

October 2011

International Project Aid, Bederstrasse 97, 8002 Zürich, Phone +41 (0)44 381 20 24, Fax +41 (0)44 381 20 25, email: info@project-aid.org, www.ipa-project-aid.org; for UK see p. 7



Dear donors, dear members!

During our last visit to Cameroon we visited Mogodé for the first time, a region in the very north of the country. The Mayor had personally asked us to

help the numerous poor villages in that area. No doubt, help is urgently needed, but the people we met seemed to be uninterested, almost apathetic in fact.

No help without the commitment of the population

Classrooms full of animal dung, chaos in medical centres, drunken orderlies and groups of farmers with completely different and contradictory ideas, all this shocked us, but the worst was that we were repeatedly given wrong information.

It is obvious that such conditions can not be the basis for good projects with a positive long-term effect. We understand the term development cooperation literally: both sides have to take responsibility for a project. Having seen all that misery did not make it easy for us, but the decision we came to was clear and final, IPA cannot become active in the region of Mogodé.

Nicole Delavy
Managing Director IPA

Zina, Cameroon

Solidarity among all parties

In Zina a school class from Kantonsschule Obwalden took part in a project against hunger and poverty in North Cameroon. In the village of Zina some of the young men almost overstretched themselves, but the solidarity within the group saved them.



Cooperation at Kantonsschule Obwalden: Pietro Tomassini is discussing details of the project with students

Zina is situated right in the centre of the Waza-Logone plain. Because the fish population in the river Logomatya had diminished dramatically over the years, the men had to find new ways of feeding their families. A group of villagers therefore presented a "twin-project" to IPA, the cultivation of rice and the start of a fish farm. A school class from Kantonsschule Obwalden took up the project. For several months the young people ran a fund-raising campaign in central Switzerland. Finally the whole school took part in a charity run. The result of this solidarity was that both projects could be financed.



In spite of the cold: a relaxed atmosphere during the charity run in Obwalden

The rice project was realised without any major problems. In the first year over 20 tons of rice were harvested. Now “The young farmers and fishermen of Zina”, as the villagers called themselves, intended to dig out the fish pond. It was going to be 60 metres long, 20 metres wide, and 3 metres deep. Although the group had meanwhile increased to almost fifty persons, the start of the project was postponed again and again. But during the dry period the soil became harder and harder and the task of digging out 3,600 cubic metres of earth with only simple picks, hoes and shovels got more and more difficult.



A member of the group in the rice field

The men launched an appeal for a “war effort”

With temperatures rising to almost fifty degrees Celsius they desperately struggled to reach their aim, but finally had to accept the fact that they didn’t have the necessary manpower to dig out the pond before the rainy season began. Now they challenged the solidarity of the other villagers and ap-

pealed to them to make a so-called “war effort”. A lot of men joined the group and offered their help. Altogether another 1,000 work days were invested. “I no longer believed that we would ever achieve our aim”, one of the young men later admitted. “I feared that all our efforts had been in vain.” The fish pond, however, was completed in time and three different kinds of fish were released. Almost a year later 1,8 tons of fish could be “harvested”. This was in May, at the time of year which is known as the hunger period.



The melander fish has reached an impressive size

A far-reaching echo

This was a big success indeed! The men in the village were now able to feed their families and to send their children to school. Now it was their turn to show their solidarity. They had promised to do so in an agreement they had previously signed. Like in similar IPA projects the Swiss students had offered their help on condition

that part of the profit would be given to the village community. So first of all they granted the salary of a village teacher. In future they plan to buy desks, chairs and course books. Later on they intend to support the medical centre as well.

The village benefits from the project in several ways, hunger and poverty have lessened, the villagers can participate in the success of the fish farm, which at the same time gives the natural fish population in the river a chance to recover. Not surprisingly the village soon had visitors. Civil servants working for the Ministry of Economy went on the long journey from Yaoundé to Zina to analyse the project and establish it as a model example for other fish farms. The mutual solidarity has had a tremendous effect and the Swiss students can surely be satisfied with the result of their work.

Milot, Albania

Toilets for 900 pupils and students

Two big schools in the centre of a small town in North Albania didn't have a single toilet that could be used by the children. IPA managed to put an end to this deplorable situation.

