeritus of Mathematics and Statistics in Dar es Salaam; we had also an exchange of letters with him.

³ Currently we are working on a little book, which presents in detail our experiences and conclusions for African development policy (in German).



We also had an encounter with our sponsored child *Charity* and her parents. We provide this support in the framework of the general sponsorship programme of ChildFund Deutschland. Charity (14 years old), the youngest of six children, seems shy but bright and ambitious; she wants to become a teacher in mathematics and sport. Currently, ChildFund Mutonga looks



after 790 sponsored children,⁴ moreover after 220 non-sponsored children. The talks with the project leaders *Silas* and *Lucy* gave us important and in part unknown details about this programme. We are, by the way, the unique sponsors having ever visited their sponsored child at this place during the last ten years, in our case even several times.

Eventually we met – at the Mutonga ChildFund Office – with *Fridah*, our former sponsored child and in the meantime a mother of two children. She left, after a joint ‘Grand Shopping’ for her household, with a ‘Bongo-Bongo-Driver’ back to her home at about 70 km distance.⁵



⁴ The majority of sponsors for the 790 children in this region come from Germany, others from USA, Canada, Australia or South-Korea.

⁵ Male youth or young men who detected small earning opportunities through providing on their (mostly rented and cheap motorbikes made in India) taxi services; they look – with their helmets and thick waistcoats – like Samurai warriors and cannot be missed anymore on the streets of Kenya’s countryside.



We took then a plane from Nairobi to Kisumu and went by car and two hours' drive to *Kendu Bay* at Lake Victoria. Here, at the regional office of ChildFund Kenya, we also met all current and some of the former supported scholars. The children came for their half-year Alumni-Meeting, which is connected with teaching in sexual behaviour, reproduction and health issues by professional teachers from the regional government. We had a lively exchange of thoughts and information, and we got great emotional feedback from the children. Most of the children also expressed their wish to get further support after finishing secondary school for attending higher education or professional vocational training; so far, we provided such support only occasionally and selectively. Many of the children have ambitious if not overdrawn professional goals; two of the girls, for instance, definitely want to become neurosurgeons.

We also met with some of the teachers and parents or grandparents and had extensive talks with the local project leaders. The teachers complained about the gross deficit of good revision books for preparing national examinations; they promised to better promote the girls through simulations of examinations and organising teamwork. One grand-



mother requested getting the allowance to shift her granddaughter from a daily public school to a (more expensive) boarding school to save the child from the long daily walk to school

(often in the dark of morning or evenings) as well as to increase her chances to reach her ambitious choice of career.

Back to Nairobi we had a final talk with the country programme and project director *Issa Kipera* who promised to continue any necessary support to our projects. He briefly presented the new Country Strategic Plan (2019-2021) of ChildFund Kenya which sets new priorities to child protection, education, employability or entrepreneurship of youth. We also visited the head of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), *Henrik Maihack*, and exchanged experiences and opinions on African development policy. We finally met with the well-known Kenyan writer *Ken Walibora* whose novel *Kufa Kuzikana* Barbara currently translates.⁶

On August 21 we flew from Nairobi to Zanzibar, heading again to *Jambiani* at the east coast, which – in the meantime – is quite familiar to our readers from former Newsletters. After breaking-off the project „*Jambiani Community Academy*“, we had turned our activities to the Secondary School of this expanding village (see Newsletter 15). Shortly after our arrival, its headmaster *Yussuf Simai* visited us and proudly told us that the eLMS, i.e. the electronic Learning Management System is going to be installed. He was able to mobilize additional resources (in particular for the server), and he informed also various political personalities supervising the school: the district commissioner, the district educational commissioner, the regional commissioner and the responsible state secretary of the government. On the next days we could see for ourselves the result: the Computer Room of the school, with 17 computers and three laptops, looks now really inviting for hard work and effective teaching.

