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Dear donors, dear members!

2017 – elections in Albania. Every politician wants to be re-elected. Cash to complete projects is short, but you can always make promises: we will renovate the school, the ambulance station, or we will build a new road.

### Disastrous campaign pledges

The nearer the elections come, the faster the promises follow each other. The more uncertain a politician is, the bigger the promises for projects are. For IPA this is an impossible situation. The government repeatedly promised to renovate schools, which IPA donors were willing to support financially. So, the only option for IPA was to postpone these projects and to recommend another one to the donor – maybe that other school would really be helped in the end. But 95% of the time this is not the case. For the time being the school therefore loses its urgent support from Switzerland, but at the same time it is not declared to be a state project. This again means waiting for better times. At least every four years this sad scenario is repeated, leaving behind not only frustrated citizens.

Pietro Tomasini  
Managing Director IPA

### Progonat, South Albania / Zurich, Switzerland

### IPA juniors open doors

The IPA juniors decided to go in for a project “at the end of the world”. Their help for the region of Kurvelesh has had an important impact that goes far beyond the original project.

The road reminds you of the Tour de France. Endless bends lead to a remote mountain area in the south of Albania. The only difference is that the road to Progonat is not tarmacked. For the Swiss students the approach to “their” school was an adventure in itself. Without a four-wheel drive vehicle, the visit would have been an extremely difficult matter.



*Adventurous road to Progonat*

Nicole Delavy, the leader of the group, was driving the car carefully over stones and around potholes. “Before the project was started”, she says, “the area was not only geographically, but also in the public perception, completely isolated”. Here, of all places, the young people from Switzerland wanted to renovate and equip a big school building. Nothing should be missing: a gymnas-



October 2016: Juniors visit the school



October 2017: The renovation has been completed

tics room, a sports field, a computer room, learning materials. Of course, the teachers in Progonat could not really believe that a group of seventeen-year-olds would be able to handle such an extensive project. But the junior team benefitted from the excellent reputation that was established by other projects in the south of Albania. "It even turned out much better than I had hoped", Luvjon Kreka, one of the teachers, rejoices. All the 16 part-projects were completed. Now he can also teaches computer sciences. The school in Progonat has definitely caught up with the rest of the world.



Teacher Luvjon Kreka at his new place of work

## Stimulating developments in the mountain region

"With their project the young people have broken down a door." Luvjon Kreka says. "Behind it, other doors opened." The junior team has brought hope and new ideas to the area. It prevented six families from moving away. The mayor of Tepelenë, to whose district Progonat belongs, develops interesting plans. At the moment a tourist hostel is being built in traditional style and soon the road leading down into the valley of Tepelenë and to the sea will be tarmacked. Soon the unspoilt region has the potential to become an interesting tourist destination with some improvements in its infrastructure. Hiking-tours, culture and beaches, all within easy reach in an agreeable summer climate on the elevated plain of Kurvelesh. Thanks to new means of income, investments can now be made from which people in the mountains will benefit.



Impressed by the juniors: the mayor

With their project the Swiss youngsters have clearly stimulated the development of the whole area. This is far more than could be expected. Carol, one of the juniors, said after her visit in October 2017: "I am very happy to see how everything was implemented." Admittedly there were also a few sad moments, for example when we visited the kindergarten in Goricë, a project which had not yet been completed, but the journey was

a tremendous experience. Like all her colleagues in the team, she has benefitted a lot from her time with IPA.

### Waza-Logone plain, North Cameroon

## Help for the children of refugees – against extremism

In the north of Cameroon thousands of families were forced to flee from Boko Haram. The school education of their children was suddenly interrupted. IPA gave at least 160 of them the chance of a better future.



*Superintendents fill in the dossiers for the children*

The news came in on Facebook: Our local IPA partner informed us about the big number of refugee children who were, because of the Boko Haram terror, without school education. Tens of thousands had escaped to the Waza-Logone plain. The children had witnessed terrible and senseless brutality by Islamic terrorists. They were traumatised and their schools were used as barracks. Most of them had missed important years at school and were forced to settle in completely new surroundings without any means. We quickly decided that we wanted



*Done! The way to school is open*

to help these children. We told our partner in Cameroon about our decision on his birthday – this was probably the nicest present you can give someone who is as committed as he is.



