

July 2023

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Dear donors,
dear members!

The UN has offered our partner in Cameroon to manage a big project. But he laughed and refused. "I'd rather have the head of a fish than the tail of an elephant", he wrote to the IPA office in Zurich. Whew! Losing him would have been a heavy blow. What has IPA got which the UN has not? The salary can certainly not have been the reason for his refusal.

Money is not everything

"We are not a good example for the big international NGOs because we have no large offices and no big cars", Aboukar Mahamat explained in his email. But for the local NGOs IPA is an ideal. "We are pragmatic and cost-efficient. Our projects are realised by experts and we work without prejudices where others are not keen to work", our partner specified. He is proud and happy about each project he can plan and complete with us. And that is why he abides by us. We will always be grateful to him. Even in such a poor region money is not everything.

Nicole Delavy
Managing Director IPA

Pheti and Chiphanga, North Malawi / Soazza, Switzerland

"Safe for human consumption"

In the Mulyezi region none of the villages had access to drinking water. In Pheti alone six children died within half a year because of that deplorable situation. Two wells built by IPA stopped the dying.

"It was an extremely enjoyable, interesting, but also hard week", Janik wrote after his return from Soazza. Together with two leaders and five friends he had been working on the Alp de Crasteira, 1,400 meters above Soazza (in the South of Switzerland). 35 youngsters had put their names down for the environmental project 2021, but the village of Soazza can only offer accommodation for



In Pheti this was considered to be drinking water

20 people. Thanks to the flexibility of the authorities of the small mountain village in the Grisons and the financial support of the Lions Club Zimmerberg the possibility of a second place of action on the alp could be found. The students and their leaders had a

tough time indeed. Very basic accommodation facilities, a hail storm on the first day, no hot water and no mobile reception. And the food was delivered by cable car. It was an



Living and working in the open air – a new experience

adventurous week. But like their friends who at the same time looked after the chestnut groves in Soazza, they wanted to support the people in Pheti. It was their aim to be able to finance the construction of at least one well for the region of Mulyezi.

Visiting the mayor by helicopter

Although they had clearly reached their aim, there was certainly not enough money for a second well. A class at the regional school in Muri therefore supported the project with several fundraising activities. The amount they were still short of was finally contributed by the Lions Club Zimmerberg, so that in the end a second well for the villages of



The mobile drilling machine

Chimphanga, Mwachilimba and also Mjowa could be built. A total of 1,250 people in Pheti and its surroundings have now, at long last, access to clean water. "Safe for human consumption" the official report of the laboratory that had analysed the quality of the

water said. Those were indeed comforting words; they stood for the end of the cases of death. To make this new situation permanent two water point committees were formed that have issued strict rules. Whoever does not pay the fees for water is banned from the use of the well. There are various penalties for offences, even for missing a



Members of the water point committee are taught how to maintain the new installation

meeting. Each family in turn has to keep the installation clean during one day.

In Mulyezi the world has changed a little to the better. And the youngsters will not easily forget the last week of their summer holiday



By helicopter to the meeting with the mayor

on the alp. After the heavy storm on the first day the hiking trail into the valley was blocked up. So the group was flown down to Soazza by helicopter, where the mayor was already waiting for them. He offered both groups a drink before they started on their journey home to Zurich. It was obvious that everybody was utterly satisfied with the results of the environmental assignment.

Talaf, North Cameroon / Wohlen, Switzerland

Upgraded to a bilingual school

Six school classes with 300 children at the primary school in Talaf were expected to share two rooms made of straw. Students at Wohlen high school are presently changing their lives with their project.

A beautiful, radiant day in November 2022. Near the border to Nigeria a long column of children, buckets full of water on their heads, are walking towards a building site. They sing, pour the water onto the foundations and run back to fetch even more,



Can this be called a school? The situation in Talaf before the project was started.

shrieking with joy. They are helping to build their new school. So far 200 of them had attended their lessons in a straw hut, herded together. The elder children went to school in a distant neighbouring village. But one day Aboukar Mahamat had arrived in the village and, during a village assembly, had presented the project of a real school – unbelievable! He also spoke of desks and books, even of a well. The IPA partner was



Children are carrying water to the building site

known to be a man who kept his words and so the excitement in Talaf was big. “They

are extremely enthusiastic”, Aboukar Mahamat wrote. This was also true for the au-



Ready for the „Day of Roses“ at the school

thorities: while the school was still being built it was upgraded to an “Ecole Biligue” where subjects are taught both in French and in English. It is the first school of this type in the area where the Mofou people live.

