

## Sawubona Kunjani from Swasiland!

We are two students, Ursula and Annika, and we will stay the next few weeks in Swaziland as volunteers for MEDEA e.V. We have the wish in common to support MEDEA e.V. with their projects and to gain an insight view into the culture and way of life in southern Africa.

At the moment it is winter in Swasiland. That means that during the day with have temperatures from 20-25°C and during nights it can be below 10°C. Winter also means that it is dry season; therefore the landscape is coloured in all different kinds of brown. It has not rained at all in the last four month!

The impressions that we have from the first days are unbelievable versatile. For example a lot of people walking along the highways, a lot of little sheds along the streets where you can buy all kinds of fruit and vegetable or alive chickens, random power failures, doing the washing at the river, loads of cows and goats and chickens roaming the streets, on Sundays people are dressed in all different colours to go to church and much more...



In our first week we also went up in the rural areas to Nyonyane to visit the school and the child headed household of the Gumezes. We will try to let you join our first impressions from this visit.

After turning from the tarred road onto the gravel road, the journey becomes an adventure. The street is very bumpy and filled with road holes. A 4-wheel drive is necessary for this part of the road. After 7,2 km on this bumpy road we finally reach the school of Nyonyane. At the moment it is lunch break at school and kids are sitting around outside having their lunch or are already finished and started playing. Of course we are a big attraction and the children are welcoming us with a few shy smiles and eyes wide open. A few children are even brave enough to say hello to us in English. But the conversation does not go much further than "Hello" and "How are you". We try to break the ice by trying to pronounce the siSwati names, which leads to a lot of laughter.

We brought two big boxes of apples for the children with us. But before they should get the apples, we tried to motivate them to clean up the school premises. This meant for the kids to collect the garbage! We distributed some big bags and quickly the kids started to run around and collect whatever they could find. After we were happy with the cleanliness of the school ground, the teachers handed out the apples.



After our first impressions of the school we walked the few minutes down to the homestead of the Gumezes, which MEDEA e.V. gives support to. During our stay in Swaziland, our main task will be to set up a garden for vegetables for the children including a fence around the garden. So we were really excited to see the homestead and meet the children for the first time.

Approaching the area of the homestead, the first eye-catcher is definitely the new two-room building that is nicely painted. After seeing the new rooms, the view falls on the old sleeping hood, which did collapse on one side after heavy rainfalls. Next to this hood are two other hoods in traditional style with the reed-roof. At the moment Moses is doing some work at these two hoods which means that he puts some concrete at the floor and the inside walls and installing new doors. When we arrived the craftsman Moses was just doing a concrete board at the bottom around the kitchen hood.

Banele and Chazile, the two oldest children of the Gumeze family, welcomed us very shy. Due to the strike of the teachers in Swaziland at the moment, these two, which are going to high school, did not have any classes today. We used the time to have a look around and to examine the area, which we want to use for the garden. Soon the other children came home from school: Qumsile, Hlengiwe, Siphositho, Thabane. After a first exchange of words and a little bit of conversation we headed back on the gravel road filled with new impressions.



During our stay in Swaziland we will support the children to set up a garden to grow their own vegetables. We decided to stay in Nyonyane for three days to get the work done and to gain a nice view into the rural life in southern Africa. Together with the kids we hope to finish the fence and the garden within these days. An exciting task is waiting for us!

Greetings from Swaziland!

Annika & Ursula