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Dear donors, dear members!

Crises wherever you look. Italy is facing a crisis and so is Greece – an even bigger one in fact. About 500,000 Albanians spent the last few years abroad – most of them in Greece or Italy – and regularly supported their relatives back home as well as they could.

### In the shadow of the crisis

Now thousands of them are being made redundant. Instead of sending their families money, they return to their villages. But what is going to happen next? The chance to find work in poverty-stricken Albania is small. Their children have to go to school in buildings which are about to collapse, and in many areas even basic health care is non-existent. The home-comers are confronted with innumerable problems. They are the big losers in the shadow of the crises, but nobody speaks of them. With the renovation and equipping of schools and First aid stations IPA is making a substantial contribution towards the improvement of the situation. The more expats return, the more important our work becomes.



Pietro Tomasini  
Managing Director IPA

## Raps, Albania

### Saving a mountain village

The members of the junior team 2010/11 wanted to aim higher than all the other teams before them. For the first time they took the risk of tackling a double-project, covering the fields of education as well as medical care in a village. They successfully achieved their ambitious aim.



*The First aid station was out of use for years*

Right from the start the whole project was an adventure because the dirt road up the mountain to Raps was so rugged that getting there by car was absolutely impossible. So together with their leader, Nicole Delavy, the juniors climbed up the hills for

an hour to get their first impressions of the village school and the First aid station. Raps, a scattered village in South Albania with 200 inhabitants, is extremely poor. Because of the remoteness of the place people have to look after themselves. A few goats and a small garden is all they have to survive. They have to get the water they need in their houses from a drinking fountain in the village.

The nurse in Raps told the juniors that she was forced to visit her patients in their homes because the one room First aid station resembled a horse shelter and was empty. Ironically her small medical case was no heavy burden, it only contained an old stethoscope, an unreliable blood pressure measure and a few medicines. The schoolchildren and their teacher weren't better off, either. On rainy days they sat in their classroom under their open umbrellas, and in winter the cold made teaching almost impossible.

**The juniors chose a comprehensive approach**

The building, which houses both the school and the First aid station, was in need of a complete renovation. The walls were thick and solid, so conditions were ideal. That's why the juniors set themselves the task of helping all the villagers with this project. The costs for the renovation and equipping of the school and the First aid station, including the opening of a kindergarten under the same roof, amounted to about 120,000 Swiss francs.



*The reconstruction of the roof was only one of many building jobs*



*Before*



*After*

The project was supported and financed by three foundations (the MBF Foundation, the Spendenstiftung Bank Vontobel and the Aline Andrea Rutz-Foundation), by two service clubs (the Rotary Club Schönenberg, Au and Zürich au Lac and the Lions Club Zurich Cosmopolitan), by the Verein Kinderhilfe in Uitikon, by various church parishes, and by a large number of private donors. The juniors themselves also organised some fundraising events.

**A positive side effect**

Thanks to their initiative and their enthusiasm the juniors triggered off a positive side effect to their project. The president of the community had the dirt road to Raps repaired so that small lorries could drive up to the village in order to deliver the building materials. Every day the building site was surrounded by spectators who could not believe their eyes. "I can hardly believe that young people who live so far away and in a world so different from ours are interested in our community", the father of a pupil said in a moment of exuberant gratitude.



*The juniors are happy about the opening of the new kindergarten*

The most important result of the project is the fact that the existence of the village could be secured. The opening of the First aid station, the chance to get a decent education and a road which is again fit for traffic have made the village attractive again. Already some families who returned from abroad and from Albanian towns have returned to Raps and people who planned to move away have changed their minds, the nurse being one of them. "I was about to give everything up. Under the previous circumstances my work made no sense. I simply couldn't imagine ever being able to look after people properly here. But now I can."



*The nurse has now everything she needs*

## **Dilga Mousgoum, Cameroon**

### **How to motivate children to go to school**

In Dilga Mousgoum 350 schoolchildren were registered, but only about half of them regularly attended their lessons. Not a single child had a course book for even one subject. IPA managed to eliminate this shortcoming and promptly the number of pupils shot up.