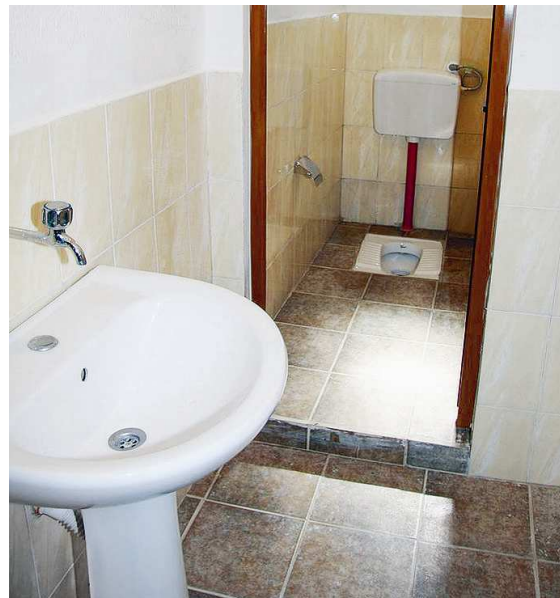


The 9-year school in Milot

In Milot a college and a nine-year junior school were built on the same site. 900 children and youngsters go to school here. In spite of the difficult situation and the considerable lack of school materials both teachers and students are doing their best to carry on with their work. For many years



Before



After

neither of the two schools has had a toilet which was in working order.

How did the pupils and students react to this? In the middle of a town you can't simply hide behind a bush and relieve yourself. To avoid having to go to the toilet they ate and drank as little as possible. And if they couldn't help it, they called on neighbours or went to a nearby restaurant during break time. Some of them skipped lessons and people living in the neighbourhood felt constantly disturbed. Girls in particular sometimes didn't go to school for days. In emergencies the schoolchildren

used one of the squat toilets which couldn't be flushed. The hygienic conditions inside and around the school buildings were horrid. The teachers also suffered. "For thirteen years I have been working here", a female member of staff said, "and I have never ever gone to the toilet. It was terrible."

Not even the town's water supply system functions

IPA is the only organisation that undertakes projects in this part of Albania. Therefore it was important for the president of the community of Milot and the headmasters of both schools to get into contact with us. When we visited Milot for the first time we immediately realised how serious the problems were. The installation of as many toilets as possible was urgent, but not so easy because the town's water supply system is so old that it keeps breaking down, even a complete collapse might one day occur. Although IPA knew that the costs would be enormous, there was only one sensible solution left. A new, separate water pipe had to be installed which would provide both schools with water.



Thanks to the project local workmen got temporary jobs

The realisation of the project, which was financed by the Fons Margarita, the village of Rüşchlikon and a private donor, was taken on by IPA's partner organisation in North Albania. Their qualified specialists looked for local workers, offering them temporary jobs. All in all twenty workmen were employed. And because it was "their" school they worked hard. Their specialist knowledge was important because the old and damp walls of the buildings made the installation of the pipes difficult. But it was

worth the effort, the project was successfully completed. The pump generates up to 4,000 litres of drinking water per hour and fills the tanks on the roofs of the two schools. They in turn supply 18 toilets and washbasins with water.



College students are reading out their thank you letter

The joy and satisfaction among the teachers and their students was more than obvious when IPA visited them. On the way to the staffroom the delegation from Switzerland was met by a group of senior students. It was their strong wish to express their gratitude in a thank you speech they had written together. "At long last we can use toilets like civilised people in other countries. We hope that you will continue working together with us for a long time."

Kousseri, Cameroon

Revival of the town library

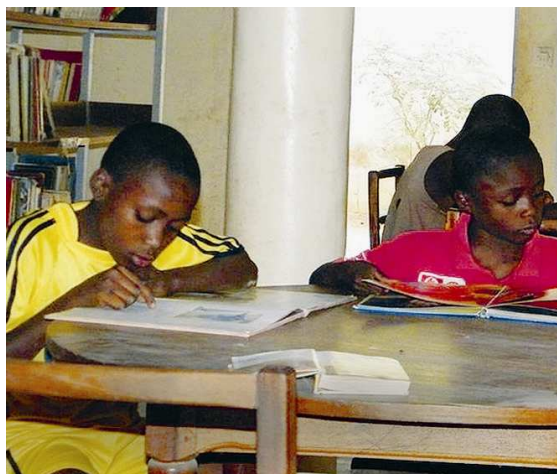
The possibility to borrow course books and books for young people has turned the library in Kousseri into a vital centre of learning for students.

Kousseri, the town on the border to Chad, has 170,000 inhabitants, but until recently has only had one small library with 1,800 old books. In fact the education authorities of the town and the whole province are confronted with a range of problems. There is, for example, a big lack of school materials. Children don't have their own course books, which makes it extremely difficult for them to study.



With the help of the new course books homework can now be done properly

Initiated by the head librarian, Mr Charles Nama Engama, IPA planned a project to change this. With the money the organisation was able to provide Mr Engama was commissioned to buy 155 course books in all subjects and on all levels in the capital Yaoundé. Since then the library has been a busy place. More and more children and youngsters do their homework there or re-read texts which were discussed during school lessons. When the time had come for them to start revising for exams their number increased again considerably. Almost 100 new students made use of the wide selection of books the library offered them, whereas in the previous year only two new students had been registered as new members. Some readers even came



Even for small children reading is now fascinating

from Chad. A large number of teachers now come to the library, too. They use the new study aids to prepare their lessons more thoroughly. The library has never before been frequented so intensively. “Now and again we had to stay open longer in the evening so that people had enough time to study. Here the children and teenagers find exactly what they need to get ready for the next school day or for their exams”, Charles Nama Engama happily and proudly said.



