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Dear donors, dear members!

Last October two IPA teams were in Albania. This is what they found: the doctor in Bulqizë, the computer science student from Tirana and the young employee of an NGO had all gone abroad. In the mountain villages of Peshkopi the harvested apples can not be sold, schools are closing down, small villages are depopulated.

### Albania's social conscience

Despite this desperate situation there is still hope. In Tirana a charity-marathon was organised. At the high school in Sukth i Ri and in the 9-year-school in Sohodoll students and pupils collect money for the poorest in their village and give them boxes containing clothes and food for Christmas. In Albania the social conscience and the wish to help others are getting stronger. This is a great sign. Teenagers and young adults follow new ways. Perhaps it is the beginning of a new movement: #westay.



Pietro Tomasini  
Managing Director IPA

### Ng'onga, North Malawi / Bonstetten, Switzerland

#### In spite of all the difficulties

**A class at Bonstetten Secondary School was brave enough to realise a complex project and so improved the primary health care for 15,000 people in a remote area.**

Friday afternoon, the last three lessons of the week - a time teachers do not particularly like. But in Bonstetten everything was different, from the first to the last day, even before the holidays. Perhaps this was possible because the students did not actually have



Teamwork – not lessons

to attend the development cooperation lessons. When they had to choose their project, they decided to support a medical centre in Malawi. The Ng'onga Health Centre was facing all the difficulties imaginable, no water, no toilets, no maternity ward, not enough staff and no equipment to make a proper diagnosis. Electricity was available only occasionally, which made the cooling and storage of vaccines too risky.

The main problem for the students was the question of where to start. The request from Malawi consisted of a list of 17 urgent needs. There was indeed a lot to discuss! How shall we set the priorities and what aims can we ever achieve? To make things even more difficult there was GIZ (the German equivalent to the Swiss DEZA, the Agency for Development and Cooperation)



*Further training in the use of the microscope*

which was planning to build a separate maternity ward in Ng'onga amongst other things. Now it was necessary for the IPA management to judge the situation. From experience they know that such huge projects are seldom executed as planned and certainly not so soon. Therefore they made their own plans. In agreement with their partners in Malawi, the class decided to tackle nine part-projects with a budget goal you would not normally expect from people of that age.

**IPA – the only partner in the area**

The plans as well as their realisation were not easy to accomplish. Some of the part-projects had to be slightly changed. In the middle of the project all the members of staff in the medical centre were changed. The new, still inexperienced crew needed and



*A lot of material for the new Medical Centre*

received more knowledge, for example how to use the new microscope. Other essential further training had already taken place. The administration committee had learnt how to manage a centre properly and how to raise funds. This ensures sustainability. Finally more than the nine original part-projects, some of them slightly modified, were completed. As a result a midwife and a new nurse were employed. The centre is now allowed to assist births without having a separate maternity ward. Having water in the building helps to keep things clean and



*A well organised charity run*

to flush toilets. Together the villagers and members of staff have cleaned and newly equipped the whole building. The young crew has already saved the lives of several patients who would all have died without the help from Bonstetten. People in Ng'onga are still waiting for the promised GIZ-project. So far IPA remains the only active organisation in the region.

And in Bonstetten? Jasmin said: „I find this project work extremely interesting, I would like to work one day for such an organisa-



*The Ng'onga Health Centre: renovated, cleaned and equipped*

tion.“ And Sandra Häcki, the teacher, added: „It is amazing how many individual students who are usually not very motivated, have contributed to this project.“ Once again: winners on both sides.

**Sohodoll, North Albania / Horgen, Switzerland**

**A video message from Albania**

**In Horgen a secondary school class found it extremely difficult to make so many decisions while they were planning their project. The difficult struggle however was well worth it, both in Switzerland and in Albania.**

„Phew, I am completely worn out!“ Julia’s words at the end of the cooperation with IPA were symptomatic. For half a year her class had been working hard to very successfully support a project in Albania. But it



*Leonie Gossner at work in Horgen*

had really been exhausting. The class found it very difficult to make decisions. In which country shall we support a project? What



*A good solution: the new toilets*

comes first, health or education? Even when they put it to the vote, they were unable to find an answer. It had to be repeated several times and was finally postponed. „It is so difficult, we can not help them all“, Moritz said. A girl who had been absent when the vote was taken turned the balance in favour of the school project in Sohodoll the following week. How should they name the ven-



*New furniture, happy students*

ture? Again a long discussion. And then there was the invitation of the Lions Club Albis. Who would be chosen to present the project to its members? Questions galore! For the first time, a former member of the IPA juniors and now a teacher, Leonie Gossner, was responsible for the class. With patience she helped the students to discuss the open issues and to master all the assignments. „Thanks for your patience and tolerance“, said Maxi at the end of the cooperation. Egzon, a student whose country of origin is Albania, on behalf of the whole class, expressed his gratitude for everything this cooperation had brought him. The girls and boys have learnt a lot and have gained a strong feeling of success. They were able to collect as much money as they had intended and despite being nervous, the presentation at the Lions Club was convincing, and even the Zürichsee-Zeitung, a local newspaper, published a report about this unusual school project.

**A reward also for Sohodoll**

The inhabitants of Sohodoll are satisfied, too. 260 students go to school here, but they do not have even a single functioning toilet. There was no adequate furniture and no teaching materials. The students who live near Zurich could hardly imagine such a



*Greetings and a big thank you from Sohodoll by video*

situation. In Sohodoll, however, people are very proud of their school culture and they will certainly take good care of the new equipment and the materials. Another part of the project was the installation of ten toilets. There was additional money for furniture, heaters, blackboards and important teaching materials. "Our school is now better than the one in town", the English teacher said with a mixture of pride and gratitude. The project in Sohodoll has helped to enhance the exemplary school culture even more. As a thank you for all the help, the students' assembly sent a video message to Horgen, as can be expected of a modern school.