*School materials for a refugee girl*

160 youngsters who wanted to enter secondary school were selected – 80 girls and 80 boys. They were all eager to go to school again, but they could not afford to pay the examination fees. As far as money was concerned, IPA could step in, but the real work was done by Cameroonian volunteers. Teachers and superintendents filled in the children's dossiers, registered them and gave them countless extra lessons so that they could catch up with the school work they had missed. It was worth it, 118 out of 160 passed the exam – a big success. A first aim had been reached and phase I was completed.

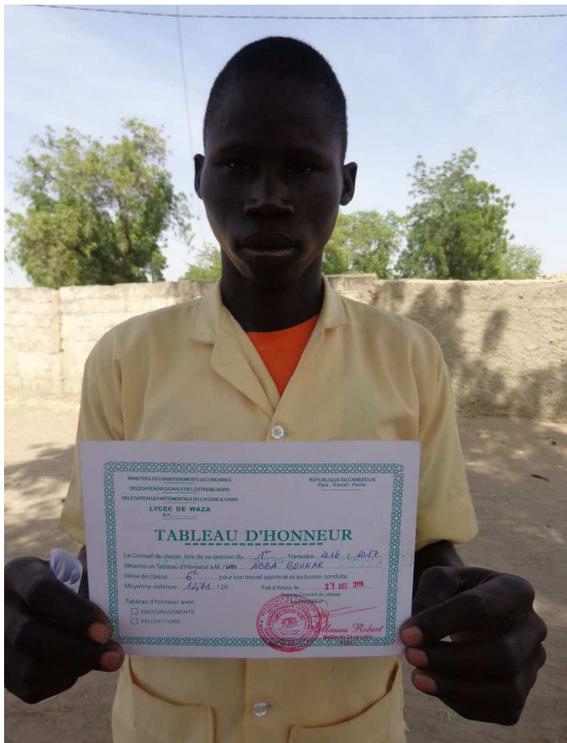


*Going to school again – a wish has been fulfilled*

## Frustration and feelings of happiness

Shortly before the term started we received the piece of news we had secretly expected: „Not all the children can bear the costs of the school fees, uniforms and school materials. What shall we do?“ our partner Mahamat wrote from Cameroon. 55 children

were very sad. They had made such a big effort, had passed the exam, and now everything seemed to be in vain. So we started phase II. The money was at hand, an immediate reaction was necessary and possible. The youngsters were given a uniform, course books, pencils and exercise books, there was even enough money to buy shoes. Their joy was immense, but they were in for hard work. Some of them had to walk to school very far and not all the knowledge gaps had been filled yet. 47 of them finally managed to finish the first year successfully and have meanwhile started their second year. Some of them belong to the best in their age group and were awarded prizes by their schools. The daily lessons help them all to come to terms with the terrible pictures which are still rooted in their minds.



Abba Boukar with his award

„I am very glad that I received an award thanks to your help“, Abba Boukar, a student in Waza writes in a letter. „I would like to continue going to school if IPA will support me in future.“ Thanks to the great effort made by the students of Horgen Secondary School the expenses for the second school year are already covered. This is fantastic for the young people in the north of Came-

eroon and a positive example of the battle of education against extremism.

**Rumphi, North Malawi / Zollikon, Switzerland**

**The first step towards a school partnership**

**When eleven classes in the biggest school in the district capital are still taught under trees, it is high time to launch an IPA project. Bumba Primary School has gone through the first phase of a long-term partnership.**



Classes „study“ under trees

The headmistress walked with her visitors across the large school campus. “The parents have built these classrooms.” With a mixture of pride and shame she points out some rickety buildings which have no floors or furniture, not even a blackboard. “There are still 950 students who have to sit on the ground, about half of them under trees – it is a scandal.” Rumphi is a small town of about



The new building with the three classrooms

20,000 inhabitants, but it is unable to offer the many schoolchildren enough classrooms. At that time, in April 2016, 1,380 pupils attended the school.

Together with the local community of Zollikon that had already helped to finance some IPA projects in the past, the teachers of the



*Happy faces everywhere*

secondary school decided to support schools in Malawi in future. The aim was to help a school with several part-projects over several years. Bumba Primary School was therefore a perfect candidate.