The war in the Ukraine – an indirect competitor

The venture with a total of 14 sub-projects was planned by a project course class in Wohlen, in cooperation with IPA. The two



Thanks to the market stall they were able to buy several desks

buildings with the classrooms were only the beginning. The big plans of the students were no matter of course at all. The course was placed at the end of an eleven-lesson-day. But in spite of being exhausted their will to do their best for the children in Talaf never faltered, not even after the end of term. On the market in Bremgarten satisfaction and frustration were very close. “How is

it going?” P. Tomasini asked when he visited the market stall selling cakes. “So far we can definitely buy five desks”, was the answer. The students had obviously converted their earnings into school furniture which they would be able to buy. But at that time no big foundation had yet consented to support the project – a disappointment. And



Each class has its own classroom

everybody knew that because of the Russian attack against the Ukraine a lot of subsidies were supposed to help the refugees. “What else can we do to help the children?” Tale asked.

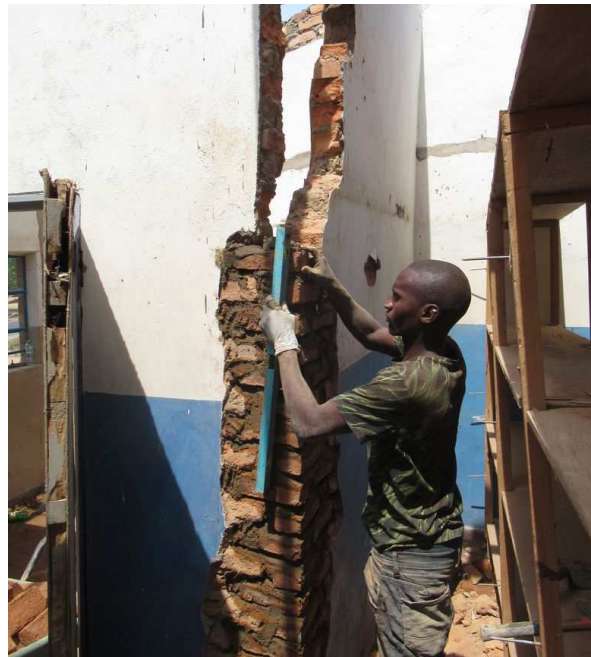
But finally financial help was in sight: The Swiss Lottery Fund made a donation and together with part of the assets of the Snow Dreams for Africa Foundation the problem could be solved. The new buildings are complete and the well which, in spite of a hydrological expertise, needed two attempts of drilling, provides enough water. The whole village will benefit from it. The project has not been completed yet, but a lot has already been achieved.

Murunda, North Malawi / Wohlen and Soazza, Switzerland

An almost endless project

It took well over four years for a class at Wohlen high school to complete their project in Malawi. During that time all the parties involved had to show patience, flexibility and strong nerves.

In their newsletter of October 2021 IPA had already reported about the big progress concerning the project at the Jalawe Health Centre which a group of students at Wohlen high school had initiated together with IPA in 2018. The participants of the environmental assignment in Soazza had also



The main building: bigger damages than expected

contributed to it with a successful fundraising campaign. In Wohlen the students were so eager to become active that they almost forgot that the detailed project proposal had to be completed before the fundraising was started. P. Tomasini, who was supervising the procedures, had to take corrective action, thereby teaching the students an important lesson.

150,000 hand-crafted bricks

The implementation was a real challenge for everybody. The corona pandemic was only



The environmental project in Soazza supported the project of Wohlen high school

one of the drawbacks. The IPA partner became seriously ill and the manager of the building company died in the midst of the venture. The local population was stressed ad nauseam because of the many tasks they had to do themselves. People living in the region, for example, had to manufacture 150,000 bricks. Moreover they took over numerous other jobs. Several adjustments



The project to provide drinking water in villages relieves the medical centre

to the project were another weighty factor. Already at the beginning of the first phase the location had to be altered. Originally it had been planned to buy an ambulance for the Kaweche Health Centre, but in the new district nobody could guarantee that the vehicle would be properly maintained in future. So the idea was dropped, instead the money was used to renovate the main building



People had to be instructed how to operate the washing machine

of the Jalawe Health Centre in Murunda – which turned out to be a stroke of luck because the termites had eaten away at the roof construction and the builders had detected deep cracks in the walls.