*The situation before: learning without any course books*

Four huts, knocked together by a group of parents, serve as classrooms in the village of Dilga Mousgoum in the very north of Cameroon. Only two of the four teachers have been trained for their job. The boys and girls from year one to year six sit, closely together, on benches or on the floor. The blackboard is so old that they can hardly read what their teacher is writing on it. All this makes it virtually impossible to teach effectively. The worst thing is that there are no educational books. None of the children had a course book, not even the teachers had their own copy of the books set by the state. Although many parents tried hard to motivate their children to go to school, the number of dropouts was considerably high.

IPA had only 7,500 Swiss francs to finance a project in Dilga Mousgoum, so the organisation had to focus on what would help the children most: the purchase of



*Holding a course book in your hand for the first time*

educational books. The teachers made a list and the local IPA representative bought the books in Maroua, 625 copies altogether, for all subjects and all levels. It was particularly important to buy the 15 teachers books which offer valuable background information as well as didactic advice. Because of the rainy period it was impossible to have the books sent to Dilga Mousgoum in time for the start of the new school year, but the news quickly spread that they would arrive soon.

### **“A breakthrough”**

What happened next was, according to the headmaster, a breakthrough. Since the books were delivered, 450 pupils have regularly attended their lessons. The teachers are now much better prepared and the lessons therefore more interesting. The boys and girls love the new approach. Now and then they are allowed to borrow a book to help them do their homework, but normally the books have to be given back to the teacher at the end of the lesson. The parents’ council takes good care of the precious property so that many further generations of pupils will have the opportunity to benefit. “The project marks an undertaking which has had a tremendous effect on our school”, the Chef de Canton, a traditional authority, said. This is true indeed; the children are quieter and more motivated and attentive. For the first time they are making real progress and can be proud of their achievements.

### **An access road for IPA**

The parents are deeply grateful for the help offered by IPA, too. When the inspection visit by members of IPA from Switzerland was due, the villagers built a provisional access road across the undergrowth of the savannah for them. In their eyes a ten-minute walk to the village would have been an unreasonable demand for the visitors. At the village assembly the headmaster and the founder of the school (both of them wearing a suit!) gave their guests self-made mats and thank-you letters as presents.



There are still hundreds of villages in the area where children have never seen an educational book. But it is good to know that also a relatively small project can have a big effect.

### **Kariçe, Albania**

### **The end of the students’ tortures**

**In Kariçe IPA combined its support of a school with the ideas of a former member of a junior team. The two projects have changed everyday life for the children and youngsters in the village dramatically.**

For Xhuliana Shira the morning seems endless. But she and her friends in year seven still have another two lessons to attend. Without any real windows it is unbearably cold inside her classroom. Water is dripping from the ceiling. The girl needs to go to the toilet, but it has been out of



**Intolerable: the kindergarten in its original place and state**



**Finally a new kindergarten**

use for years. Xhuliana likes her Chemistry teacher, but the lessons without learning materials are boring and she doesn't really understand the subject-matter. Her younger sister is supposed to be at the kindergarten, but there is not enough room for all the children, so she has stayed at home. After doing her homework Xhuliana would like to read a book, but where could she get one? The evening will probably be as boring as the morning.

In Kariçe more than 300 children and youngsters face the same problems Xhuliana has every day. However, an IPA project and of a former IPA junior have improved the situation considerably. IPA initi-



ated a complete renovation of the school building. The roof and the toilets were repaired and new windows were installed. There is now electricity in all the classrooms and they have all been refurbished. Thanks to an extension the kindergarten is now big enough. Tiziana Manfioletti, a former IPA junior and student at Kantonschule Hottingen, combined the IPA project with her own in an ideal way, she enabled the school to open a small library and to give the teachers access to various learning materials.

**The schoolchildren are overjoyed – at long last the lessons are interesting**



**Xhuliana Shira (second from left) during a Chemistry lesson**

The two projects have fundamentally changed everyday life for both the pupils and their teachers. At last Xhuliana can concentrate on the lessons. She is no longer cold and the toilets can be used at any time. She now sits at a solid desk and, thanks to electricity and a new blackboard, she can easily read what her teacher has written. Meanwhile her little sister has found her new small paradise in the kindergarten.