**Danger averted just in time**

Plans were made for a building with three classrooms which would partly be financed by a Swiss foundation (Kinderhilfe of the Swiss Personnel) and a Swiss company (Preisig Holding). The parents produced 190,000 bricks and the building company made the foundations. But when the building of the walls was about to start, the manager stopped the project. „A lot of bricks are



*Everybody wants to be part of the project*

brittle“, he said. „I can build the house, but it will not last long.“ For IPA good quality and longterm safety have always been essential. So we decided to buy solid bricks with the budgeted reserves. In July, the almost completed building, could be visited. The building manager and his co-workers were giving the house its finishing touch. „Perhaps you will have another job for me one day. Please think of me when further projects come up.“ He certainly deserves to be given the follow-up orders.

The three classes which are now taught in the new classrooms have changed in many ways. Fewer pupils are absent from school and the learning environment has led to more tranquillity and concentration which will soon be reflected in the performance of the children. In future none of them will have to sit under a tree. This is only partly due to IPA and its donors. A new law forces the schools which do not have enough classrooms to teach in shifts. “The results are as bad as when the children have to sit under a tree”, IPA-partner Flument Mkinga commented about the new situation. The teachers are not motivated at all because they are not paid for the extra lessons and because they can not cultivate their fields in the afternoons. The children, on the other hand, see their friends play games and also find it difficult to accept the new regulation. Further classrooms, more furniture and teaching materials – the wish list of Bumba Primary School remains long.



*One of the three fortunate classes*

## The Interview (part 1)

### “IPA would have to be invented”

*You have been cooperating with IPA for over twenty years. What part does our organisation play at your school today?*

I have seen various phases. At the beginning I had to get used to the fact that young people could be so deeply involved in development work. At that time, I would have liked to join in more actively myself and I would have also liked to travel to Albania. Later IPA was important when an additional subject course in International Relations and Sustainability was implemented in our school. It was also extremely helpful when IPA showed us what projects were worth taking up. Today the influence on our school is very strong. Students, both male and female, want to help on a larger scale. IPA has an important position in our school. I think it is right to be involved and it is part of a school's curriculum that students can make experiences. In this respect IPA has a key function. If it did not exist, it would have to be invented. IPA has also given us a lot of initial aid with our environmental and social work. In our school a new spirit has established itself. Not all the students respond to it, but many of them do. IPA has also played an important part in this development.

*IPA has introduced the concept of the International Relations and Sustainability course in your school. Is this course successful?*

Yes, it is indeed. The feedbacks of the classes are positive. What the school offers are the popular modules, project work and environmental work. We receive a big number of applications from all over the county. Both the Immersion Course and the new module are important features of the Enge high school. It has clearly influenced the school. The course in International Relations and Sustainability attracts students who want to commit themselves. They win prizes for

their A-level papers, take part in debating competitions and the students' organisation is very active. This has a signalling effect and an impact on the other classes and lessons. It manifests itself for example during the technology week, on the sustainability day or in a prize awarded by 'Myclimate'. The modules are a nice way of teaching and the energy week is well-liked. New forms of teaching, which have been made possible by this module, are well-established. We have a motivated team of teachers who are responsible for this course, and the classes are extremely keen on debating.



**Christoph Wittmer, 53**, lives with his wife in Stäfa and has two grown-up children. He is the headmaster of Enge high school and president of the Museumsgesellschaft, the Literaturhaus and the Literaturmuseum Strauhof in Zurich. In March 2018 he will become headmaster of the Lyceum Alpinum in Zuoz.

## Preview of forthcoming IPA projects

### Kanjululu, North Malawi.

This village is situated on the bank of a river which carries plenty of water. The villagers would finally have enough to eat if they did not have to water their arable land with buckets. If they could pump the water into their fields, they could expand the area. A project class at the Enge high school in Zurich focuses on a yield increase, combining it with a herd of goats which would combat the lack of protein.



### Sohodoll, North Albania.

Education means development – also in poor European countries. With this conviction in mind a secondary class in Horgen plans to renovate the school in Sohodoll.



### Zebediya Kazeze, North Malawi.

Brownish pools, populated by snakes, have so far provided the “potable water” as well as the water used for cooking. On behalf of all the members of the community the village chief complained about the unacceptable situation. Plans to build a well have already been made.



## IPA in a few words

- Swiss organisation for development co-operation with a branch in Beaconsfield, UK. Bulletin of ZEW 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 donor?

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