### **Goricë and Progonat, South Albania / Zurich, Switzerland**

### **Profound insights for the IPA juniors**

**A team of only four students made it possible to renovate a school building and to build and equip two first aid stations.**

Finally there were only four. The team had started with six female students, but after the first two months two of them dropped out. One of them found the tasks too much and the other one wanted to leave the team. The four who were left moved closer together and planned two projects with a budget of

over 150,000 Swiss Francs. Each of them gave her best, none of them shirked her assignments. „I have excellent memories of that team“, says Nicole Delavy, the leader of the juniors and Co-Managing Director of IPA. Two members of the group had visited Albania in October 2017 and two others travelled to Gjirokastër a year later to inspect their completed project. It was during this second trip when the motivation of the young adults strengthened. Long conversations led to profound thoughts. Nicole Delavy remembers moving discussions.



*The beginning: The reconstruction of the roof of the school in Goricë*

Maret, for example, said: „I simply can not understand that we have such a lot and people in Albania have so little.“ Dalia pondered about religions: „All religions actually say the same: In the end it is important to be



*Later: A completely renovated building*

a good person and to be active and committed. With the junior team IPA has provided a platform for me to do exactly that.“ Both of them wanted to know from their leader how she can bear all the misery she is constantly confronted with in her job. „By doing something, otherwise it would not be possible“, was the answer. This was true for this team too and it's certain that at least Maret and Dalia will continue to help others in future.

This is the basis for the good feeling that this cooperation has given them. „Here I spent my free time in a sensible way“, Maret summed up the experience.

### The IPA juniors – an institution



*The fundraising campaign was a big success for the junior team*

The attitude of the junior team in Switzerland brought good luck to the people and their children in Goricë. In this mountain village in southern Albania both the school and the kindergarten were renovated. Apart from the structural measures the building was properly furnished as well as the first aid station, situated on the same premises. It now has access to water and electricity and was stocked with medicines and medical equipment. The small, but highly efficient team had actually managed to collect more money than was necessary for this main project. This proved that the IPA junior



*The first aid stations in Goricë (picture) and Progonat look after 1,300 people*

team, no matter in what form, has become a recognised institution which attracts donors. Therefore there was enough money left for a smaller side-project, the opening of a first



*A functioning toilet is a must in every school as well as a first aid station (here: the toilet room next to the kindergarten in Goricë)*

aid station inside the school building in Progonat. This side-project completed the renovation of the school in Progonat which had taken place the year before. Two classrooms which so far had not been used were renovated and turned into a functioning first aid station.

The students from Switzerland enjoyed their time in Albania. They were happy to see their completed projects and to stay with their friendly host families. They have consolidated the good reputation of the junior team and justified the goodwill of the donors. Congratulations!



*Albania, October 2018: The juniors, their leader and the local IPA partner on their way into the mountains to check on the finished projects*

## The Interview

### “I enjoy helping the orphans”

*For more than ten years you have been working for orphans and children who have lost a parent in the district of Gjirokastër. How do you help the children?*

After the death of my mother in 2005 I decided to continue her commitment for the orphans and the children who have lost a parent. My most important backing is the IPA fund which enables us to buy school materials and clothes. The children and teenagers live in extreme poverty and therefore often do not reach the same level in school as the others.

*What part has the IPA fund played during all these years for the children?*

It has helped us a great deal, above all in the educational field. Without it, the children could not buy the materials they need for school and might fall even further behind. It is only recently that the state has decided to give them the textbooks free of charge, but once children who have lost a parent have reached sixth form, they have to pay for their school materials themselves. For them the IPA fund is particularly useful.

*What difficulties are you confronted with in your work?*

I get hardly any local help. The city council is not willing to provide even a small office for our organisation where I can do my work and where the children could meet, and only very few firms in Gjirokastër support the children with a small donation.

*You work virtually free of charge. Where does your considerable motivation come from?*

First of all from my mother. She was an orphan herself and I have taken on her com-

mitment. I also enjoy helping the children and they always give back a lot. When I can help them with the IPA fund at the beginning of the school year they are so happy that they hug me. To feel this joy and gratitude is all I need.

*How could this support of the orphans the children who lost one parent be improved?*

I have a vision of a kind of Social Centre where the children and youngsters could meet after school and do their homework and where they could also help each other. The project would match the IPA fund ideally. After all it is meant to help educational needs.



**Rudina Shajko, 39**, lives in Gjirokastër and has two children. She studied English and has been a teacher for 17 years. For the last 13 years she has been looking after the orphans and children who have lost a parent in the region. For IPA she administers the fund for the benefit of these children and implements educational projects for them.

## Preview of forthcoming IPA projects



### Chatonda, North Malawi.

The families in this village have a well-known and widespread problem: they have no access to drinking water. The nearest dirty stream is far away and difficult to get to because of snakes. During the dry period holes have to be drilled. The building of a well will relieve the women who have to get the water and reduce diseases such as cholera.



### Mzuzu, North Malawi.

In this town you would not expect to find a school where children are taught under such miserable conditions. The walls of the classrooms consist of wooden beams which remind you of a stable for animals. Rain, cold and wind get through the cracks and the children have to sit on the floor. There are also many other shortcomings. It is high time to put an end to these disgraceful conditions. In a first phase a new building with two classrooms and a small staffroom will be built.



- 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 donor?

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