But the two projects have led to further positive results. The radiance in the eyes of the pupils during their Chemistry lesson clearly shows that thanks to the didactic help for the teacher, the subject, like all the others, has suddenly become fascinating. The teacher makes small experiments so that it is much easier for Xhuliana to follow her. Students who had lost interest are active again and ask questions. After school the girl will go to the library to borrow a book. She is already looking forward to a thrilling read in the evening. The director of the school is happy too. He quotes an Albanian proverb: "It's better to have a friend than a treasure" and he vigorously shakes hands with the members of IPA.



*In high spirits: the director Urim Doçi and IPA partner Ali Brahimi after the completion of the project*

## The Interview

France Ellul / What do you think of IPA?

**"The students make IPA so dynamic"**

*Mr. Ellul, you live in England. How did you get to know about IPA?*

I had been invited to a benefit concert for IPA some years ago; I've been supporting it ever since. IPA helps children and that's very important to me.

*You have supported IPA again and again.*

*What do you like about the organisation?*

It's great to know that most of the money goes into the projects and not into fancy offices and high salaries. All the volunteer work – especially the engagement of the students – makes IPA so dynamic.

*Every year you come to the IPA lunch in Beaconsfield. How important is that event for the donors in England?*

Vital. Thanks to the 'before-and-after' pictures, the donors have a clear idea of the problems of the countries and the scale of the projects. It's always humbling to learn how the money raised in England is invested.

*How do you support IPA?*

In July I ran a half-marathon and raised funds from colleagues at my school. From time to time I organise concerts with my band, Anwen. The proceeds from tickets and the raffle then go to IPA.

*You also work with teenagers. How do you judge the involvement of students in real projects in the charity work?*

The idea is brilliant. When teenagers engage in such projects, it must be an amazing life-experience for them and will have a long-term effect. It must also be enriching for them to see what they can achieve personally by helping other people.

*How good do you think are the chances for IPA to get further support from England?*

It depends on finding someone who is completely committed to the charity, invests a lot of time in it and acts as a driving force. That would be fantastic. A pity it can't be me, but I'll support IPA wherever I can.

*Should IPA get more active in England?*

I would love to see that happening, but there are challenges. There is enormous competition between all the charities operating here. I do see the potential for IPA to

visit and co-operate with schools to inform their students; presentations showing the work of IPA have a considerable effect.



**France Ellul**

has been a teacher at a secondary school for many years. He lives in Downley, England, and teaches English at the two partner schools of Wycombe Grange and Chess Valley Grange. He plays the Celtic harp and often gives benefit concerts with his band Anwen to support NGOs. France Ellul is also a keen narrator

**Preview of forthcoming IPA projects**

**Gambarou, North Cameroon**

In this village a group of parents have built two small classrooms where the children sit on tree trunks. But in fact 200 pupils should be taught here. Working together with the parents council IPA is planning to erect a proper clay-brick school building, including toilets, equipment and school materials.

**Përmet, South Albania**

The college students in this town have no access to literary texts, but are expected to know them when they sit their final examinations. An unusual project shall change this absurd situation.

**Kala Kafra, North Cameroon**

For a villager who has fallen ill it is almost impossible to get medical help. In their distress some men have begun to build their own medical centre. This private initiative will now be supported by the State of Cameroon. It will help with the building and the finding of medical personnel. IPA will provide the water supply and the equipment.



**in a few words**

- Swiss organisation for development co-operation with a branch in Beaconsfield, UK. Bulletin of ZEW0 and supported by DEZA (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation)
- Founded in 1994, since 2001 known and active under the name IPA (International Project Aid)
- Engaged in transitioning and developing countries with focus on learning and education
- IPA offers help for self-help, e.g. through projects in the fields of food production and water supply as well as the issuance of micro credits
- The aspect of the IPA brand is the integration of youth in the implementation of projects. Swiss students thus get the opportunity to gain formative experiences
- School classes and junior-teams define, plan and execute their projects independently but are supervised by experienced IPA staff
- All projects are inspected by IPA on location and, following completion, are controlled once more
- IPA has received the Profax prize in 2005, and in 2007 was named “Swiss Charity of the Year” by Man Investments

**Would you like to support IPA?**

*As a member? Or a donor? Call us, we would like to tell you more:*  
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