The three young technicians⁷ from the *Open University Dar es Salaam* and the *Tanzanian Institute for Education (TIE)* worked for four days to get the system running; now it's time for training the teachers, the students and the administrators with our continued support. One of the computers is especially equipped for blind students, yet one additional printer in Braille is still required. Moreover, eLMS allows the installation of and the access to an electronic library. At a later stage, however, an extension of the system is probably needed to permit 'global' access beyond the narrow school area. In any case, *Jambiani Secondary School* is the first school in Zanzibar having established this kind of digital infrastructure and might serve as a role model of other schools.



⁶ We also used a couple of days for refreshing our knowledge of the art scenery (galleries) in Nairobi.

⁷ Rahim Mohamad (Head), Hassan Shunda and Rushid Mamadhan.

We were less pleased with the progress of our renewed scholarship programme for 25 students (mainly girls) giving them a second chance to repeat national examination in F4, which is required to enter High School (F5, F6) or vocational training colleges. Two problems aroused at the meetings with nine of the eleven teachers (unfortunately only male; last picture), and the majority of students and parents, one came at a surprise, the other is a well known hurdle: motivation.

It turned out, at our surprise, that the 25 students did not take part in the regular teaching; as we were talking about “repeating” with the headmaster in spring, we took it as self-evident that the selected 25 children were attending the regular classes. The scholarship should only finance “additional” teaching and individual tutoring plus possibly extra teaching material, e.g., revision books (see *Memorandum of Understanding*). The headmaster thought having requested to do so at some ‘upper echelon’ but did not get the allowance; so, only ‘private’ teaching remains in the afternoons, two hours per week and per subject chosen by the children. Indeed, the fact is – and overlooked by us – that there are only two regular classes at school in F4 with already 40 or 41 students; any addition of repeating students might lead to overcrowding and affect negatively the effectiveness of teaching.

The well-known problem: the absence from teaching seems to be rather the rule than the exception. The English teacher, e.g., told us that of 18 subscribed students only 10 show up on average, in changing composition. As we confronted parents or grandparents and students with this situation, we got – apart from embarrassing silence – the usual culprits: assistance in work at home, health problems (difficulties in breathing is chronic in this dusty village), playing at the beach or simply (and mostly) no motivation. Moreover, parents who subscribed to contribute financially (about 10 percent of the total budget) did in great part not yet fulfil their commitment; they promised to correct their omission.



We make it quite clear that such behaviour is not acceptable. The parents assure to build up a group to give their parental authority more emphasis. One of the students stands up and declares solemnly that everything will change from now on, otherwise their bad example would damage future generations of children. It becomes, however, also clear that children's motivation would rise if the perspective would open for them to get support at high school and beyond. The headmaster promises that all 25 students, like all other regular F4 students (non-repeaters), would participate in the "camp" which is going to be organized during September and October for preparing the national examination in November; this means presence in school the whole week, day and night, except during weekends. He also assures to take care for additional tutoring and to request again that the 'repeaters' can take part at the regular classes if they wish. *Tutaona*, we will see.



Now, it remains to wait for the results of the next national examinations, both in Kenya as well as in Tanzania, before engaging in any further decisions. Even maintaining, however, only the current level of support during the next three or five years, we should not rest with our fundraising activities. Once again: many thanks to you all for your donations as well as for your encouragement and faith in CDF. We are also grateful for every suggestion you may have after reading this newsletter. Finally, we would like to request anew your continued support of our project.⁸

Barbara und Günther Schmid⁹

Berlin, 8. September 2019

⁸Contributions should be sent to: Child Development Fund (CDF) (Barbara and Günther Schmid), Bank für Sozialwirtschaft, Stuttgart, Swift Code/BIC: BFSWDE33STG; IBAN: DE98 6012 0500 0007 7818 26. **Important!** Please give your private address with the donation and ChildFund Deutschland (Nürtingen) will send you a receipt for contributions to a recognised charity.

⁹ Email-Addresses: schmidhdb@aol.com; gues@guenterschmid.de;
Homepages: www.childdevelopmentfund.com; www.editionpamoja.de; www.guenterschmid.eu