These magazines for young readers are particularly popular

A small investment with a big effect

The investment of about 6,000 Swiss francs improved conditions in other ways, too. Because course books cannot be borrowed – otherwise only one person would benefit – a photocopier was bought. Now that it is possible to copy important texts thousands of children and youngsters have access to the books. The money generated by the new copying service (and the new membership fees) is used for the purchase of additional books, which constantly enlarges the range of books available. However, the money is not only spent on course books. Right from the start a second aim of the project was to encourage children and teenagers to read books regularly. Therefore the section “Books for Young Readers” – in the old days hardly worth mentioning – was increased by 200 books. Picture books, children’s books, comics, novels and thrillers enrich the readers’ leisure activities in colourful and useful ways. Four subscriptions to magazines focusing on youth topics are

particularly popular and something unheard of in the whole area.

The massive increase in the number of users has also brought the library to its limits. Therefore IPA is interested in continuing the cooperation, the project can always be extended and modified. The more children and young people frequent the library, the more successful they are at school and the more the general level of education rises. Nothing is more important for the development of a society and a country than that.

Hubert Looser / What do you think of IPA?

The Interview

“A high level of professionalism and excellent reporting”

Mr Looser, you already knew the organisation preceding IPA. In what way has the organisation changed since then?

The management soon realised that you can achieve a lot more with sustainable projects than with the mere transportation of relief goods. Therefore humanitarian help was quickly replaced by development cooperation. The organisation has also built up professional structures both in Switzerland and abroad and the management plans and carries out projects step by step. I have always liked the idea of involving young people in these projects. They offer them a unique chance to learn a lot.

What is your opinion of this development?

It has impressed me very much. The sustainability of the projects is considerable, mainly due to the fact that those who benefit are obliged to cooperate actively. The projects meet the needs of the population and, above all, give young people new perspectives by offering them an education and the possibility to start an apprenticeship.

Your foundation has made a generous financial contribution to the building of the vocational school in Kousseri. What was special about this project for the Foundation Looser?

The project was important for the town and its inhabitants, and IPA succeeded in involving the state of Cameroon in it. It is particularly satisfying to see that hundreds of young people can be trained and that at the same time many new jobs could be created. This is a long-term project which is constantly extended. The Foundation Looser supports a similar project in Phnom Penh and so far has made good experiences.

You are also familiar with other relief organisations. What distinguishes IPA from them?

Its professionalism and its reporting. In my opinion IPA has the best reporting of all the organisations I know. For years the management has guaranteed a high standard of quality. I can only say that IPA really deserves the awards it has received in recent years.

What are your wishes for IPA for the next ten years?

First of all I hope that the organisation will continue its strategy and that its work will become even better-known. With a financial contribution to IPA you can achieve a lot.



Hubert Looser, 73, was a successful entrepreneur. Nowadays he is mainly interested in questions of humanity and the arts. In 1988 he founded the Foundation Hubert Looser, which has so far helped to organise and finance forty projects. His foundation focuses its activities on help for children, AIDS-projects as well as culture and the arts.

Preview of forthcoming IPA projects

Prongji, South Albania

During their nine compulsory school years the children of this village are taught the basics under extremely difficult conditions. The school was built in 1910 and is in urgent need of a complete renovation as well as an adequate infrastructure.



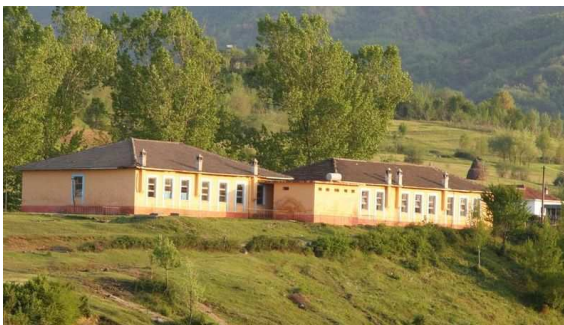
Lahai, North Cameroon

With the production of spirulina, a blue-green alga, IPA is promoting a risky pilot project. At the end of its processing spirulina will be sold in powder form. This is urgently needed as a high-quality food supplement.



Kariçe, North Albania

The view of the mountains from the school in this village is breathtaking, but teaching and learning inside this building is a nightmare. 290 pupils and their 19 teachers are affected. Help is on the way, thanks to the enormous generosity of a donor the whole school building can be renovated in one go.



- 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:
01494 67 48 30 or by email:
dianawallacedtw@aol.com.

Bank details for donations:
Barclays Bank Plc
Beaconsfield
Sort Code 20-02-06
Account no. 00391522

Would you like to donate online or by credit card? Go to:
www.ipa-project-aid.org