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Dodgy practices in Black Africa

Dear sponsors, dear members!

In Maskalaï, a village in Northern Cameroon, people used to drink from a watering hole that they shared with their cattle. As a result, there was widespread disease. In their despair the villagers entrusted themselves to a local non-profit organisation that promised to build them a drinking fountain – against a “personal contribution” of approximately CHF 1,500. The villagers went off to collect the money and handed it over to the representative of the organisation. The latter thanked them and disappeared.

After years of countless villages all over Cameroon suffering similar practices, the government has finally stepped in and introduced a new law which prevents the work of fraudulent organisations. Well done!

The students of the Cantonal High School in Wohlen are currently undertaking a project that will finally give the people of Maskalaï their drinking fountain. For more on this see page 4.

Pietro Tomasini, Managing Director

Kertphul, Albania Medicine for 3,000 people

During the civil war of 1997 a medical centre was destroyed in Northern Albania. Following its renovation, a whole mountain region has regained access to medical care – thanks to a project conducted by a class at the Cantonal High School Freudenberg in Zürich, under IPA’s guidance.

In 2007 it had been ten years that Kertphul, a mountain village of 750 inhabitants in Northern Albania, along with other villages in the region, had had to do without medical care. Their medical centre had been destroyed during the civil war of 1997. As a consequence, the president of the commune of Luf-Qerret in the district of Pukë, turned to the local IPA partner, Ali Brahimi, for help.

Thus a project for reconstructing the centre and equipping it with medical supplies and drugs was born. The project was carried out by students at the Cantonal High School Freudenberg under the guidance of IPA’s Nicole Delavy, who is also in charge of coaching the junior-teams.

The students raised a portion of the costs, projected at approx. CHF 40,000, and took the steps needed for carrying the project through. One of the issues they studied carefully was sustainability: how can the medical centre continue to operate effectively once the drugs and other consumables bought during the project have been used up? The solution: the medical centre will be visited regularly in order to determine which drugs and supplies need replacing or restocking. These items will be financed via IPA’s “medical fund”, specifically set up for this purpose. The fund will regularly be replenished by sponsors and will, of course, benefit not just Kertphul but other medical centres too.



Following the successful completion of the renovation at Kerthpul, the students at the Cantonal High School Freudenberg were informed of the results of their work in pictures in a power-point presentation and in a final report. The result is a newly renovated medical centre capable of offering medical care to 3,000 people. The commune of Luf-Qerret, the local villagers as well as a construction company that had offered its work for free, contributed to the success of this project. In Kerthpul IPA once again experienced how unexpected forces can be mobilised in transitional and developing countries as soon as people there realise that they have not been forgotten – even if they “live almost at the end of the world”, as one of the villagers put it. And as he continued: “The project has given us courage; it has showed us that we are not forgotten. As soon as the people receive help, the part that they can contribute to the project themselves suddenly becomes significant and they notice that one person is not useless when they can work with partners who think alike”. Thus, in the end there are many who have benefited from this project: the local population, the Swiss students and IPA.



The class of the Cantonal High School Freudenberg



Before: Pictures on the left



After: Pictures on the right

The IPA junior-team

Fair and friendly

IPA is the only Swiss aid organisation that is specifically set up to integrate young people in project work. Annina Villiger, a student at the Cantonal High School Freudenberg in Zurich, describes how the junior-team works.

For many years, the junior-team has been a key part of IPA. Here young Swiss have



The IPA junior-team: Standing from left to right: Nicole Delavy (team-leader), Rebekka Nordmann, Celine Staub, Annina Villiger, Migmar Dhakyel. Front row: Joe Winkelmann, Nico Lüthi, Anai Schaad, Charlotte Fischli

the opportunity to learn what development cooperation means and what it means to plan, finance and realise a project. This article will not just deal with our selected project but will try to give our sponsors some insight into how the junior-teams work.

Crucial for the functioning of the team are the twice-weekly meetings. We get together at the IPA offices for about 90 minutes on a Wednesday evening and work through a previously set agenda. One of the juniors takes minutes, which is necessary for those juniors who have not been able to attend a meeting to keep up to date. It can also be very useful in certain instances to refer back to the minutes.

The agenda is often very long since we find it important that all significant decisions are taken as a group. Of course, it is not always easy to come to an agreement quickly since eight different people are not always unanimous. At

times discussions can get quite heated, but we always make sure that the atmosphere remains friendly and cooperative and that no one feels affronted.

In addition to these meetings, there are also so-called “weekly services”. Each week (usually during holidays as well) one of the juniors goes to the IPA office for about 2 hours. He/she checks the task list and deals with the most pressing items relating to our project. This may entail writing letters to foundations or local communities, writing emails or completing other administrative tasks. (The actual project work takes place in the team in the course of a number of weekends). Nicole Delavy, the junior-team leader, is always in the office to offer us advice and help. The “weekly service” is a good thing – it ensures that there is never too much work piling up and each junior is equally participating in the project. During the next meeting the tasks completed will be briefly discussed and, if necessary, corrected.

“Currently we are planning various events in order to raise the funds necessary to realise our project.”

The third aspect, apart from meetings and “weekly services”, is the participation in training sessions and the cultivation of contacts with sponsors and people who could be important for our project. During the first training session, we learned about the basic principles of project management. Some juniors benefited from an exchange with some experts on the topic of fundraising. We have also been the guests of two Rotary Clubs. During a sponsored dinner we were able to present our project to the club members and sponsors.

Currently we are planning various events in order to raise the funds necessary to realise our project. We hope to have completed the task by the summer of this year.