Now the medical centre has all the means which are necessary to guarantee primary health care for the population whose number has meanwhile risen to 7,500. Thanks to the students who had joined the environmental assignment it was even possible to finance an additional project. But in spite of employing more staff – one of the many positive results of the project – the workload remained more than substantial. „One of the reasons is that a big number of villages have no access to drinking water“, the head of the station explained. IPA together with the local partner NGO managed to connect eleven small villages to the new state water



Equipment: no comparison to former times

pipe which had been installed to provide water for the Health Centre and the biggest villages of the region. This led to the decrease in the number of patients. People in Murunda are particularly proud of the microscope and the washing machine, „the only one in a medical centre in the whole district“, as the chief of the region declared. The venture took a long time and had to be adjusted again and again. The flexibility of the people finally led to a successful completion. The region now has a safe primary health care and 400 villagers are pleased to have access to drinking water.

The Interview (part 2)

Strengthen a woman's position in her family and in the society

All the members of your team are women. Does this mean that working in an Albanian society dominated by men can sometimes be complicated?

Yes, this is indeed so. There have been moments when our work was encumbered by the fact that we are women. Many people were prejudiced and thought that we would not be successful. In rural regions it was difficult to get into contact with the population, but as time went by we were usually able to establish positive working relationships.

In which fields does your country need even more help?

Emigration is a very big problem. In Albania we now have to realise projects which aim to create jobs for young men and women so that they can enjoy a good life in their home country. We should offer them direct support and enhance their initiatives. They need good qualifications for those trades which are necessary and possible in a region.

How can you best support women in Albania?

The situation of women in Albania is still disadvantageous. Because of economic reasons they often have no access to education and therefore have fewer chances to find jobs. Consequently they are dependent on their husbands. Statistics prove that the number of divorces is rising and that more cases of domestic violence are reported. The women should be given professional training that guarantees them to find a job. Economic security will strengthen their position in their family and the society.

Your organisation also runs a social business. How does this work?

For the last five years this social enterprise

has been offering Albanian women who work in the field of arts and crafts the chance to earn some money. In various parts of Albania they have the possibility to produce works of art which we sell for them.

IPA does not look for publicity. Is this an advantage or a disadvantage for you?

One of the first things that impressed me was the fact that IPA does not want to be particularly visible. This has made our work easier. But then I came to the conclusion that I should make our successful performance and the great contribution we make together with IPA more public. We are grateful for the support IPA gives us and we are proud of what we can change for the better in Albania thanks to this cooperation.



Suela Koçibellin, 40, lives with her two daughters and her partner in Tirana. She is a human rights activist and the head of Vizion. During the last ten years she has - in joint projects with IPA - improved the quality of life for countless children, women and men in times of need.

Preview of forthcoming IPA projects

Mlongoti, North Malawi.

The primary school in Mlongoti lacks coursebooks and teaching materials and the teachers live under ignominious conditions. To support the school teaching materials will be bought and a house will be renovated so that teachers may be motivated to move to Mlongoti.



Rumphi, North Malawi.

The only hospital in the district is expected to take care of 280,000 people. Two patients have to share a bed. There is a lack of everything that is needed for an adequate medical care. Patients lose their lives because they cannot be treated, the surgical instruments are not properly sterilised or there is a power failure. A class at Hottingen high school in Zurich wants to improve the situation by starting several sub-projects.



IPA in a few words

- Swiss organisation for development co-operation
- Founded in 1994, since 2001 known and active under the name IPA (International Project Aid)
- Engaged in transitioning and developing countries with focus on education
- IPA also offers help for self-help, e.g. through projects in the fields of food production and water supply as well as the issuing of credits
- The aspect of the IPA brand is the integration of youth in the implementation of projects. Swiss students get the opportunity to gain formative experiences
- School classes and junior-teams select, 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 checked once more
- IPA has received the Profax prize in 2005, and in 2007 was named "Swiss Charity of the Year" by Man Investments
- International Project Aid-UK CIO (IPA-UK) registered with the Charities Commission, number 1170012, based in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, is associated with International Project Aid (IPA), Switzerland
- IPA (Switzerland) provides the project evaluation, project management and on-site supervision for IPA-UK, employing local partners to ensure resources are delivered to where they are needed

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