Annina Villiger

Kousseri, Cameroon

Vocational training courses in dressmaking and carpentry

Of late the sewing machines are chattering and wood shavings are flying through the air in Kousseri, Northern Cameroon. 52 youngsters are attending the first two courses offered by a vocational school, which is being set up there by IPA.

“The centre is my big dream”, says Jonas Namekong, a carpenter from Kousseri, “I pray to God that you can help me with this”. He is referring to the vocational school whose construction is supported by IPA. The idea was Namekong’s, called “Papa Jonas” by all.



Kousseri is a town in Northern Cameroon of between 150,000 and 170,000 inhabitants. The town borders on Chad. Street scenes are dominated by small traders – and by many street children, who



have hardly any chance of receiving any education. Even for children who do attend primary schools there is hardly any way of receiving vocational training later on. That is why the project of a vocational school in Kousseri is needed. Once completed, it will offer a number of different vocational courses.

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During the initial phase, the CFPK (Centre de Formation Professionnelle de Kousseri) is offering vocational courses for carpentry and dressmaking in an old barn and under



the roof of a hangar. Thanks to Papa Jonas, the news that something could be learned here quickly made the rounds in the town. At the beginning, over 70 youngsters started their vocational training; in the meantime, around 20 have dropped out, being somewhat overburdened by the demands of the timetable and the unfamiliar structures imposed on their lives. The remaining 50, who are willing to stay on and complete the course, will not only receive practical and theoretical specialist training but will also get tuition in language, mathematics and “éducation morale”. The latter has nothing to do with religion; it simply seeks to teach the students the rules of their society. The timetable for the girls offers additional subjects such as “child care”, “family planning” or “homemaking”.

Moreover, the CFPK not only teaches but also executes orders, especially in the carpentry shop. Each month this brings in earnings of around € 500 – a promising start on the way towards self-sufficiency.

The costs for the first year – establishing the vocational school in existing buildings, i.e. without a new building as yet – amount to approximately CHF 170,000; the money was donated by private sponsors – especially one particularly generous person, who would like to remain anonymous. The detailed budgets for the

second phase – the construction of the first buildings in 2009 – are currently being put together. The State of Cameroon is also contributing to the project: It donated four hectares of land to CFPK for the construction of the new buildings.



The CFPK team is very committed and has worked without any pay during the first four months. Now the teachers receive a small salary. The project is supervised and accompanied by Aboukar Mahamat, the IPA

partner in Northern Cameroon, while the school is headed by Mariatou Ngoungoure Mofing, a young, intelligent and hardworking woman. “We are more than a vocational school”, she says. “We pick kids from the street and help them to grow up”.

For further information please see:
www.project-aid.org >projects
 >Cameroon >education >infrastructure
 >current

The interview

“Constant drops will eventually bring about a change...”

Ms Bruderer, you support IPA projects through Fons Margarita, a charity of which you are the president. What is it that drew you to IPA?

Angela Bruderer: What impressed me most is the double effect achieved through engaging Swiss youth both in Switzerland and in a developing country. Young Swiss people gain an understanding through the projects in Albania, where IPA is active, which raises their awareness: Help is not an abstract entity; it is an activity and requires participation.

Do you feel certain that the money you gave to IPA is used according to your wishes?

Bruderer: Any cooperation with aid organisations has to be based on trust. My trust in IPA is substantial. This is because of the people who work with IPA. This trust is further strengthened because IPA documents each and every project with painstaking precision.

Back in spring 2007 you had the opportunity to visit various projects in Albania. What memories did you bring back from this trip?

I was particularly touched by the medical centres that were built by IPA. They guarantee a basic service where there was none before. The immense work that has been accomplished by the various parties involved - including the locals - is impressive.

What was your level of knowledge about Albania before your engagement?

As a politically interested person, I knew how urgent it was to help this country – one of the poorest in Europe – and bring it on board. Albania is a member of the United Nations, has a seat in the European Parliament and joined NATO a few weeks ago. From a political angle, everything looks promising. However, there remains much to catch up with, both in real terms as well as in terms of general awareness.

How do you – a privileged Western European – feel when confronted with the level of poverty in Albania or elsewhere?

I have gained some early experience with regards to poverty. As a young woman I lived in Brazil for some time, a country where the gap between rich and poor is particularly wide. I was confronted with people who slept on newspapers. That was difficult to



Doctor Angela Bruderer

accept back in 1968 when it was believed

that everything would turn for the better. Later on I worked as a doctor in the Caribbean, where I was again confronted with poverty.

In view of the misery in so many countries: Is the help you – or IPA – offer not simply a drop in the ocean?

On a global scale, this might well be the case or at least might seem to be so. For the people, however, who benefit from development projects on location the help is a real and noticeable improvement of their lives. Constant drops eventually wear away the stone and change something not just for the individual but hopefully also in society as a whole.

Preview of IPA projects summer 2009

Kalur, Albania. Total renovation of a school building in cooperation with the DEZA (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation)

Kalivaç, Albania. Renovation of the medical centre, and supply of equipment. This is a project of the junior-team.

Kousseri, Cameroon. It is planned to set up a “flying library” from which the children can borrow school books and educational materials. At present approx. CHF 140,000 remain to be raised before this project can be realised.

Maskaläi, Cameroon. The people had to share their watering holes with the cattle; serious illness – sometimes lethal – was the result. Swindlers disguised as local aid workers promised them a drinking fountain and took their money (see editorial, page 1). IPA in cooperation with the Cantonal High School Wohlen (grade 2b) is now building this drinking fountain.



in a few words

- Swiss organisation for development cooperation 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 transition 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 exclusive 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?

You are very welcome! Be it as member or sponsor. We would love to tell you more about IPA and are looking forward to hearing from you by phone: 1494 67 48 30 or by email: dianawallacedtw@aol.com.

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